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The Chicago Medical Society Calls On Gov. Pritzker To Veto Bill Harming Patient Care Amid Pandemic

Governor Letter January 18, 2021

<http://www.cmsdocs.org/news/prejudgment-interest-letter-to-the-governor>

Governor Letter February 12, 2021

<http://www.cmsdocs.org/news/cms-urges-governor-pritzker-to-veto-prejudgment-interest-bill>

This past Monday, the Chicago Medical Society launched an extensive weeklong outreach and ad campaign through the Chicago Sun-Times and Politico urging Gov. J.B. Pritzker to veto House Bill 3360, a harmful measure backed by the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association and passed by the General Assembly that would add to the cost of healthcare and harm physicians already reeling from the historic COVID-19 pandemic.

HB 3360, which would require the payment of prejudgment interest, rewards trial attorneys at the expense of physicians. If signed into law by Gov. Pritzker, the legislation would impose a 9% per year prejudgment interest in all tort actions seeking recovery for personal injury or wrongful death. The interest would be a direct financial benefit to trial attorneys who are typically compensated on a percentage of total award. In short, this bill redirects vital financial resources from hospitals and physicians away from patient care.

This legislation is no way to thank a medical profession that has been caring tirelessly for patients and their communities during the pandemic. The irony is that when this legislation passed at 3:00 a.m., it wasn't while the health care heroes slept- it was while they worked.

HB 3360 would require defendants to pay for delays during civil litigation that frequently occur due to reasons for which they have no control. In many medical malpractice cases, it could be two years or more before a case is actually filed. The pandemic has only exacerbated logjams as courts have shut down due to COVID-19, dramatically slowing all civil proceedings.

Hurting physicians with this legislation would be only the latest blow to a profession already suffering burnout and exhaustion brought on by the historic COVID-19 pandemic. Many non-critical care physicians have seen their hours and pay cut throughout the pandemic amid shutdown orders that closed doctor offices and kept patients away from many routine care needs. Those physicians that haven't been hit financially have been put at significant risk on the frontlines while working to treat tens of thousands of Chicago area patients and healthcare workers infected by Covid-19.

There are many things in the bill that just do not make sense, like charging interest on pain and suffering damages, which are not devalued by inflation or passage of time. We urge Gov. Pritzker to veto this harmful and unnecessary legislation and send it back to lawmakers to find a way to protect patients, without punishing hospitals and physicians across Illinois.

This is one of the many advocacy campaigns underway by the Chicago Medical Society to advocate for you and your patients. The leadership of the Medical Society thanks you for your continued support and membership!

"The selfless self-sacrifice of our healthcare heroes has kept so many people alive during this pandemic."

—ILLINOIS GOVERNOR JB PRITZKER

DECEMBER 11, 2020



DON'T ABANDON THEM NOW, GOVERNOR!

VETO HB 3360

CMS CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY

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Tariq Butt, MD
President
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Founded in 1850, the Chicago Medical Society is the largest county medical society in the United States, representing 17,000 physicians in Cook County and more than 4 million patients. For more information, visit www.cmsdocs.org.

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