

Will Your Doctor Be There To Save Yours?



 **SAVE Our**
DOCTORS
Protect Our Patients
www.saveourdoctors.org

PLEASE HELP US NOW!

CONTACT KEY STATE LEGISLATORS: Maryland General Assembly leaders are the key to solving the medical liability crisis. Call them, or send them e-mail saying you want comprehensive common sense reform NOW!

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Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
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CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR: Find your own State Senator and Delegate at WWW.MDELECT.NET, and write or call them today. Tell them to support comprehensive reform. Consider paying them a visit individually or with a group of your friends or colleagues. They need to hear your voice!

CONTACT THE GOVERNOR: Call on Governor Robert Ehrlich to work with lawmakers to pass comprehensive common sense reform legislation now!

GOVERNOR ROBERT EHRLICH

Telephone: 1-800-811-8336
E-mail: governor@gov.state.md.us
Internet: <http://www.gov.state.md.us/mail>

MAKE TELEPHONE CALLS: Be active and get the word out. Call your doctor. Call family members, friends, and colleagues.

This crisis is about making sure our doctors are there when we need them. Unless we solve the crisis, your doctor may not be there the next time you need lifesaving medical care!

Log onto WWW.SAVEOURDOCTORS.ORG for more ways you can help.

 **SAVE Our**
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My Doctor Saved My Life...



Dick & Sally Poole of Hagerstown, Maryland

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Dick Poole of Hagerstown collapsed in his office with a bleeding brain tumor. He was at death's door upon arrival at Washington County Hospital. Dr. John Caruso, a neurosurgical specialist, was there to perform lifesaving emergency surgery.

What about your doctor? Will he or she be there the next time you need medical care?

OUR DOCTORS NEED YOU NOW!

A doctor/patient crisis is upon us. The medical liability system is broken.

- Not a single graduating doctor from the University of Maryland this year chose obstetrics/gynecology.
- Liability insurance rates for neurosurgeons are driving those doctors out of brain surgery.
- Fewer physicians are willing to work in hospital emergency departments.
- At least one family practice in the state has already gone bankrupt due to the last liability insurance rate hike.

But, this is not about dollars and cents. It's about right and wrong.

It's about YOU . . . the patient! Unless we all work together now, more and more patients will lose their trusted doctors and be deprived of care.

We all have to work together now to make changes in the system. To make sure patients retain local access to the care they need, your doctors need everyone to get the message out:

PROTECT OUR DOCTORS SO THEY ARE THERE TO PROTECT YOU.

NO STOPGAP SOLUTIONS. WE NEED REAL REFORM NOW!

Doctors and other medical professionals from across the state have come together to form SaveOurDoctors.org (WWW.SAVEOURDOCTORS.ORG). Members of SaveOurDoctors.org understand the threat the medical liability crisis poses to doctors and patients. It is forcing our doctors to retire early, limit their practices, or move to another state.

KEY FACTS ABOUT THE MEDICAL LIABILITY INSURANCE CRISIS

- Two-thirds of all malpractice lawsuits filed are found to be without merit. Yet, it still costs an average of \$25,000 to defend one of these lawsuits.
- Only seven percent of cases actually make it to trial, and 80 percent are won by the doctor.
- 84 percent of Americans are concerned that skyrocketing medical liability costs could limit their access to care.
- Who will deliver your babies? Between 1999 and 2003, one in seven obstetricians have called it quits.
- OBs can expect to be sued three times in their career. More than half of these lawsuits are dropped or settled without payment.
- Many doctors are avoiding high-risk procedures because of liability insurance reasons.
- Nearly 56 percent of Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans in 12 states are already refusing high-risk procedures.

We believe that FOUR long-term reforms are essential to solve the medical liability crisis. Short-term solutions have already been tried in other states, and they have not worked!

COMMON SENSE SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE NOW!

- **THE CALIFORNIA MODEL:** California reforms have stabilized that state's system and maintained open access to the courts for all patients. There, medical liability insurance rates have risen 168 percent, compared to the national average of 420 percent. Very simply, California now has a system that works for the benefit of patients – not trial lawyers.
- **EXPERT WITNESS QUALIFICATIONS:** It doesn't make sense for a doctor who is not an expert in the same specialty to be an expert witness in a malpractice case. Does it make sense for a plumber to comment on an electrician's work? Of course not.
- **"GOOD SAMARITAN" PROTECTION:** Don't punish doctors for donating care to critically ill, often uninsured patients in emergency/crisis situations. Encourage our retiring doctors not to give up practice completely, by making volunteer care economically feasible.
- **HEALTHCARE COURT:** This reform is already working in Indiana. It's a system that evaluates the merits of malpractice claims before they go into the legal system. By bringing medical and legal experts together to judge when malpractice has occurred, many frivolous lawsuits are blocked from ever reaching a courtroom.

For more details on these Comprehensive Common Sense Reforms, go to WWW.SAVEOURDOCTORS.ORG.