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**ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT DECISION WILL HAVE CHILLING EFFECT ON  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS AND THEIR FUTURE IN OUR STATE**

LISLE, Ill. (February 4, 2010) The following statement is attributed to IAFP president Patrick A. Tranmer, MD, MPH:

“IAFP is extremely disappointed in the Court’s decision to remove the cap on non-economic damages in medical liability lawsuits. As a result, medical liability insurance providers will once again pass the uncertainty of that potential “jackpot verdict” on to physicians in the form of higher annual premiums.

“This decision will have an immediate chilling effect on family physicians. Current family physicians will once again curtail procedures and refer more patients to subspecialists and emergency rooms, which adds up to higher and preventable costs to patients, payers and taxpayers. Doctors will order more tests as a defensive measure, rather than use their training and patient relationships to guide their decision-making. Meanwhile, future physicians will choose other states with fair medical liability systems and lower premiums, creating a shortage of physicians in many areas of our state already in need.

“Illinois physicians and patients joined together to convince the Illinois General Assembly to pass this law in 2004. This is a proven solution that ensures patients that prevail in court receive all the economic support for needed health care services and lost income. Caps also ensure that needed health care providers are not driven out of practice by unsubstantiated payouts driven by emotional courtroom pleas, but unrelated to the actual cost of care.

“We can’t return to the jackpot justice system historically run out of courtrooms in Cook County and Metro East. Because medical liability reform is not even on the table in the U.S. Congress, it’s even more important that we protect reforms already in place at the state level.

We will join with the physician community to restore fairness and common sense to Illinois’ medical liability system.”