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**FEDERATION OF STATE MEDICAL BOARDS
CHAIR REGINA BENJAMIN, M.D., M.B.A., RECEIVES
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION ‘GENIUS GRANT’**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 29, 2008

DALLAS—Regina Benjamin, M.D., M.B.A., chair of the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), was named a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship “Genius Grant.” She is one of 25 people being recognized with the prestigious honor, which includes a \$500,000 grant awarded over a five-year period.

The MacArthur Fellows Program awards unrestricted fellowships to talented individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction. There are three criteria for selection of Fellows: exceptional creativity, promise for important future advances based on a track record of significant accomplishment and potential for the fellowship to facilitate subsequent creative work.

“The Federation of State Medical Boards is honored to congratulate Dr. Benjamin for her receipt of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship,” said James N. Thompson, M.D., president and CEO of the FSMB. “The FSMB is extremely fortunate to have someone of such high purpose and commitment as chair of our organization.”

Since 1990, Dr. Benjamin has been a solo family physician in the impoverished Gulf Coast town of Bayou la Batre, Ala. She is Founder and CEO of the Bayou La Batre Rural Health Clinic, which serves this small, Gulf Coast shrimping village of 2,500 residents. The clinic was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina and later by a fire, but Dr. Benjamin has never stopped seeing patients or caring for the community.

Dr. Benjamin's courage, resiliency and tireless efforts to provide health care services to the Gulf Coast of Alabama have led to numerous international awards and honors. These include the National Caring Award, which was inspired by Mother Teresa; the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights; and the Papal honor, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, from Pope Benedict XVI.

In 1995, Dr. Benjamin was elected to the American Medical Association Board of Trustees, making her the first physician under age 40 and the first African-American woman to be elected. She also served as President of the American Medical Association Education and Research Foundation and is a current member of the AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs. Dr. Benjamin is also a member of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Board of Trustees. In 2002 she became President of the Medical Association State of Alabama, making her the first African American female president of a State Medical Society in the United States.

Dr. Benjamin has been active in the medical regulatory community on the state and national level for the past 20 years. In addition to serving on the FSMB's board of directors, she has served on many of the organization's committees, including the workgroup that developed the FSMB's *Model Guidelines for Opioid Addiction Treatment in the Medical Office*. Dr. Benjamin also served on the National Board of Medical Examiners and chaired the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 3 Committee. In Alabama, Dr. Benjamin served on the state's Board of Medical Examiners for 12 years.

For more information, please go to www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.4537251.

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is a national not-for-profit organization representing the 70 medical boards of the United States and its territories. The FSMB's mission is to continuously improve the quality, safety and integrity of health care by developing and promoting high standards for physician licensure and practice. Visit our website at www.fsmb.org.

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