



**Physician Insurers
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Protecting Healthcare

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PIAA Comments on Federal Funding of Patient Safety/Medical Liability Reform Demonstration Projects

Rockville, MD – June 14, 2010 – The Physician Insurers Association of America (PIAA), a trade association that represents physician and other healthcare provider-owned and/or -operated medical professional liability insurance companies, commented today on grants announced by the Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to evaluate patient safety and seek medical liability reforms.

“We applaud the efforts of the federal government to enhance patient safety for Americans,” said Lawrence E. Smarr, president of the PIAA. “Since its inception in 1977, the PIAA and its members have led the way in patient safety programs and vigilantly promoted the practice of high-quality and safe medicine. Patient safety is indeed a true cornerstone of our philosophy.”

“However, based on the descriptions that we have seen, the selected demonstration projects do not appear to place emphasis on enacting true medical liability reforms,” Smarr continued. “These grants should not be confused with nor detract from the continuing need to enact proven, successful tort reforms at both the state and federal levels. California, Texas, and Colorado are just a few examples of states where true reforms—such as caps on non-economic damages—have had a tremendously positive impact on the healthcare environment.”

“The current legal system—which is encumbered with wastefulness and inefficiencies—serves no one well and must be fixed. The PIAA will remain diligent in working for medical liability reform in the best interests of both patients and physicians alike,” Smarr said.

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