

Ladies' Home Journal Delivers Thousands of Petitions from the Public in Support of the Legislation; Petition Signer/Mom Elizabeth Kobb Tells Her Story

Nation's Emergency Physicians Herald Re-Introduction of Legislation To Protect Their Patients' Access to Lifesaving Emergency Care

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Washington, DC — Urging Congress to preserve their patients' access to lifesaving emergency medicine, the nation's emergency physicians today heralded the reintroduction of the Access to Emergency Medical Services Act of 2007 by Reps. Bart Gordon (D-TN- 6th District) and Pete Sessions (R-TX, 32nd District) and Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). Nearly 7,000 petitions from people across the country, generated by articles in *Ladies' Home Journal*, were delivered to Congress, exhorting policymakers to pass the legislation quickly.

"The nation's emergency physicians applaud this bipartisan effort to reduce the dangerous trends that are limiting the public's ability to receive high-quality, lifesaving medical care, and leaving emergency departments unable to respond to disasters," said Brian F. Keaton, MD, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "We are supported by the readers of *Ladies' Home Journal* whose personal pleas for action are contained in the petitions we are handing to Congress. Their support shows the public cares deeply about emergency medical care and expects legislators to make it a priority in the 110th Congress."

The Access to Emergency Medical Services Act of 2007 seeks to address the dangerous trends outlined by reports from the Institute of Medicine in 2006, specifically the widespread lack of preparedness for disaster. Most emergency departments report operating at or above capacity, chiefly due to overcrowding and patient boarding, and that drastically reduces their ability to handle a surge of patients in a crisis.

"During a crisis, an open and fully-staffed emergency department can literally be the difference between life and death," said U.S Rep Bart Gordon (D-TN). "Unfortunately, too many of our nation's emergency departments are overcrowded, underfunded and stretched to the breaking point. We must take steps to ensure our emergency departments have the resources they need to stay open. My bill will take the first steps to shore up the emergency department system and ensure that patients have access to urgent care."

The bill requires hospitals to report to the Department of Health and Human Services statistics on how many patients are boarded and for how long. It will also create a commission to examine the factors that affect the delivery of emergency medical services.

Ladies' Home Journal articles that appeared in 2005 and 2006 generated so much reader interest that the magazine's editor-in-chief will deliver signed petitions at an event announcing the reintroduction of the Access to Emergency Medical Services Act.

"Family health care is a top priority for the 13 million readers of *Ladies' Home Journal*," said Diane Salvatore, *Ladies' Home Journal's* editor-in-chief. "Our women want to be educated about health issues — for themselves, their kids, their husbands and parents — but they also feel a sense of mission in acting to push for social, legal or policy changes to improve health care options for

American families. Our reader is someone who uses emergency rooms, and many have experienced first-hand the serious problems people can have in getting speedy and high-quality care at America's scarce and overcrowded ERs."

Elizabeth Kobb, of New Jersey, signed the petition and attended the event, saying "I was in the emergency room with my daughter, and they admitted her, but we never even got a room. We were there all night into the next day and still had 30 people ahead of us waiting for rooms. It was like a factory, and this is a nice area of northern New Jersey! People were lined up in the hallway. It was so busy, I had to fight to get her IV fluids, and she was so sick and very dehydrated — close to passing out and white as a sheet. The nurse told me all the doctors were overworked, and waiting for a room is a daily problem."

"Our emergency care system is stretched to the breaking point, and that presents dangers to patients on a daily basis, never mind during a disaster," said Dr. Keaton. "We ask the public to visit www.acep.org and send a message to Congress to pass this bill and save emergency care."

About ACEP

ACEP is a national medical specialty society representing emergency medicine with more than 25,000 members. ACEP is committed to advancing emergency care through continuing education, research and public education. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, ACEP has 53 chapters representing each state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. A Government Services Chapter represents emergency physicians employed by military branches and other government agencies.

About *Ladies' Home Journal*

Ladies' Home Journal was founded in December 1883 and has been inspiring, informing and entertaining women for more than 120 years. Published monthly by Meredith Corporation (NYSE: MDP), *Ladies' Home Journal* has a circulation of 4.1 million and a readership of 13 million. The magazine's interactive online companion, www.lhj.com, has 1.8 million unique visitors and 20 million page views each month.

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