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# To My Patients – Your Help Is Needed!

**A**re you aware that there is a **medical liability insurance crisis in New York?** Premiums for medical liability insurance have risen so dramatically that patients are at risk of losing their physicians, who will not be able to stay in business if these increases continue. I am one of the physicians in this group.

As a physician I am required to purchase “medical liability insurance” to protect against malpractice lawsuits. The premiums for this insurance continue to rise – and there is no end in sight. In the past 6 years the premiums have increased a total of 49%. A law mandating a one year freeze in premiums was enacted last August, but in the prior year premiums increased 14%!

At present, the cost of my medical liability insurance (as an orthopaedic surgeon practicing in Manhattan) is **\$93,400** per year. This premium is not paid by the hospital or medical center – this is money that I pay from the fees that I collect from the care of my patients. Those fees, usually from managed care companies or worker’s compensation carriers, have not increased.

After signing the “freeze” last August the Governor said, *“The bill will hold rates stable as the legislature and Governor Paterson continue to work toward reforms that would provide significant and long-term premium relief for physicians, enhance patient safety and stabilize the medical malpractice insurance market.”* **However, since that time no reforms have been implemented.** As a result, insurance companies are claiming insolvency and again asking for huge rate increases.

**With these further increases I would not be able to continue practicing as an orthopaedic surgeon in New York.**

The New York State Legislature and our state “leaders” need to be prodded to take action to resolve the medical liability insurance crisis. **Therefore, I need your help to protect your future access to medical care.**

Here is what you can do to help:

1. Send a message to Governor David Paterson, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith and ask that they take action to resolve this crisis. **To send a message, pick up the phone and call the New York State Medical Society’s Liability Reform Hotline at: 1-866-728-3397.**

When you make this phone call, letters will be automatically faxed to these leaders on your behalf.

2. Send a message to your representatives in the New York State Legislature (Assembly and Senate) and ask that they take action to resolve this crisis. To send a message, go to [www.UnitedForMedicalAccess.org](http://www.UnitedForMedicalAccess.org).

From this web-page you can send letters or emails to your representatives (who will be identified automatically after you enter your address). A sample letter is provided.

**Inform our state “leaders” and elected representatives that you are concerned about your future access to health care and that their prompt action is required to resolve the medical liability insurance crisis.**

Please help me and all of New York’s physicians stay in practice so that we’re here for you when you need us.

<b>Contact New York State leaders:</b>	<b>Contact New York State Legislature:</b>
<b>Call 1-866-728-3397</b> (The number is in service but sometimes the lines get overloaded. If you get a busy signal, please try again at a later time.)	<b>Go to <a href="http://www.UnitedForMedicalAccess.org">www.UnitedForMedicalAccess.org</a></b> Send letters or emails to your state legislators: Select “Patients <u>CLICK HERE</u> ”