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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF COSMETIC SURGERY OPPOSES COSMETIC SURGERY TAX

Chicago, IL (November 19, 2009) – As negotiators on Capitol Hill try to find ways to fund a health care overhaul, a 5% tax on cosmetic surgery has been introduced on Nov. 18 as part of the Senate’s proposed health reform bill, introduced by US Senator Harry Reid (D-NV). The American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery strongly opposes such taxes and urges legislators to consider the following points:

- A tax on elective cosmetic procedures is an unreliable, risky revenue source that has no proven record of raising projected revenues.
- The difficulty of defining elective vs. medically-necessary cosmetic surgery. There is a blurry line between what procedures are considered medically-necessary and those that are elective.
- Retention of highly-skilled physicians is at risk. Physicians face many challenges in operating their practices on a day-to-day basis. Turning them into tax-collectors is an additional burden on these doctors.
- Cosmetic surgery is not a specialty for only the wealthy or the vain. In fact, the median income for those electing to have cosmetic surgery is dropping.
- Despite the fact that more men are seeking cosmetic procedures than ever, the largest portion of patients are still working women, who would be unfairly targeted by such taxes.
- A large portion of those being taxed would be the baby-boomer generation. And as this age group continues to age, the more interest will be generated in cosmetic procedures. It is important to note that the age bracket are most likely to vote in elections is the same as those who are electing to have cosmetic procedures.

“Activating a cosmetic surgery tax is not the solution to funding a health care overhaul,” states AACS Immediate Past President Dr. Steven Hopping. “While it appears that this is currently a serious consideration, this idea concerns us.”

Such a tax has been proposed in numerous states over the years and rejected after examining the feasibility. The only state to approve such a tax has been New Jersey, which has failed to realize proposed profits from the bill and faces opposition from the same legislators who approved it in the first place.

“Implementing such a bill would be a bad idea for patients and physicians,” Hopping said.

To speak with a cosmetic surgeon on this topic or to obtain additional information please visit the AACS website at www.cosmeticsurgery.org.

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The American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery is a professional medical society whose members are dedicated to patient safety and physician education in cosmetic surgery. Most members of the AACS are dermatologic surgeons, facial plastic surgeons, head and neck surgeons, general surgeons, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, plastic surgeons, or ocular plastic surgeons – all of whom specialize in cosmetic surgery. AACS is an organization that represents all cosmetic surgeons in the American Medical Association through its seat in the AMA House of Delegates.