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Contact: Lawrence P. Matheis (lmatheis@nsmadocs.org)
Cell (702) 683-1987

Nevada State Medical Association Statement on Supreme Court Decision

Reno, Nevada— Nevada State Medical Association (NSMA) President Florence N. Jameson, M.D., a Las Vegas Obstetrician-Gynecologist and founder of Volunteers in Medicine of Southern Nevada, presented the following NSMA statement following the release of the Supreme Court of the United States decision in the 6 cases regarding the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act”, which were combined for today’s ruling.

Today, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (PPACA) passed in 2010 is Constitutional. Unfortunately, major health care problems are not resolved by this law. The Congress and the President must continue to work to find an acceptable way to sustain Medicare for seniors and persons with disabilities and the Medicaid program for indigent and chronically ill children and seniors. Governor Bryan Sandoval and the Nevada legislature will have to determine the impact on Nevada Medicaid of the Supreme Court’s decision, but it doesn’t make the funding of the Medicaid program easier. It means that they must address again the often unfair way that health insurance coverage fails patients when they have the greatest need for medical care.

The hundreds of pages of PPACA regulations added to the thousands of pages of the law itself still leave many Nevadans uninsured and the underfunded State Medicaid program expecting a 60-70% increase in 2014. While physicians, hospitals and most health care providers are straining to comply with significant changes to the way they are required to practice, Medicare, the largest health care coverage system in the world, continues to flounder as physicians face a 32% reduction on payments for services to Medicare patients in January. In January, there will be 348,168 Nevadans on Medicare and 99,063 Nevadans on Tricare who face the consequences of the 32% cut in payments for their care. Nevada will lose an estimated $200 million for the care of senior and disabled patients in 2013. Every Nevada physician would expect to lose at least $33,000. Many of the
24,000 employees of physician practices may add to the State's unemployment rate.

The act on which the Supreme Court has ruled is only part of the major reforms to the health care system that Nevada physicians face. The Nevada State Medical Association is participating with and supports the State's efforts to implement the law through the creation of the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange, the new Health Information Exchange Board, and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board's Health Care Sector Council. Nevada physicians will continue to provide Nevadans the best quality care possible as we adopt these significant changes to the health care system.

The NSMA is Nevada’s largest and oldest physician advocacy organization, representing over 2,000 physician and medical student members. It is located in Reno and Las Vegas and has 6 component County Medical Societies around the State. NSMA’s key objective since 1875 is to improve the health of all Nevadans.