

To All Our Patients:

You deserve the very best medical care. As your physicians, we are dedicated to providing just that. Unfortunately, a serious healthcare crisis is facing our community that threatens our ability to provide you with the care you need.

Medical liability insurance costs have skyrocketed for the last several years. Physician practices do not have the ability to increase fees due to our contracts with managed care plans. Yearly malpractice premium increases of 30-120% have caused some physicians to retire, close practices, or move out of state. **Stark County** has thus far lost 24 % of it's obstetricians/gynecologists, with more than two definitely dropping OB and two more seriously considering dropping OB or retiring-all within the next six months. This is also true of other specialties. One internal medicine group shut down for three days in December due to lack of insurance. Anesthesiology, emergency room and radiology services are straining to afford insurance. These are our colleagues who must be available to help provide you with the care you and your family need.

Fewer physicians available to care for patients means patients transferring to already busy doctors, which then produces longer wait times for appointments. We adjusted our office hours and schedule to accommodate as many patients as possible. We continue to promptly see emergency patients with acute problems. We appreciate your patience in this matter and apologize if you have experienced any inconveniences because of it.

The physicians, nurse practitioners and staff at Atrium Ob/Gyn value our relationship with you both as a person and a patient. Our commitment to providing healthcare to you is truly heartfelt by our practice. **We respectfully request your help at this time.** Please write or call any or all of the individuals listed below. You may also contact your Member of Congress via the internet through the Stark County Medical Society. Log on to www.starkmedical.org and follow the link from the home page. Our legislators control the business environment in which we live and work. Despite Ohio Tort Reform in late in 2002, liability insurance rate increases are decimating physician availability. Let them know that this situation must now change. Demand that they quickly find a way to provide the physicians of Ohio access to affordable professional liability insurance. Without prompt change, all physicians in Stark County, as well as all of Ohio, will soon have to consider leaving the practice of medicine or leaving Ohio. Thank you for your loyalty, support and effort in this matter.

Respectfully Yours,

The Physicians, Nurse Practitioners & Staff at Atrium Ob/Gyn

Senator Mike Dewine

140 Russell Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510

Senator George Voinovich

317 Hart Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510

Representative Scott Oelslager

77 South High Street, 13th Floor, Columbus, OH 43266-0603

Representative John Hagan

77 South High Street, 13th Floor, Columbus, OH 43266-0603

Representative Ralph Regula

2306 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

Senator Kirk Schiring

Senate Building, Room 041 Ground Floor, Columbus, OH 43266-0603

Governor Bob Taft

77 South High Street, 30th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Director Ann Womer-Benjamin

Ohio Department of Insurance, 2100 Stella Court, Columbus, OH 43215

Representative Mary Cirelli

77 South High Street, 10th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215-6117

President George Bush

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500