

# Doctors And Insurers Work Together To Improve Patient Safety

(NAPSA)—Patient safety is a major health-policy issue that affects every physician. Recent years have seen the growth of a national movement—among doctors, patients and even some doctors' medical liability insurance companies—to improve the healthcare delivery system and reduce medical errors.

The Physician Insurers Association of America (PIAA) and its member companies are working to develop patient safety measures that help physicians lower their liability exposure while improving the quality of patient care. This is being accomplished by identifying and eliminating errors in the healthcare system and educating doctors to protect patients from medical injury.

The PIAA Data Sharing Project, an ongoing claims study, is a major driver in advancing patient safety. The Data Sharing Project houses the world's largest research database on medical errors. Storing detailed information on more than 240,000 medical and dental claims, the database provides a rich resource for the investigation of the underlying causes and issues pertaining to medical malpractice claims. The project provides member companies with detailed and credible information for use in risk management programs, which are aimed at educating doctors and minimizing the incidence of patient injury.

PIAA member companies play a critical role in maximizing patient safety, through the risk management services they provide to the physicians they insure. For example, many have assessment services, which help physicians step back from their daily



**Patient safety involves the medical professional—and the patient's understanding of procedures and risks.**

work and evaluate their own practice—an office “checkup.” This assists doctors in finding new ways to improve care.

There is an important difference between the patients who are actually harmed by a medical procedure and those who have an unfortunate outcome or are simply unhappy with the results. Most medical procedures, from coronary bypass surgery to LASIK vision correction, do involve risk. It is up to the medical professionals to explain procedures fully—including the risks. Armed with this knowledge, the patient can make informed decisions and weigh the benefits and risks before he or she signs a consent form.

The PIAA represents 70 medical professional liability (medical malpractice) insurance companies that are owned and/or operated by doctors, dentists, hospitals and other healthcare providers. These companies insure more than 60 percent of America's doctors and other health care providers. To learn more, please visit [www.piaa.us](http://www.piaa.us).