

HEALTH CARE FOR MASSACHUSETTS CAMPAIGN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Medical Women's Association Endorses Health Care Constitutional Amendment

AMWA Becomes 125th Endorsing Organization; Endorsements Represent Over 400,000 People

May 3, 2006 (Boston, MA) — The **Health Care for Massachusetts Campaign (HCMC)** today announced that the **American Medical Women's Association (AMWA)** has endorsed the Health Care Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing every Massachusetts resident access to affordable, comprehensive coverage for medically necessary health and mental health care services including prescription drugs and devices. The endorsement of the national women's medical organization pushes the number of endorsing organizations supporting the Constitutional Amendment to 125, representing at least 400,000 individuals.

"We believe that the proposed Massachusetts Constitutional Amendment clearly articulates the principles that AMWA strongly advocates, and that passage of it is necessary to ensure that Massachusetts laws and regulations undertaken in the name of 'health care for all' are actually consistent with the principles of equity and access embodied in the Amendment," said Susan Ivey, MD, MHSA of AMWA.

The Amendment makes the Legislature and Governor responsible for enacting the laws needed to meet the standards it established – affordable, comprehensive, universally available. It does not, however, specify any particular approach to reform. As a ballot petition, sent to the Legislature by 71,385 registered voters, it needs two approvals by consecutive Legislatures meeting jointly in Constitutional Convention. It takes only 50 legislators to vote "yes" to move on to the next step. Over 150 legislators voted for the measure on July 14, 2004, giving it a strong send-off to the expected second vote this year. The Constitutional Convention reconvenes on May 10th. If the ConCon gives its second approval, the Amendment will be on the November ballot.

Dr. John Goodson, co-chair of the HCMC, commented, "As a doctor myself, it is tremendously gratifying to see this national medical group make such a powerful commitment to end one of the fundamental injustices of our society – a health care system that denies hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents access to quality health care, based on their ability to pay." He added, "Their commitment will mean better care for their patients throughout their professional careers."

"We think today's endorsement is very significant because these women who spend their lives on the front lines of our health care system are acting to make sure that the promise of recent reforms are completely fulfilled and that their Massachusetts colleagues will have the tools they need to work effectively with the Legislature to make sure the job begun by the sweeping reforms just enacted gets finished," said Barbara Roop, co-chair of the HCMC.

The text of the Amendment reads:

Upon ratification of this amendment and thereafter, it shall be the obligation and duty of the Legislature and executive officials, on behalf of the Commonwealth, to enact and implement such laws, subject to approval by the voters at a state wide election, as will ensure that no Massachusetts resident lacks comprehensive, affordable, and equitably financed health insurance coverage for all medically necessary preventive, acute and chronic health care and mental health care services, prescription drugs and devices.

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Paid for by The Committee for Health Care for Massachusetts

About AMWA

Founded in 1915 as the oldest and largest multi-specialty association of women physicians, residents and medical students, the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) today represents a community of professionals working to promote health and encourage the professional and personal development of those in medicine, healthcare and health-related fields. AMWA is dedicated to the promotion of ethical principles of medical practice, particularly as they apply to health care issues involving women and their families, and to the expansion of access to care for all residents of our country. Over 300 of its members live and practice in Massachusetts.

HCMC link to the list of organizations that have endorsed the Campaign to date:

<http://www.healthcareformass.org/endorse/endorsements-org.shtml>

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