



# ASMD

PROTECTING THE BOND BETWEEN DOCTORS AND PATIENTS

## PATIENT OUTREACH GUIDE

### Talking to your patients is important.

Patients depend on us to provide the highest quality health care possible. They count on our training, knowledge and experience to help them overcome illness and disease and to live longer, healthier lives.

Most patients are happy with their personal doctor, but too often their opinions on these issues are based on misinformation and political rhetoric rather than fact. But quality health care is a *medical* issue, not a political issue. You can help to educate the public by educating your patients about the threats to the physician-patient relationship from a government-run health care system.

Your patients need to know how you feel about health reform proposals. And they need to know the dangers of a government-run system. They are depending on you – now more than ever.

If you have questions or would like to know more contact the ASMD at (202) 449-8665.

### Ways to talk to your patients.

You know your patients and how best to interact with them. However, here are a few suggestions for raising the issue and engaging them:

- **Ask questions.** There are strong opinions on every side of the health care debate. Some of your patients will be knowledgeable and informed, others will not. Some will agree with you, some will have different opinions. Ask them how much they know and what opinions they have, and you will know how best to engage them.
- **Keep it short and simple.** No one wants a lecture, and even the most informed patient will be frustrated by long and complex explanations of the health care system. Take the opportunity to explain your point of view, but don't go too deep into details unless they ask. Just hearing the facts from you will be enough to inform and impress most patients.
- **Give encouragement.** If a patient agrees with you and is also concerned about government-run health care, offer suggestions for how they can play an active role in the debate. Tell them they can write letters to the editor of the local paper, they can write, call or email their Members of Congress, and they can discuss the issue with friends and family. You have the opportunity to empower them; don't waste it.



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### Key points for your patients.

- **Health care decisions should be made by physicians, patients, and patients' families.** The bond between physicians and patients has been under attack for years. It is critical to the future of health care in America for doctors and patients to come together to fight any proposal that expands the involvement of government in decisions related to patients' care. You – the patient – should have control of the decisions that affect your care, not the government.
- **Government controlled health care will be expensive and inefficient.** Government already dominates education, transportation, and much more. The government controls nearly half of all health care spending in this country. Proposals to expand public health care programs would put the government in charge of a majority of the available health care dollars, and we'll all experience higher taxes and lower quality care.
- **We must say "NO!" to government-run health care.** If proposals to give government more power to control the way health care is provided in America are enacted, treatments, procedures, and prescriptions could be mandated not just by middle managers at insurance companies focused only on a balance sheet, but by *government bureaucrats* focused only on rules determined every year by other bureaucrats – *not by doctors*. This will seriously impact the quality of care you – the patient – receive.
- **Patients must stand up for their rights.** We – the doctors – are fighting government-run health care as hard as we can. But we need you – the patient – to fight with us. Tell your friends and family about how dangerous a government plan for health care will be to the quality and availability of medical care in America. Most importantly, tell your Members of Congress to oppose any expansion of government-run health care.

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