



*American Academy of Dermatology Association*  
Excellence in Dermatology™

## President Obama Signs Health System Reform Legislation into Law

*March 26, 2010*

President Obama signed health system reform legislation into law on March 23, ending a protracted, politically charged debate about changes to the American health system. After hours of discussion, the U.S. House of Representatives passed health system reform, H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, ([www.aad.org/gov/documents/BAI09M01.pdf](http://www.aad.org/gov/documents/BAI09M01.pdf)) by a vote of 219-212 on Sunday, March 21. The U.S. Senate had passed the same bill on December 24, 2009.

In addition, the House and Senate passed H.R. 4872, the Health Care Education Affordability Reconciliation Act (the secondary “corrections” bill) ([http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h4872rh.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h4872rh.txt.pdf)), through the reconciliation process ([www.fed-soc.org/publications/pubid.1791/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.fed-soc.org/publications/pubid.1791/pub_detail.asp)).

This combined legislation represents more than 18 months of negotiations, hearings, and debate on issues ranging from insurance coverage requirements to closing the Medicare prescription donut hole.

AADA has prepared a summary of key provisions ([www.aad.org/gov/documents/HSR\\_overview\\_final%20bill.pdf](http://www.aad.org/gov/documents/HSR_overview_final%20bill.pdf)), a timeline for implementation ([www.aad.org/gov/documents/HSR\\_Timeline.pdf](http://www.aad.org/gov/documents/HSR_Timeline.pdf)), and a more in-depth list of policy changes ([www.aad.org/gov/documents/HSR\\_Senate%20Bill\\_Recon\\_Bill.pdf](http://www.aad.org/gov/documents/HSR_Senate%20Bill_Recon_Bill.pdf)) for members.

Our AADA worked diligently and collaboratively throughout the process to represent the interests of dermatologists and patients, making decisions based upon our principles. While the legislation does not comport with all of our principles, there are some positive changes with respect to insurance reform, the expansion of coverage to more Americans and strengthening of wellness efforts.

For example, our AADA pushed for a federal tax on indoor tanning use, a measure that promotes prevention. It is good public health policy as it will discourage all individuals, especially young people, from this dangerous practice. It has the potential to save our patients from the many adverse effects of chronic ultraviolet light damage including, most importantly, melanoma. In addition, a federal tax on tanning bed use helps reduce the future costs of treating skin cancers. A tax on tanning bed use also will reinforce other federal and state efforts to protect the public from the harmful effects of tanning beds.

### **AADA to Work with Others to Address Concerns about Legislation**

There are, however, many concerns we have about this legislation. Among those of utmost importance are the need for a permanent fix to the flawed Medicare physician payment (Sustainable Growth Rate or SGR) formula, and correcting problems with the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB), both of which threaten to undermine access to care and destabilize health care delivery. Physicians need a secure payment system in order to invest in their practices, their employees, and in the new

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technologies that will continue to enhance our ability to provide high-quality care. Additionally, many sections of the legislation related to quality and health information technology are of a scope and pace that we find unacceptable. Another area needing further reform relates to achieving meaningful medical liability reform.

The AADA will remain actively engaged in the health system reform process and be a positive influence in establishing the regulatory framework to implement the new law. Advocating for changes that preserve our ability to provide high-quality care for our patients will continue to be a priority.

## **Regular Updates Conclude: AADA HSR Resource Center Will Be Maintained**

This will be the last regular message on health system reform. We encourage everyone to continue to visit the AADA's Health System Reform Resource Center ([www.aad.org/gov/index.html](http://www.aad.org/gov/index.html)) on its Web site. Your AADA will update and publish new information on how the law will affect you and your practice in the coming months. Urgent information will be communicated as an alert as appropriate. As always, please do not hesitate to contact our Government Affairs office in Washington, DC at (202) 842-3555 or by email [govtaffairs@aad.org](mailto:govtaffairs@aad.org) with your health policy questions.