
Letters to the Editor

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Preventable medical mistakes killing us

It comes as no surprise that the Iowa Association of Business and Industry's lobbyist, John R. Gilliland, thinks our medical liability system is rife with "meritless" lawsuits (Sept. 15 letter, "Limits Should Be Set on Medical Liability"). But it is telling that he offers not a shred of empirical evidence to support his claims.

A highly acclaimed study by Harvard University researchers begs to differ with Gilliland. According to the Harvard study, "Portraits of a malpractice system that is stricken with frivolous litigation are overblown." Indeed, the Harvard researchers found that the problem is medical errors that are not compensated, rather than frivolous claims that are compensated.

While lobbyists like Gilliland campaign to limit the financial responsibility of negligent medical-care providers, the medical-errors epidemic rages on.

According to no less an authority than the National Institutes for Health, up to 98,000 patients die each year as a result of preventable medical errors. The price tag for these preventable mistakes is a staggering \$29 billion per year. What, pray tell, does the Iowa Association of Business and Industry propose to do about that?

— **Thomas J. Duff, vice president,
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