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Stop Hurting Patients and There Will Be No Lawsuits

Posted by [Catherine Bertram](#), Partner



In a recent [opinion piece](#) in [Salon](#), [Dr. Rahul Parikh](#) summarized the tort "reformers" arguments which have been in the news lately. These argument about the so called lawsuit crisis are being put forth by insurance companies and the American Medical Association. Dr. Parikh carefully refutes each one by using the real facts. He then challenges physicians to focus on the real priority, patient safety. Instead of attacking lawyers who advocate for patients harmed by preventable errors, the resources should be focused on preventing the patient injuries in the first place. Here is the bottom line directly from his piece:

"Tort reformers neglect the fact that malpractice reform won't save one extra life. To make that difference, insurers, doctors and their lobbyists like the AMA need to find ways to improve patient safety. So for those who push tort reform as a panacea for a sick health care system, working to prevent injuries is a much more noble pursuit than writing up baseless arguments for the back pages of a newspaper."

Instead of focusing on limiting the rights of citizens who have valid claims for harm as a result of preventable errors in health care, we need to focus on how to stop the patients from being injured in the first place. This involves daily focus by doctors, nurses and most of all the support and resources from hospital leadership.

I would love nothing more than to come to my office and have no calls from patients or their families after devastating medical errors. However, that is not the case. We are seeing more errors and more obvious preventable errors because the system is broken and there is often not accountability.

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." Helen Keller

About the author:

Catherine Bertram is board certified in civil trials and was recently nominated as a 2010 Super Lawyer for Washington, D.C. Ms. Bertram has 20 years of trial experience and is unique in that she was formerly the Director of Risk Management for Georgetown University Hospital so she brings a wealth of knowledge to her practice including how hospitals should be run and what doctors and nurses can do to protect patients. She is a partner with the firm and devotes her practice to the representation of patients and families of loved ones who have been injured or lost due to medical errors. Ms. Bertram lectures regularly to lawyers and health care providers, nationally and locally, regarding patient safety, medical negligence and other related issues. She has also recently published a chapter in a medical textbook. She can be reached by email at cbertram@reganfirm.com or by phone 202-822-1875 in her office in Washington, D.C.