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HCLA Applauds Study That Affirms Reasonable Liability Limits Protect Patients, Physicians

WASHINGTON, DC – The Health Coalition on Liability and Access (HCLA) today applauded a [new peer-reviewed study](#) published in *Health Economics* offering compelling evidence that the repeal of reasonable limits on non-economic damages leads to significant increases in medical liability premiums, particularly among high-risk physician specialties.

Authored by researchers from the RAND Corporation, Brown University, and Harvard Medical School, the study examined the effects of court decisions in Georgia and Illinois that struck down and reversed such limits. The authors found that repeals were followed by premium increases of roughly 20 to 23 percent in obstetrics and gynecology and general surgery.

“States considering the repeal of their caps may need to understand the potential ramifications of their policy actions for malpractice insurance premiums and subsequent consequences for physician practice and patient health care,” the authors wrote in *Health Economics*.

The findings suggest that removing such limits on non-economic damages could have significant ripple effects on liability premiums, physician behavior, and overall patient care.

HCLA Chair Mike Stinson said the findings reinforce the need for consistent, balanced liability policies that protect patient access to care. “This study validates what physicians and patients alike have long known: reasonable limits on non-economic damages help maintain stability in the medical liability system, keeping coverage affordable and ensuring patients can find the care they need, when they need it,” Stinson said.

As states revisit their liability laws, policymakers should be cognizant of the building economic evidence that removing reasonable limits on non-economic damages raises costs and threatens access to essential health services. The HCLA continues to be a champion for proven, comprehensive reforms at both the state and federal levels.

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HEALTH CARE LIABILITY EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS

For more details, visit www.hcla.org. The Health Coalition on Liability and Access is a national advocacy coalition representing physicians, hospitals, health care liability insurers, employers, health care providers and consumers. HCLA believes federal legislation is needed to bring fairness, timeliness and cost-effectiveness to America’s medical liability system.