

*February 23, 2011*

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**FROM: JEAN REXFORD, CT CENTER FOR PATIENT SAFETY**

**PLEASE SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 6374—  
AAC THE CONNECTICUT MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD**

During the past several years, the Connecticut Center for Patient Safety (CCPS) has worked very successfully with members of the Public Health Committee, the Legislature, the Connecticut Attorney General, the AARP and other advocacy groups to enact laws that increase the transparency of adverse events that occur in hospitals; to increase patient and family involvement in disciplinary actions against physicians; and to improve the disclosure of marketing activities by pharmaceutical companies. The healthcare consumers have greatly benefitted by these good laws. Thank You!!

This session, CCPS **strongly supports** House Bill 6374. Despite the good laws that have been recently enacted, Connecticut still has a very low ranking in the country (according to *Public Citizen*) in the area of appropriate disciplinary actions taken against physicians who cause unnecessary harm to their patients. I believe that the boards that review the conduct of physicians and health care providers should always be focused on what is best for the patient – yet this is not always the case. Recently, as the public member of the Connecticut Chiropractic Examining Board, I was asked to recuse myself from participating in a hearing panel because I had a conflict of interest. And the conflict of interest turned out to be that I represented a consumer voice! Ultimately, after unnecessary legal wrangling, I was able to participate in the Board proceeding. With all due respect, I believe that the consumer and patient representatives are the most important representatives on any Examining Board.

CCPS applauds the proposal in House Bill 6374 that adds more patient advocates as members of the Medical Examining Board, and the proposal that adds an expert Criminal Attorney as a member of the Medical Examining Board. In addition, CCPS supports the provision that strengthens the ability of the Board to refer potential criminal matters for review by the Chief State's Attorneys' Office.

The provisions of House Bill 6374 appropriately recognize that we need to be more aggressive in dealing with repeat offenders and with suspected criminal actors. We need to be certain that when physicians lose their licenses in other states that they also lose their privileges in here in Connecticut (which I understand is a proposal that may be contained in another DPH bill). Many other states do a good job punishing bad actors, and the provisions of House Bill 6374 will help Connecticut do a better job as well. The members of CCPS across the state are grateful for the Public Health Committee's proposals contained within House Bill 6374 that will help make the patients the most important people in Medical Examining Board deliberations.

Thank You.