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MAG'S "DOCTOR OF THE DAY" FEATURED IN TELEMEDICINE DEMO

ATLANTA – Gary C. Richter, M.D., the president of the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG), is applauding Georgia Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and the state's Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rep. David Ralston, for their leadership in promoting telemedicine as an innovative way of enhancing the patient-physician relationship during a demonstration that took place in concert with MAG's "Doctor of the Day" program at the Medical Aid Station at the Capitol this afternoon.

MAG member Debra B. Lister, M.D., performed exams on Lt. Gov. Cagle and Speaker Ralston using a live video feed from more than 200 miles away in her office at the Coffee Regional Medical Center in Douglas.

The Georgia Partnership for TeleHealth, Inc. (GPT) provided the equipment and the network that was used to conduct the demonstration. GPT says telemedicine can deliver some immediate health care and costs savings benefits in a number of sectors, including trauma care, corrections, schools, mental health and nursing homes. It adds that Georgia's telemedicine network now extends to more than 100 rural areas and includes more than 110 specialists representing more than 40 specialties, including dermatology, psychiatry, neurology, endocrinology and pediatrics. GPT says the state's telemedicine network was used more than 18,000 times in 2009.

Dr. Richter says MAG is an advocate for evaluating telemedicine and other electronic health care initiatives, noting the organization formed an electronic health care committee in 2008 that is chaired by Jack M. Chapman Jr., M.D., that is charged with, "...developing a base of knowledge and expertise within the Medical Association of Georgia to identify, track and positively impact the rapidly changing field in which technology intersects with the delivery of health care."

Of the demonstration, he said, "We believe telemedicine has the potential to enhance patient care, reduce costs, and build on existing patient-physician relationships by leveraging some incredible technology. This could be especially true for rural and underserved areas."

The "Doctor of the Day" program began in 1968. Working out of the MAG-sponsored Medical Aid Station at the Capitol, physician volunteers provide free, minor medical care to legislators and their staff for one or more days during the legislative session.

With more than 6,000 members, MAG is the leading voice for physicians in Georgia. Go to www.mag.org/electronichealthcare for additional information. Also follow MAG on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MAG1849.

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