



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

*Inspiring Quality:
Highest Standards, Better Outcomes*

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May 24, 2013

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
308 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Matheson
2211 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blackburn and Representative Matheson:

On behalf of the more than 79,000 members of the American College of Surgeons, I would like to express our support of the Good Samaritan Health Professionals Act of 2011 (H.R. 1733), legislation that would ensure disaster victims' access to medically necessary care in a declared emergency. We appreciate your leadership on this legislation.

Rapid medical response in a disaster can greatly decrease loss of life and improve outcomes for patients who desperately need assistance. Surgeons in particular, with their training in trauma and critical care, play a major role in the health care community's response to most disaster situations. Properly trained volunteers are critical in such circumstances.

However, due to inconsistent state laws and lack of federal policy, it is often unclear whether protections against unnecessary lawsuits exist for medical volunteers who cross state lines. Sadly, this lack of uniformity has greatly hindered the ability of volunteer health professionals to provide care; in some cases, volunteer health professionals have even been turned away due to uncertainty about potential liability.

H.R. 1733 would provide volunteer health professionals with the same level of civil immunity that they have in their home state when they provide urgently needed care in a declared emergency. Removing barriers that prohibit licensed surgeons and other qualified health care professionals from voluntarily administering medically necessary care during disasters will ensure citizens access to high-quality surgical services in the event of a crisis.



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100years

Again, thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you to ensure enactment of H.R. 1733.

Sincerely,

David B. Hoyt, MD FACS
Executive Director

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