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May 30, 2013

Honorable Joseph Griffo
Legislative Office Building
Room 612
Albany, New York 12247

RE: S. 5493, AN ACT, to amend the education law, in relation to enacting the health care professional transparency act.

Dear Senator Griffo,

On behalf of the NYS Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery, I want to thank you for introducing and sponsoring the Health Care Professional Transparency Act. As you know, this bill would amend the Education Law to assure appropriate identification of all licensed health care professionals in their one on one interaction with patients and in their advertisements to the public. The NYSSDDS strongly supports this measure and urges its passage by the NYS Senate.

Importantly, this bill will require that advertisements for services to be provided by health care practitioners identify the type of professional license and board certification (if applicable) held by the health care professional. In addition, this measure would require all advertisements to be free from any and all deceptive or misleading information. Ambiguous provider nomenclature, related advertisements and marketing, and the myriad of individuals one encounters in each point of service exacerbate patient uncertainty.

Additionally, this measure would require health care practitioners to wear an identification name tag during patient encounters that includes the type of license held by the practitioner. The bill would also require the health care practitioner to display a document in his or her office that clearly identifies the type of license that the practitioner holds.

A recent survey conducted by the American Medical Association's Scope of Practice Partnership (SOPP), on which the AADA serves as a steering committee member, confirms increasing patient confusion regarding the many types of health care providers - including physicians, nurses, physician assistants, technicians and other varied providers. The survey revealed:

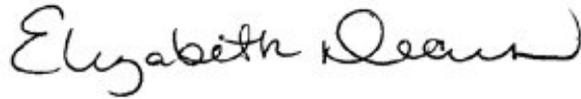
- **54 percent** of patients incorrectly believe an optometrist is a medical doctor;
- **35 percent** of patients believe a nurse with a "doctor of nursing practice" degree is a medical doctor;

- **68 percent** of patients believe a podiatrist is a medical doctor;
- **44 percent** of patients believe it is difficult to identify who is a licensed medical doctor and who is not by reading what services they offer, their title and other licensing credentials in advertising or other marketing materials.

As you know, there is a wide spectrum of training and expertise among caregivers. In a clinical setting- particularly during an emergency or life threatening hospitalization, it is often impossible for patients to know whether the person providing their care is a physician, nurse, physician assistant, pharmacist, dentist, or dental hygienist, for example. Greater transparency concerning the credentials of health care professionals in their advertisements will assist the public in making informed decisions concerning the providers from whom they seek treatment.

For all the above-stated reasons, the NYS Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery supports this bill and urges its enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Dears". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Elizabeth Dears, Esq.
NYSSDDS