



Report: Congress Should Focus on Curtailing Medical Errors, Not Patients' Rights

Written On March 9, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

According to an update of the National Practitioner Data Bank released recently, fewer medical malpractice payments were made on behalf of doctors in 2009 than any other year on record. This contradicts claims by some that medical malpractice litigation is to blame for rising health care costs. Last year was the fifth consecutive year the number of payments has fallen, and the sixth straight year in which the value of payments has fallen. In contrast, U.S. health care costs have increased every year since 1965, the earliest year for which such data exist.

Numerous studies have found that injuries and deaths caused by medical errors dwarf the number of actual medical malpractice payments. For example, the Institute of Medicine found in 1999 that 44,000 to 98,000 people die every year due to avoidable errors. Subsequent studies have estimated even higher casualty levels.

You can read much more about this report in [Public Citizen's detailed analysis](#).

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