“Patient Injury Act” Introduced in Georgia Legislature

Patient Compensation System Would Reduce Healthcare Costs

ATLANTA (Feb. 8, 2013) – Patients for Fair Compensation today applauded state Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta) for taking a bold step in introducing the “Patient Injury Act” which would replace the state’s current medical malpractice system with a no-blame, administrative model that would reduce healthcare costs.

The legislation, Senate Bill 141, is aimed at giving more injured patients access to justice and eliminating the practice of “defensive medicine” or when physicians order more tests and procedures than are medically necessary to keep from being sued.

The Gallup organization says one in four dollars spent in healthcare can be attributed to defensive medicine.

“Senator Beach is doing patients and taxpayers a real service by proposing this legislation,” said Wayne W. Oliver, executive director of Patients for Fair Compensation. “The Patient Injury Act would not only eliminate defensive medicine but give more injured patients an opportunity to be compensated for their injury. That would be a win for patients, doctors and all Georgians.”

Under the proposal, the current adversarial tort system would be entirely scrapped and when a patient is harmed by a physician, he or she would file a claim for review by an independent panel of medical experts. If the panel deems “avoidable harm” occurred, the claim would be forwarded to a Compensation Board to award compensation.

A study by Emory University scholar Joanna Shepherd Bailey released last fall showed that trial attorneys rarely take cases where the compensation does not yield settlements of $500,000 or more. Patient cases take years to make their way through the courts. Under Sen. Beach’s proposal, patients would be compensated within less than a year.

Under the “Patient Injury Act,” patients would also endure fewer needless tests and procedures. Healthcare costs would drop as physicians would be evaluated by a panel of impartial medical experts. Their livelihoods would no longer be on the line with every
patient, and doctors could practice defensive medicine without feeling like every patient is a potential plaintiff.

“Our healthcare system could use some drastic relief and the Patient Relief Act would do just that,” Oliver said. “It is nice to know there is a creative solution out there that will actually bring savings to our healthcare system. Georgia could actually be a national model on how to not only protect patients but bring down healthcare spending.”

To learn more information about Patients for Fair Compensation, please visit www.patientsforfaircompensation.org.

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About Patients for Fair Compensation:
Patients for Fair Compensation is a 501(c) 4 organization dedicated to educating and proposing policy solutions to ensure access to real justice for injured patients by eliminating up to $650 billion per year nationally of unnecessary costs due to defensive medicine.

Patients for Fair Compensation is seeking to replace our broken medical liability system with a no-blame, administrative compensation system. The Patients’ Compensation System will lower healthcare costs by eliminating the practice of defensive medicine, saving up to $650 billion per year nationally in unnecessary costs. By assuring access to real justice for injured patients and increasing patient safety, the system is one that works for patients and our economy.