

MMA and MHA Co-host Health Care Reform “Listening Session” with Senator Snowe

The Maine Medical Association was pleased to co-host a successful “Listening Session” on health care reform with Maine’s Senior Senator Olympia J. Snowe at Portland City Hall on April 7, 2009. Twenty-seven organizations representing health care professionals, consumers, hospitals, employers, health plans, and government presented their respective ideas on health care reform. Senator Snowe is a member of the Senate Finance Committee, a Committee that will have an influential role in the health care reform debate in the nation’s capital.

Jo Linder, M.D., Chair of MMA’s Executive Committee, presented the Association’s testimony which is available on the MMA website at www.mainemed.com. The MMA’s statement noted the need for better support for primary care, coverage for the uninsured, and support for an individual health insurance mandate. MMA first proposed a mandate for individuals to purchase coverage, with appropriate subsidies for low-income individuals, in its *White Paper on Health Care Reform in Maine*, drafted in 2003 during the development of Governor Baldacci’s Dirigo Health Program.

The one point that I believe all organizations represented around this table agree on is that, with respect to America’s health care, the status quo is unacceptable. Continuing on the present course is not an option. The Maine Medical Association recognizes this, as does the American Medical Association.

MMA Executive Committee Chair Jo Linder, M.D.



Martin’s Point President and CEO David Howes, M.D. chats with Noel Genova, PA-C (L) and Maine Children’s Alliance President/CEO Elinor Goldberg



MMA EVP Gordon Smith with Senator Olympia J. Snowe and MHA VP Mary Maybaw



Listening session participants

MMA President Stephanie Lash, M.D. presented the MMA’s testimony at a second “Listening Session” with Senator Snowe at Husson

University in Bangor on Wednesday, April 8, 2009.

The local media provided extensive coverage of both events.

As a moderate Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Snowe is expected to be a major player in the Congressional debate about health care reform. Accompanying her at the sessions was her principal legislative assistant for health care, William Pewen, Ph.D., M.P.H. *Roll Call* magazine recently named Dr. Pewen one of the ten most influential health staffers on Capitol Hill. He has advised Senator Snowe on health care matters for the past six years.

The health care reform debate in Washington is heating up. On Monday, May 11, 2009, AMA President-elect J. James Rohack, M.D. and Chair-elect Rebecca J. Patchin, M.D. joined representatives of the American Hospital Association (AHA), the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of American (PhRMA), medical device manufacturers, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in a meeting at the White House with President Obama in which they discussed efforts to slow the growth of health care costs and health care reform generally. You can find more

information about the AMA’s principles for health care reform on the web at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/legislation-advocacy/current-topics-advocacy/health-system-reform.shtml>.

You can find more information about the President’s views on health care reform on the web at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fy2010_key_healthcare/.