

MMA to Co-host "Listening Session" with Senator Olympia Snowe

On Tuesday morning, MMA and the Maine Hospital Association will host a "listening session" with U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe in order to give various stakeholders in the national health reform debate an opportunity to share thoughts with the Senator before hearings begin later this month. The two hour session will be held at Portland City Hall in the State of Maine room from 9:30am to 11:30am.

As an influential member of the Senate Finance Committee, one of two committees having primary jurisdiction over Medicare and Medicaid, Senator Snowe is expected to play a leading role in the upcoming debate on national health care reform. The Senator will be accompanied by William Pewin, PhD, MPH, who is her primary health staffer. Organizations invited to participate in the session and present their organization's position on reform include business organizations (Maine Chamber of Commerce and NFIB), consumer groups (Consumers for Affordable Health Care, AARP, Maine People's Alliance, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine Equal Justice), health associations (MMA, MHA, Maine Primary Care Association, Maine Osteopathic Association and Downeast Association of PA's), Policy institutes (such as Maine Heritage Policy Center and Maine Center for Economic Policy) and Maine Medical Center, Mercy Hospital and Martin's Point Health Care. Also participating will be the major voluntary health organizations (Heart, Lung and Cancer), some major employers (Hannaford and Maine Health Management Coalition), insurers (Harvard-Pilgrim and the Maine Association of Health Plans), some unions (SEIU), the USM School of Nursing and the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. The Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance and the Bureau of Insurance will also participate, as will Quality Counts and the Maine Quality Forum.

The following day, Wednesday, April 8, the Senator herself will host a similar event in Bangor at Husson College. MMA President Stephanie Lash, M.D. will represent the Association in Bangor. Jo Linder, M.D., chair of the MMA Executive Committee will represent MMA at the Portland event.

The Portland event will be hosted by Gordon Smith, MMA EVP and Mary Mayhew, Vice President of the Maine Hospital Association.

While open to the public and the media, space is limited and the invited organizations were limited in order to hold the participants to a number that would facilitate discussion.