Dr. ________________,

I want to thank you for seeing my patient, ____________. As a family doctor, I rely heavily on your specialty expertise to provide the best care possible for my patients. I also want to call your attention to two troubling trends family doctors are seeing in Mississippi.

First, many specialists are choosing to employ physician extenders in their clinical practices. As a family doctor with a large panel of patients who need a wide variety of services, I understand the need to spread the work among nurse practitioners or physician assistants to allow the best use of your time. However, a recent trend is to have new referrals see a physician extender for their initial visit in a specialty clinic. This is troubling for me as the patients’ primary doctor because it creates extra visits for them and an extra layer of complication in their care plan. I strive hard to send appropriate referrals with a direct clinical question or problem; therefore, I welcome feedback on the appropriateness of the referral. However, it is my expectation that my patients will get to see you, the physician to whom I am referring them.

Second, the advent of large multispecialty groups is leading to a pattern of secondary referrals. For example, I may refer a patient to an orthopedist for potential knee replacement, and the patient is subsequently referred to an endocrinologist for management of diabetes in preparation for surgery. This creates several issues, such as duplication of resources in managing problems that I am already addressing, and again adding unneeded layers into the patient’s healthcare. My practice serves as the patient’s medical home, an efficient, effective, and timely practice of medicine which affords me in-depth knowledge of the patient’s medical history. I respectfully ask you to refer my patients back to me for appropriate referrals.

In summary, I want to thank you for your time and care of my patients. I appreciate that they will see you and get the benefit of your expertise. I look forward to continuing to serve as their medical home as you assist me with their care.

Sincerely,