

THE  
NEW ENGLAND  
COUNCIL

April 6, 2004

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the New England Council, I am once again writing to urge you to support efforts to pass medical malpractice liability reform. More specifically, I urge you to vote tomorrow in favor of the motion to proceed to the Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act (S. 2207). As we have stated in previous correspondence, the Council believes that reasonable reform is necessary to ensure the economic stability of the New England region, and this legislation specifically addresses two areas of patient care most affected by spiraling liability costs.

The New England region continues to be the leader in all aspects of health care. Whether in the provision of patient care, research and development or the development of our nation's health care professionals, the importance of the medical industry to the economy and identity of the New England region cannot be overstated. In addition to the advances made in medicine, the health care industry is a vital part of the region's innovation economy and continues to play a significant role in the economic development of the region.

As outlined recently in a report by the New England Healthcare Institute, in 2001, more than 800,000 New Englanders were employed in the health care sector. With more than 11% of the region's workforce directly engaged in health care, we have the highest concentration of health care employment in the nation. The direct gross regional product for New England's health care industry is \$53 billion. When you consider the indirect impact and induced effect of the health care economy on the New England business community, the figures are even more dramatic, representing an additional 924,900 jobs and \$68 billion.

Because New England is such a prominent leader in health care, we are directly impacted by legislative and regulatory initiatives that affect the industry. Medical malpractice liability reform is one of those initiatives. Failing to enact appropriate legislation not only affects the number of doctors that choose to practice certain types of medicine (keeping in consideration that New England doctors are traditionally associated with being involved in high-risk, cutting edge medical fields), but it also impacts our world-renowned hospitals, which must pay higher premiums.

Meaningful reforms are necessary to curb the liability crisis that is affecting all aspects of the health care system. By enacting reasonable reforms, the practice of defensive medicine will be reduced, frivolous litigation will be curtailed and the medical liability system will become more predictable, leading to lower health care costs in all aspects of the health care sector. As a result, both access to and quality of care will be improved.

Once again, we urge you to vote in favor of the motion to proceed to the Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act (S. 2207). As always, if you have any questions, or if we can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Very Truly Yours,

James T. Brett  
President & CEO