

June 18, 2004

Dear Senator:

**Contact: Peggy Tighe x442**

For our physicians and the patients they serve, the undersigned state and national medical specialty societies strongly urge the United States Senate to advance S. 720, the "Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act." S. 720 is an important quality improvement initiative because it would create a system in which health care professionals share and analyze information about errors to prevent similar incidents from recurring. This voluntary reporting system enables physicians, hospitals and other health care providers to report information on errors to Patient Safety Organizations (PSO) that would confidentially collect and analyze the information. The PSO would also provide patient safety improvement strategies based on the data. Currently, there is a disincentive for physicians and other health care professionals to engage in a reporting system because of the fear of litigation. The program is modeled after a similar system set up in the aviation industry. Aviation safety has improved dramatically because pilots and ground crews can report mistakes without fear of retribution.

S. 720 would provide the same option for physicians and other health care professionals. Similar legislation, H.R. 663, passed the House of Representatives in March 2003, by a vote of 418 to 6. S. 720 was unanimously reported out of the Senate HELP Committee in July 2003. The time for Senate action is quickly running out.

We urge you to contact your Leadership asking that this important patient safety legislation be brought to the Senate floor. Thank you for your commitment to America's patients.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Facial, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
American Association for Hand Surgery  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
American Association of Clinical Urologists  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American College of Cardiology

American College of Chest Physicians  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Gastroenterology  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American College of Radiology Association  
American College of Rheumatology  
American College of Surgeons  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Medical Association  
American Medical Directors Association  
American Medical Group Association  
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery  
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society for Surgery of the Hand  
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Bariatric Physicians  
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery  
American Society of General Surgeons  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Thoracic Society  
American Urological Association  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
College of American Pathologists  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Marshfield Clinic  
Medical Group Management Association  
National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care  
North American Spine Society  
Renal Physicians Association  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Society for Vascular Surgery  
Society of Critical Care Medicine  
Society of General Internal Medicine

Society of Hospital Medicine  
Society of Interventional Radiology  
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces  
Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama  
Alaska State Medical Association  
Arizona Medical Association  
Arkansas Medical Society  
California Medical Association  
Colorado Medical Society  
Connecticut State Medical Society  
Medical Society of Delaware  
Medical Society of the District of Columbia  
Florida Medical Association  
Medical Association of Georgia  
Idaho Medical Association  
Illinois State Medical Society  
Indiana State Medical Association  
Iowa Medical Society  
Kansas Medical Society  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Maine Medical Association  
Michigan State Medical Society  
Minnesota Medical Association  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
Missouri State Medical Association  
Montana Medical Society  
Nebraska Medical Association  
Nevada State Medical Association  
New Hampshire Medical Society  
Medical Society of New Jersey  
New Mexico Medical Society  
Medical Society of the State of New York  
North Carolina Medical Society  
North Dakota Medical Association  
Ohio State Medical Association  
Oklahoma State Medical Association  
Oregon Medical Association  
Pennsylvania Medical Society  
Rhode Island Medical Society  
South Carolina Medical Association  
South Dakota State Medical Association  
Tennessee Medical Association  
Texas Medical Association  
Utah Medical Association

Vermont Medical Society  
Medical Society of Virginia  
Washington State Medical Association  
West Virginia State Medical Association  
Wisconsin Medical Society  
Wyoming Medical Society