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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2009

**Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
Statement on texting while driving**

(LISLE) – The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) All-Member Assembly adopted a resolution on December 6, 2008 establishing a policy against driving or operating machinery while texting from a wireless device. Additionally, the IAFP supports HB 71, introduced by Rep. John D'Amico. The bill would prohibit sending or reading messages on any wireless device while driving, unless using a voice activated capability. Global positioning devices used as a navigation aid would be exempt.

"Although technology has enabled us with instant communication, we must always put the safety of ourselves and others first," says IAFP President Javette C. Orgain, MD of Chicago. "Drivers and machine operators must devote their full attention, both eyes and both hands to the task at hand. Family physicians will urge everyone to put safety first, and put the phone down."

The IAFP resolution was introduced by member Arvind K. Goyal, MD of Rolling Meadows, the IAFP's 2001 Family Physician of the Year. Dr. Goyal introduced a similar resolution at the November 2008 American Medical Association interim meeting, which was adopted as AMA policy.

"Texting while driving can result in death and serious injury not only to the driver of a vehicle but also to others on the road," said Goyal. "Physicians need to be vocal on issues that directly endanger public health and safety. The potential public health risks associated with texting while driving require public education with effective legislation behind it so people won't put their own lives and others at risk."

Nearly 40 percent of motorists between 18 and 27 have admitted to sending text messages while behind the wheel. That's compared with 19 percent for all drivers, according to a 2006 study by Nationwide Insurance.

Seven states — Alaska, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey and Washington — and the District of Columbia already have bans on text messaging while driving because of the risk to public safety.

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Founded in 1947, the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians represents more than 3,800 family physicians, family medicine residents and medical students dedicated to excellence in family medicine and the patients they serve.

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