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PAFP applauds House action on direct primary care

(HARRISBURG, PA Oct. 2, 2017) Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) President Ed Zurad, MD today praised the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for its unanimous support of House Bill 1739, sponsored by House Health Committee Chairman Rep. Matt Baker (R-Tioga).

“We thank Chairman Baker for his leadership, and members on both sides of the aisle for voting in favor of House Bill (HB) 1739. The PAFP looks forward to working with the Senate and stakeholders so that we can secure more choices for patients and providers in the future,” said Zurad.

HB 1739 would give patients and doctors the right to directly contract for care. It will improve access to direct primary care, or DPC, by recognizing these arrangements and defining them as outside the scope of state insurance regulations.

DPC is an evolving, innovative model for delivering and purchasing health care services that gives physicians and their patients an alternative to the third-party, fee-for-service system. For a flat, transparent, and fixed monthly fee, patients have extensive access to their doctor – in person, by phone, by email and other digital means – for a full range of comprehensive primary care services including acute and urgent care, regular checkups, preventive care, chronic disease management, and care coordination.

With no public or private insurance involved in DPC, care can be delivered seamlessly without having to worry about prior authorization, precertification, or denied services. DPC arrangements are traditionally coupled with high-deductible health plans for specialty care, hospitalizations, and catastrophic events.

“While currently only a small percentage of our membership is engaged in DPC practices, we expect the model to grow in response to high out-of-pocket deductibles now faced by many individuals and families in Pennsylvania,” said Zurad. “Studies have shown high deductibles are causing many to forego their primary care needs, which ultimately leads to preventable chronic conditions and associated high care costs.”

The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and its Foundation supports its members (including nearly 80 percent of Pennsylvania family physicians) through advocacy and education to ensure a patient-centered medical home for every Pennsylvanian. The Academy and its Foundation are the leading influential resource among family physicians and physicians in training in Pennsylvania; the primary voice on health care issues with state legislative and administrative branches of government, media and professional health organizations; and the leader on health care issues in the community.

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