



TO: Wisconsin State Assembly
FROM: Dr. Corazon Loteyro, President – WI Academy of Family Physicians
DATE: April 19, 2010
RE: Please **OPPOSE** SB 203 – Expansion of medical liability lawsuits

The Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians (WAFP) strongly opposes Senate Bill 203 and would urge you to oppose this unnecessary legislation that would expand claims for loss of society and companionship in medical liability cases.

The bill would allow parents of adult children to make a claim for loss of society and companionship in medical liability cases. Additionally, it would allow adult children to sue for the loss of society and companionship for their parents in medical liability cases.

While family physicians certainly understand the impact unintended medical outcomes can have on families, there simply is no rational need for SB 203. Current law already provides the means for individuals to file claims against health care providers in medical liability cases.

This legislation would further erode Wisconsin's medical liability climate, increasing the cost of health care for our citizens and making it more difficult to retain and attract qualified physicians to our state. As you know, Wisconsin already faces a severe shortage of primary care physicians – the first line of defense in cost-effective, quality medical care.

According to the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce, Wisconsin currently has a shortage of 374 primary care physicians, which is expected to increase dramatically over the coming years. Unnecessary laws, such as SB 203, to expand medical liability claims will only serve to exacerbate the current shortage and increase health care costs.

To make matters worse, a March 2010 report issued by the Legislative Audit Bureau found the **Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund has a negative balance of \$109 million.** The Fund was created to keep medical liability rates manageable for Wisconsin health care providers. Unfortunately, an unstable Fund will lead to a more volatile medical liability climate in Wisconsin.

Again, the WAFP would urge you to help keep health care costs in check and strengthen Wisconsin's medical liability climate by opposing Senate Bill 203.