Leading up to its historic passage, the health care reform bill had its share of opponents and supporters. Now, almost 6 months later, heavy opposition and support continues. Many debate whether the benefits outweigh the disadvantages and vice versa.

Supporters of physician-owned hospitals are among those debating the disadvantages. A lawsuit filed by Physician Hospitals of America and Texas Spine & Joint Hospital challenges the limitations on physician-owned hospitals.1

**SECTION 6001**

Section 6001 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act prohibits physician-owned Medicare hospitals from expanding after March 23, 2010 and bans any new physician-owned Medicare hospitals that are not certified as Medicare providers prior to December 31, 2010.2 As a result, some physician-based hospitals have experienced a large growth in their patient base and will be prohibited from expanding their facilities in response to the extra patient volume.

Physicians Hospitals of America and Texas Spine and Joint Hospital believe that Section 6001 will have a negative impact on patient choice and medical care affordability.

**THE ARGUMENT**

Some would argue that physician-owned hospitals exist in only those specialties that are lucrative in reimbursement, eg, cardiology, orthopedics, and oncology. Physician-owned hospitals can be perceived as institutions that do not cater to all, but only to those patients who are deemed the most lucrative in terms of reimbursement.

However, there is no denying that these hospitals exist to improve the health, and lives, of patients. With the advent of new medical technology, there has been an increase in the life expectancy of the world’s population. As a result, there is an increase in the need for orthopedic surgery, with hip and knee replacement leading the way. The popularity of sports has led to an increase in the need to surgically repair sports-related injuries.

**THE PATIENT**

Let’s not forget about the patient. It is the best interest of patient that we should consider through every debate and lawsuit. The health care reform bill was drafted and passed, supposedly with the patient in mind. Physician-owned hospitals also have the health and well-being of the patient in mind. Without the patient, where would we be? The needs of the patient should always come first.

**REFERENCES**

2. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 6 USC §6001 (2010).