

Improving Consumer Healthcare Quality

**An Act Promoting Healthcare Transparency and Consumer/Provider Partnerships
(House #2226; Senate #1277)**

Background

Medical errors injure approximately 1 million Americans each year during the course of their hospital stay; up to 100,000 of those patients die as a result. Medical mistakes are the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. They cause more deaths than car accidents, breast cancer or AIDS. Even when mistakes made in hospitals are not fatal they can still have devastating results. They can lead to injury, disability, extended hospital stays, or lengthy recovery. The national cost of medical errors is estimated at \$17 - \$29 billion.

Key Provisions

1. Require hospitals to reduce rates of **hospital-acquired infections to zero**, or as close to zero as feasible, in accordance with the recommendation of the Department of Public Health's Statewide Infection Prevention and Control Initiative established in Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006, and the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety and Medical Error Reduction Expert Panel on Healthcare Associated Infection; and, through the Department of Public Health, to disclose and **publicly report infection rates**.
2. Require medical facilities, through the Department of Public Health, to **publicly report so-called never events** (events that should never happen in a hospital such as wrong-site surgery and wrong-person surgery), identify problem areas, and develop quality improvement initiatives.
3. Require physicians or designated health care representatives to **notify patients of adverse medical events** and potential adverse medical events that occur during their care.
4. Allow physicians and healthcare providers to acknowledge a medical error by offering an **apology** to a patient without fear of the apology being used in a lawsuit.
5. Require hospitals to establish and convene "**Patient and Family Councils**" through which consumers would have a voice in improving hospitals' quality of care.
6. Require hospitals to establish **Rapid Response Teams** which patients and families can activate when immediate medical attention is needed.

The lead sponsors of An Act Promoting Healthcare Transparency and Consumer/Provider Partnerships are Senator Richard Moore and Representative Denise Provost. **For more information**, please contact Deborah Wachenheim, Health Care for All, at 617-275-2902 or dwachenheim@hcfama.org.

This Act is supported by the Consumer Health Quality Council (consumers advancing patient safety and quality), AARP, AIDS Action Committee of MA, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of MA, and the New England Coalition for Cancer Survivorship.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
DEBORAH WACHENHEIM, CONSUMER HEALTH QUALITY COORDINATOR
30 WINTER STREET 10TH FLOOR • BOSTON, MA • 02108
PHONE: 617.275.2902 • FAX: 617.451.5838 • EMAIL: DWACHENHEIM@HCFAMA.ORG