



Grants Aim to Reduce Medical Malpractice Lawsuits

Written On June 18, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that the federal government is ready to begin \$25 million in grants, as promised by President Obama, that seek to reduce medical malpractice claims by a variety of methods. Here are excerpts from the article:

During last year's health debate, Republicans criticized the president for not addressing the rising cost of medical liability lawsuits as part of his sweeping health-overhaul legislation. The final health bill passed in March included only limited measures aimed at curbing such lawsuits.

In his joint address to Congress last September, Mr. Obama asked the Department of Health and Human Services to take action, separate from the broader legislation, to reduce malpractice costs.

The result is a slate of demonstration programs aimed at reducing preventable injuries, improving communication between doctors and patients, ensuring patients are compensated more quickly and reducing liability insurance premiums.

A seven-member group that includes health-care systems, a state court and a state health department will conduct three-year demonstration projects. One is a \$3 million grant to the New York State Unified Court System that will funnel obstetric and surgery

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patients toward an alternative dispute resolution system overseen by the court. Other demonstrations will disclose medical errors to patients as early as possible, with the hope of minimizing the chances of a lawsuit.

A smaller set of one-year grants will go to 13 states and health-care systems. Among other things, they will go toward developing evidence-based guidelines to curb lawsuits, reducing patient suicides and developing a legislative proposal that will define a legal standard of care for health-care providers.