



CURE-NY is a coalition of community groups and consumer advocacy organizations working to reduce the incidence of deaths and injury arising from medical error and to protect the rights of the victims of medical negligence.

A crisis in patient safety

Each year approximately 7,000 New Yorkers die as a result of preventable medical error in hospitals.¹ Compared to the 921 murders in 2006, New Yorkers are nearly eight times more likely to be killed in a hospital than by a criminal.² Tens of thousands of additional New Yorkers suffer grievous injuries each year due to the epidemic of medical error.³

New York fails to discipline bad doctors, enabling the worst practitioners to continue to prey upon innocent New Yorkers. This crisis of death and injury is caused, in large part, by a small minority of New York's 80,000 licensed doctors. Just 7% of the state's doctors account for 68% of the medical malpractice insurance payments in the state (while 82% of doctors have not had to make a single malpractice payment to an injured patient.)⁴

The state's 580 doctors who have been refused private insurance force good doctors to pay more to cover the uninsurable doctors' costs. To make matter worse, then-Governor Pataki's fiscal gimmickry in the 1990s removed hundreds of millions in financial reserves from the malpractice insurance system.⁵

To grapple with the legacy of Pataki-era fiscal gimmicks and the death and destruction wrought by the worst doctors, Governor Spitzer created a Medical Malpractice Liability Task Force, in July 2007, to bring together consumer advocates, insurers, medical professionals and other stakeholders.

There are solutions

While some special interests may seek to add insult to grievous injury (or even death) by restricting the ability of the victims of medical negligence to receive compensation for their losses, consumer, health and community groups are coming together in support of a common-sense agenda for reform.

The real crisis is medical malpractice itself. Consumers and insurers both support comprehensive reform of the doctor discipline system.

New York State should

- Repay the hundreds of millions dollars in malpractice reserve funds stolen by Pataki-era fiscal gimmicks.
- Discipline bad doctors to prevent the worst practitioners from continuing to prey upon innocent New Yorkers. Consumers and insurers both support comprehensive reform of the doctor discipline system.
- Enact regulatory and legislative changes, such as rating doctors based on their safety track record, to protect consumers and reduce costs for good doctors.

How You Can Help

Join the CURE-NY coalition today. Email CureNY@gmail.com or call (212) 209-7661.

¹ Harvard Medical Practice Study, "Patients, Doctors and Lawyers: Medical Injury, Malpractice Litigation, and Patient Compensation in New York" (1990).

² U.S Dept. of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services, "2006: Crime in the United States" Available at: http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_05.html (October 25, 2007).

³ Harvard Medical Practice Study, see above.

⁴ Public Citizen Study, "New York's Dangerous – and Undisciplined – Doctors" (March 2003).

⁵ New York State Insurance Department Press Release, "Rate Increase Staves Off Looming Insurance Industry Crisis as New York Task Force Confronts Medical Malpractice Reform" (July 2, 2007).