



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

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ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

March 7, 2017

The Honorable Andy Barr
United States House of Representatives
1427 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Barr,

On behalf of over 18,000 board-certified orthopaedic surgeons, the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) would like to commend you for introducing the Saving Lives, Saving Costs Act of 2017.

Across the country, the fear of frivolous medical lawsuits forces many physicians to practice what is known as 'defensive medicine,' a practice of recommending a diagnostic test or medical treatment that may not be what the physician believes is the best medical option for the patient, but instead serves to protect the physician against the patient as a potential plaintiff. These medically unnecessary tests and treatments not only add to the overwhelming cost of health care, but do not guarantee any improved outcomes for patients.

The Saving Lives, Saving Costs Act of 2017 would address this issue by allowing physicians who have demonstrated use of appropriate eligible clinical practice guidelines in the course of treatment to benefit from increased liability protection in the form of a legal safe harbor. By reducing the necessary practice of defensive medicine and increasing adherence to evidence-based practices, this legislation may help lower health care costs and improve the quality of care for orthopaedic patients across the country.

The AAOS supports progress in medical liability reform that improves patient safety and reduces health care costs. Safe harbors are an effective mechanism to increase patient safety and allow for more stringent adherence to physician-developed clinical practice guidelines and appropriate use criteria.

Again, the AAOS commends the efforts put forth in this legislation to provide protections for physicians who demonstrate use of clinical practice guidelines and appropriate use criteria. Please feel free to contact Catherine Boudreaux, AAOS Senior Manager of Government Relations (boudreaux@aaos.org), if you have any questions or if the AAOS can serve as a resource to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald R. Williams, Jr.".

Gerald R. Williams, Jr., MD
President
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons