



AMERICANS SAY HEALTH CARE ACCESS THREATENED BY LIABILITY CRISIS

Most Believe Quality Care At-Risk From Litigation

A new national poll demonstrates that a vast majority of Americans say that unnecessary medical litigation is compromising their ability to get the health care they need. They support common-sense legislative reforms to help solve the medical liability crisis across America.

A nationwide poll of 1,000 adults shows that by overwhelming margins, the American people believe that the medical liability crisis is pushing good doctors out of medicine and is threatening their ability to get the health care they need. Most believe that the medical liability crisis is driving health care costs higher for everyone, and that the number of excessive lawsuits is unjustified. The vast majority support specific common-sense legislative reforms to guarantee payments for lost wages and medical costs, but to limit non-economic damages. The poll reveals strong support for limits on amount trial lawyers can receive from the settlements awarded to their clients.

The poll was conducted in March, 2004 for the Health Coalition on Liability and Access by Wirthlin Worldwide. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

The poll results demonstrate that most Americans believe:

Access to Quality Health Care is At-Risk: More than 8 in 10 (82 percent) of the Americans surveyed believe that doctors are being forced to leave their practices because excessive litigation has put the cost of medical liability insurance out of reach.

Cost of Health Care Rising Due to Excessive Lawsuits: By a huge margin, 72 percent of those surveyed said that health care expenses for all people are being driven up by the rising cost of medical liability lawsuits.

Too Many Frivolous Malpractice Lawsuits: The high number of medical liability lawsuits is unjustified, according to 55 percent of the survey respondents. Only 16% say the number of lawsuits against health care providers is lower than is justified.

Common-Sense Reforms Are Needed: Three-quarters of Americans want Congress to pass reforms to fix the medical liability crisis. 72 percent favor a law that guarantee full payment for lost wages and medical expenses but limit non-economic damages; 73 percent want to limit the amount of money personal injury trial lawyers can get from the excessive litigation settlements their clients receive.

SUPPORT COMMON SENSE MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORMS