

**P R E S S     R E L E A S E**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**STATE MEDICAL BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO TESTIFY BEFORE  
HOUSE COMMERCE COMMITTEE**

BOSTON-- Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine Executive Director Nancy Achin Sullivan will testify before the U.S. House Committee on Commerce as the Committee considers the Patient Protection Act (H.R. 5122) tomorrow, September 20, 2000. Sullivan was invited to testify by Committee Chairman Rep. Thomas Bliley of Virginia. The proposed legislation would open up the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) to the public. Currently, the information about physician malpractice and misconduct is disclosed only to health care entities.

Executive Director Sullivan will offer assistance to the House Committee by outlining the experience of Massachusetts in the development of its Physician Profiles program. The Patient Protection Act, if passed and enacted into law, would provide the public with increased access to health care information in the National Practitioner Data Bank. The proposed legislation is modeled after the Massachusetts Physician Profiles Program which, since its creation four years ago, has provided millions of health care consumers with information about the almost 30,000 physicians who are licensed to practice in the Commonwealth.

Executive Director Sullivan stated, "This Board enthusiastically supports the public information goals of this Act. We believe it incorporates all of the most important lessons learned about profiling physicians: full disclosure of relevant information, contextual presentations to assist consumers in making truly informed choices, and excellent accessibility using user-friendly information technology."

Said Board Chairman Dr. Peter Madras, "This kind of legislation is proof that the Massachusetts Physician Profiles program is a model worthy of replication on the national level. I am proud of the Board and its staff for dedicating themselves to improving patient protection and public safety through the Profiles program."

Consumer Affairs Director Jennifer Davis Carey said, "In order for consumers to make good decisions about their health, they need to have access to equally good health care information. The Massachusetts Physician Profiles Program has done just that and has become an accepted part of the health care environment in this state. The Patient Protection Act would enable consumers nationwide to make more informed health care decisions for themselves and their families."

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine licenses close to 30,000 physicians, osteopaths and acupuncturists. The Board was created to protect the public health, safety and welfare by setting standards for the practice of medicine by ensuring that doctors who practice in the Commonwealth are appropriately qualified and competent. The Board investigates complaints, holds hearings and determines sanctions.

**NOTE TO EDITORS: Copies of the testimony of Nancy Achin Sullivan are available by calling the Board's Public Information Officer at (617) 727-3086 x328.**