

Sent: Tue Mar 20 15:48:23 2007  
Subject: AMA news on specialty hospitals

The following is a story from the current edition of AMA Federation News. We are also submitting a letter to the editor of JAMA.

#### AMA reiterates support for high-quality specialty hospitals

The AMA last week affirmed its support for specialty hospitals as one way to provide patients with high-quality care. The statement of support came in response to a study in the March 7 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) that connects the opening of specialty cardiac hospitals within a hospital referral region to increasing population-based rates of coronary revascularization among Medicare beneficiaries.

Other analyses have found high patient satisfaction with specialty hospitals, and a congressionally mandated study found that risk-adjusted 30-day mortality rates were significantly lower for specialty hospitals than they were for community hospitals, AMA President William G. Plested III, MD, said.

"When patients are offered multiple high-quality options about where to obtain health care, we believe the entire health system benefits through competition that spurs innovation," Dr. Plested said. "JAMA's recent article and editorial on specialty hospitals focus on the increased amount of cardiovascular care in regions that include specialty hospitals, yet the commission that advises Congress on Medicare, MedPAC, has found no evidence that financial incentives play a role in increased utilization of heart surgery."

The journals of the AMA, including JAMA, are editorially independent of the organization.