

**MARCH 11, 2011**

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

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

**PLEASE SUPPORT HB 6547--**

*An Act Concerning The Responsibilities Of The Department Of Public Health Upon Receiving Notice Of A Malpractice Claim Or Settlement Involving A Health Care Provider Presently Or Formerly Licensed By The State.*

The Connecticut Center for Patient Safety is a member-driven statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care for all Connecticut residents.

We support House Bill 6547 and we applaud the Public Health Committee's continuing efforts to do everything possible to protect the health care consumer.

The overwhelming majority of physicians (in most states over 80 percent) have never paid so much as a dime for a medical malpractice. They do their jobs carefully and they do their jobs very well.

The majority of the money paid for malpractice is paid on behalf of only a very small minority of physicians (in most states fewer than 3 percent), whose professional performance repeatedly leads to malpractice payments but who are unlikely to be disciplined by their state licensing board, a hospital or any other facility at which they practice. (*Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts*)

Not only do we need to inform other states of malpractice awards – as is provided for in HB 6547 – but we feel strongly that any physician who obtains a license in Connecticut should be required to disclose any disciplinary actions or medical malpractice awards/settlements that the physician may have had in any other state. Such information should be included in the physician's profile that is required to be posted on the DPH Website pursuant to Section 20-13j. It is our understanding that the DPH may be proposing legislation this session to accomplish the goal of physicians disclosing out-of-state disciplinary/malpractice actions, and we are planning to support the DPH proposal.

A random audit of newly- licensed physicians' documents relating to licensure could go a long way in assuring honest filings. And if it were found that a physician had not fully disclosed either malpractice awards/settlements in other states or a criminal conviction, then the DPH should immediately suspend or terminate the physician's license.

For too long, doctors have moved from one state to another and the public is put at risk.

Here in Connecticut, there is so much that we could do to help the consumer who thinks all these systems have been created to protect the consumer from harm. We can do more, we can do it better and we can do it faster. Thank you for Supporting House Bill 6547.