

Help Make Colorado the Safest State in the Country for Patients

Please Support the “Patient Safety Act” (Riesberg/Sandoval)

Why this bill is necessary

Enhancing the ability of Colorado’s health care system to provide safe, high-quality care and minimize the potential for adverse outcomes is a compelling public interest – and there are some safeguards that only the legislature can provide:

- Hold physicians to high standards, requiring them to demonstrate their proficiency in order to be licensed.
- Make it harder for potentially dangerous individuals to find work in health care facilities.
- Protect health care facilities that share information with patients about investigations into adverse medical events.
- Require proponents of future legislation concerning redress for adverse medical events to demonstrate how such legislation will improve patient safety, professional accountability and restoration of injured patients.

The common thread throughout this bill is transparency and disclosure. Specifically, when we can share information about adverse events and freely explore the systems breakdowns that lead to their occurrence, we can give patients the peace of mind that comes from understanding what happened, and engage both patients and providers in making the changes that will prevent such problems from happening again.

What the bill does

- Requires physicians to demonstrate ongoing clinical proficiency in order to renew their licenses. Physicians may comply with this requirement through the rigorous national board certification process or through performance-based metrics to be developed by the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners, including quality assessment by a physician’s peers.
- Requires health care facilities to verify references for all job applicants; requires (and provides protections for) facilities to share objectively reasonable information about substance abuse, drug diversion, patient abuse and crimes of violence by current and former employees or contracted health professionals; provides protections for facilities that do so. Requires employers to notify potential employees and contracted professionals that such information will be shared.
- Gives health care facilities protections in order to gather information from, and share information with, patients, family members and other interested persons in the course of investigations into adverse medical events.
- Requires proponents of bills concerning redress for adverse health care outcomes to provide the General Assembly with an independent analysis of the proposed legislation’s impact on patient safety, professional accountability and compensation/restoration for injured patients.
- Establishes a new article in the Colorado Revised Statutes, “Patient Safety Act,” to house these and future related provisions.

What the bill does not do

- Limit an individual’s ability to file a medical liability claim.

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