

READERS' OPINIONS

AP report seemed to be making up controversy

I was surprised (and disappointed) to read the June 16 Kennebec Journal report on the reaction of the American Medical Association's House of Delegates to President Barack Obama's speech.

Both the headline, "Doctors' rebuff illustrates Obama challenge," and the story leave the reader with the impression that the president and his message of the need for comprehensive health system reform were not well received.

I was there and saw the president greeted enthusiastically with a sustained standing ovation, interrupted many times by applause and also left to a standing ovation.

While the delegates were disappointed that the president did not support strong medical liability reform, he was not rudely "booed" as reported.

The physicians certainly knew about the president's position on this topic (which is not the AMA's top legislative priority, as reported). When the president said he did not support limits on awards but would work with the AMA on more limited reforms, the audience gave him a good-natured reaction, and Obama certainly seemed to take it that way.

Patients, physicians and the president share many goals as the Congress stands poised to ensure quality health care for all Americans.

While it is frequently the role of the press to provoke controversy, this particular reporting (by the Associated Press) seemed to be making one up.

At this potentially historic moment

in the evolution of health care in this country, we should all be looking for what unites us in our common goals.

*Gordon Smith
Executive vice president
Maine Medical Association
Manchester*