

STAT!

VOLUME XIV

WWW.SICKOFLAWSUITS.ORG

JUNE 22, 2004

“Junk and frivolous lawsuits cause docs to have to practice what’s called defensive medicine... If you want health care to be affordable and available, you need to have a legal system that is fair and balanced. I believe this is a national issue because it runs up the cost of medicine for national budgets.”

- President George W. Bush, remarks at Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio, May 25, 2004

Lawsuit Abuse News

Mississippi Tort Triumph

“This is no small achievement for a poor state that rarely appears on the top half of any list of economic measures...Doctors have fled or quit practicing, 71 insurance companies have pulled out, and a recent study by a local business group predicted the loss of 10,000 more jobs by 2009 without some legal reform.” Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour signed into law one of the nation’s most comprehensive tort reform bills in an attempt to make the state more business-friendly” – *Wall Street Journal*, June 16, 2004

Medical-Malpractice Battle Gets Personal

“Doctors and lawyers long have been at odds over malpractice litigation. But soaring malpractice-insurance premiums, which hit doctors in high-risk specialties such as neurosurgery and

obstetrics particularly hard, have fueled the debate. For doctors who blame the increases in their premiums on unwarranted lawsuits and large jury awards, the solution is clear: Overhaul the nation’s civil litigation system, starting with limits on what jurors can award in damages.” – *USA Today*, June 14, 2004

Man Wins \$3 Million for Injury by Doctor ... A Malpractice Panel Earlier Had Found That the Doctor Had Done Nothing Wrong

“A jury awarded a South Portland man \$3 million Wednesday, concluding a complicated malpractice claim The verdict was unusually large for Maine, where awards of more than a million dollars are rare. It was particularly surprising in this case because a medical malpractice review panel had unanimously found that the doctor and hospital were not at fault for Maietta’s injury. The panel’s finding was disclosed to the jury, but it found for Maietta anyway.” – *Portland Press Herald*, May 27, 2004

Sick Of Lawsuits In Action

Sick of Lawsuits?

Are you a victim of frivolous lawsuits? Has a frivolous lawsuit impacted your access to healthcare or driven your doctor out of town? Are personal injury lawyer ads scaring you away from taking medications or seeing a doctor? If so, we want to hear from you. Visit www.sickoflawsuits.org and share your story with us.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Illinois

Medical malpractice bills are presently stalled in the Illinois State House and Senate. The House bill includes caps that limit non-economic damages in malpractice cases. While the governor opposes caps, he says he hopes to bring doctors and lawyers back to the negotiating table after a “cooling-off period.” – *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 3, 2004

Mississippi

Governor Haley Barbour signed a tort reform bill that establishes a \$1 million cap on pain-and-suffering awards in most lawsuits, and a \$500,000 cap in medical malpractice cases. The governor believes the law will make the state more business-friendly and help to reduce large jury awards. “I want to tell job creators across America that our scales of justice are now in balance. It is time for them to come and take another look at Mississippi as a place to locate,” Barbour said in a written statement. – *Associated Press*, June 16, 2004

Our Broken Healthcare Liability System —

The Stats:

- **20:** The number of states now facing a medical malpractice crisis, according to the American Medical Association (AMA). Massachusetts recently joined 19 other states suffering from skyrocketing insurance rates and the loss of doctors. – *American Medical Association*, www.ama-assn.org.
- **2:** The number of obstetricians remaining in the Enid, Oklahoma area after four of its six obstetricians plan to quit or retire this summer as a result of medical-malpractice lawsuits. The two remaining will have to cover an average of 1,200 deliveries annually. – *NBC Nightly News*, May 14, 2004
- **57%:** The percentage of Massachusetts voters surveyed who believe people bring too many lawsuits against physicians. – Poll by the McCormack School at the University of Massachusetts, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Medical Society, June 7, 2004

For press inquiries, please contact Rossanna Salazar at: 1-800-476-1442