



Position Statement
on
Gag Rules and Financial Disincentives
(Approved by the Board of Directors August 1996)

The American Academy of Dermatology strongly endorses the policy that no insurance company nor any managed care system should be able to inhibit, censure or prevent physicians, through contract or by other means, from discussing and advising patients on alternative treatment options and modalities. Furthermore, physicians must not deny their patients access to appropriate services based upon the promise of personal financial gain or the avoidance of financial penalties. Patients must have the necessary information to make informed decisions about their care. Physicians have an ethical obligation to assure that their contractual agreements restricting either referral or treatment options are disclosed to the patient. Above all the physician must have the patient's best interest at heart when either treating the patient directly or discussing treatment options. Our contract has always been with and should forever remain one between the patient and physician.