



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 27, 2005
(House)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

S. 544 - Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005

(Sen. Jeffords (I) VT and nine cosponsors)

The Administration strongly supports House passage of S. 544, which would help reduce the number of medical errors that injure and kill thousands of Americans each year. The bill would authorize the establishment of patient safety organizations that would improve patient safety and the quality of health care through the collection and analysis of confidential data that can help avoid errors, complications, and suboptimal care.

Independent health care experts have noted that the absence of confidentiality protections and the resulting threat of lawsuits have impeded good-faith efforts to eliminate these errors. The result is needless suffering, lower quality care, higher health care costs, and more lawsuits. The President has called for legislation that would eliminate this critical obstacle to improving patient safety and health care quality. S. 544 is a critical step toward the President's goal of high-quality, patient-centered health care.

S. 544 would assure doctors and other health professionals that if they voluntarily report information to expert patient safety organizations, that information will be used for health care quality improvement efforts and will be kept privileged and confidential. This protection will encourage health care professionals to report and will result in the creation of valuable new information that can be used to identify best practices for eliminating errors and improving patient outcomes. We believe the bill will also help reduce the number of lawsuits resulting from medical errors. Information from medical records and other existing data sources will continue to be available for injured plaintiffs to pursue their claims in court, just as that information is available today.

The Administration looks forward to working with Congress to enact legislation that meets the President's goal of reasonable patient safety reforms. Combined with medical liability reform legislation, this will result in safer and more affordable health care for all.

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