



THE PRACTICE OF DEFENSIVE MEDICINE:

A SURVEY OF ALABAMA PHYSICIANS

Prepared for:

Patients for Fair Compensation

Prepared by:

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INTRODUCTION

Patients for Fair Compensation contracted with Jay Rayburn, APR, CPRC, Ph.D., of Beacon Research, Inc., Tallahassee, FL to conduct a survey of Alabama medical doctors and osteopathic physicians. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain attitudes of Alabama physicians toward the practice of defensive medicine. A random sample of 244 licensed physicians was conducted during March and April 2016. The data were collected by American Directions of Lakeland, FL. A sample of this size has an approximate error rate of plus or minus 6.3% at the 95% level of confidence. This means we are 95% sure that if we had interviewed all licensed physicians in Florida, we would have found within plus or minus 6.3% of what the survey found. This is a conservative error estimate; the actual error in a given question is smaller. In the text, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent and may not always total to 100%.

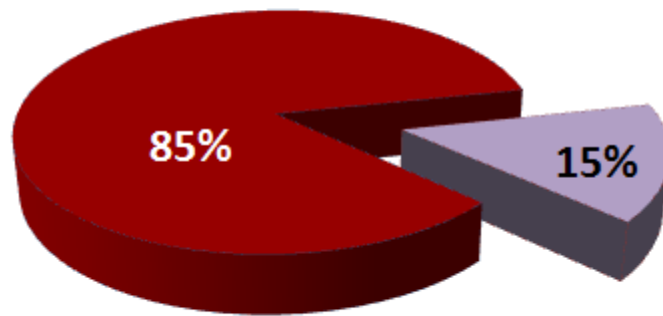
Following are the highlights of the findings. Appendix A contains the frequency distributions for each question.

FINDINGS

- 71% of all respondents say the practice of defensive medicine negatively impacts patient care
- Respondents estimate the practice of defensive medicine contributes 54% to the overall cost of healthcare
- 94% of respondents say they would be very likely (64%) or somewhat likely (30%) to support a proposed law which would replace the Medical Tort System with a no-fault system legally similar to Workers' Compensation
- 85% of respondents say they practice defensive medicine; within those 85%, 68% say the proposed legislation would: eliminate (7%) their practice of defensive medicine, significantly reduce (33%) their practice of defensive medicine, or somewhat reduce (28%) their practice of defensive medicine
- 92% either very strongly agree (25%), strongly agree (33%) or somewhat agree (34%) that if this law is passed, physicians will no longer live in fear of litigation
- 93% either very strongly agree (30%), strongly agree (39%) or somewhat agree (24%) that if this law is passed, the new system will reduce the costs of healthcare by reducing the practice of defensive medicine

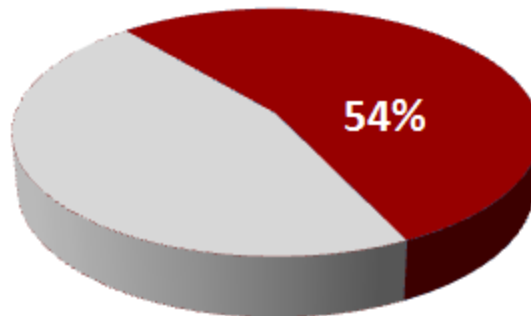
These findings clearly indicate an overwhelming support on the part of Alabama licensed physicians for the proposed PCS legislation.

**83% of Alabama Physicians Practice
Defensive Medicine**



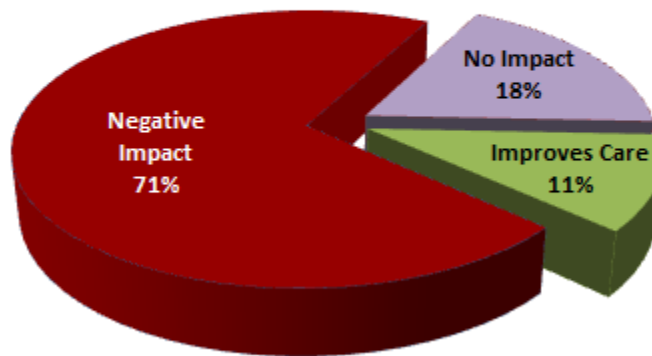
n = 244

**Alabama Physicians:
54% of Healthcare Costs Attributed to Defensive Medicine**



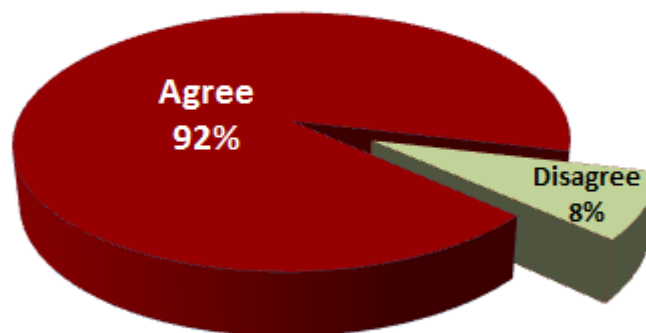
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**71% of Alabama Physicians:
Defensive Medicine Negatively Impacts Patient Care**



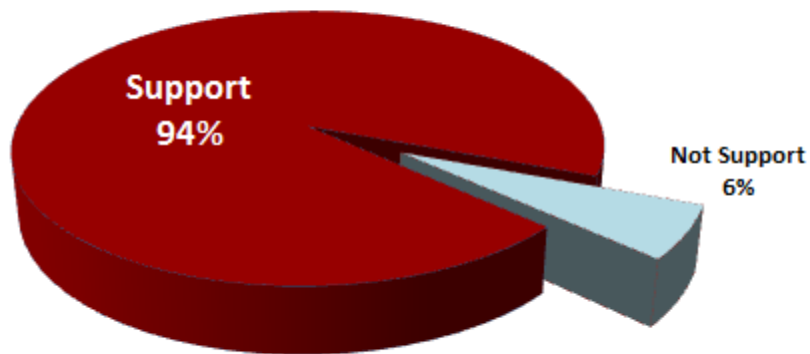
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**92% of Alabama Physicians:
If PCS Solution Passes,
Physicians Would No Longer Live in Fear of Litigation**



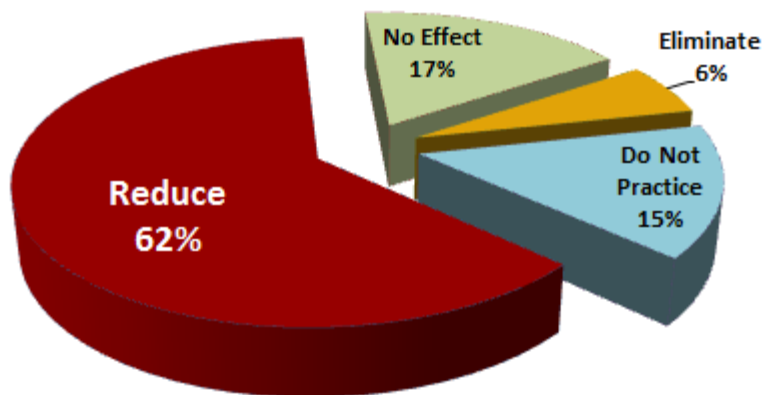
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94% of Alabama Physicians Support a PCS Solution



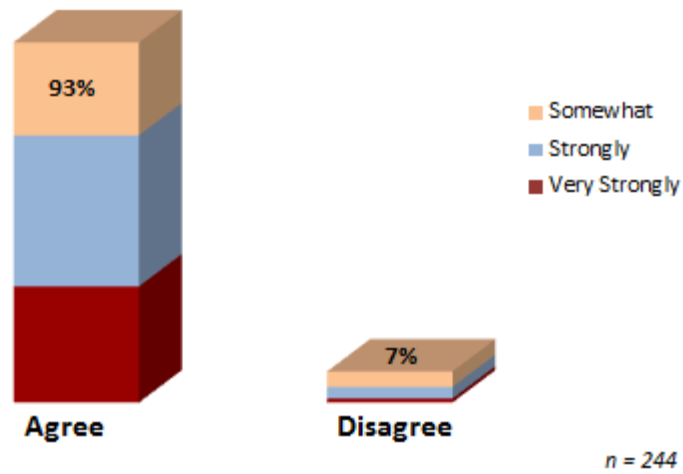
n = 244

68% of Alabama Physicians Would Reduce or Eliminate Practice of Defensive Medicine



n = 244

93% of Alabama Physicians: PCS Solution Would Reduce Healthcare Costs



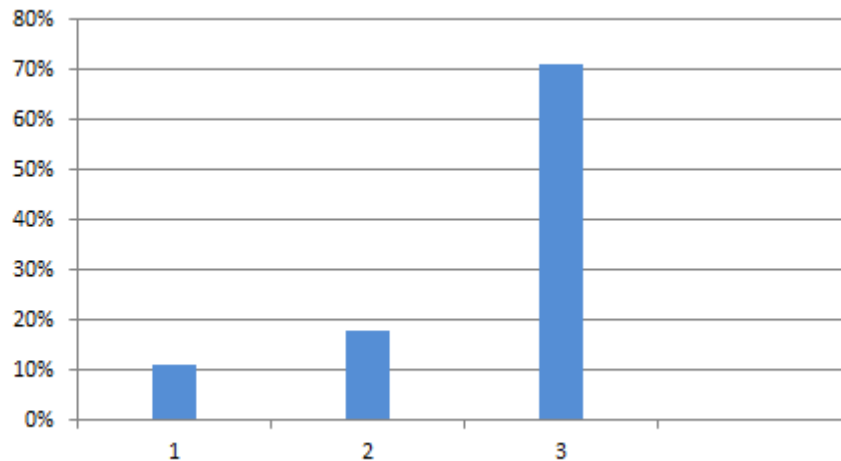


APPENDIX A

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS

SURVEY QUESTIONS


1. Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion about how the practice of defensive medicine affects patient care?



1 = (11%) The practice of defensive medicine improves patient care. It makes me and my peers better doctors.

2 = (18%) The practice of defensive medicine has no impact on patient care, either positive or negative.

3 = (71%) The practice of defensive medicine negatively impacts patient care.

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2. *Thinking broadly, what percentage of overall healthcare costs do you attribute to the practice of defensive medicine? Please give a specific percent, not a range.*

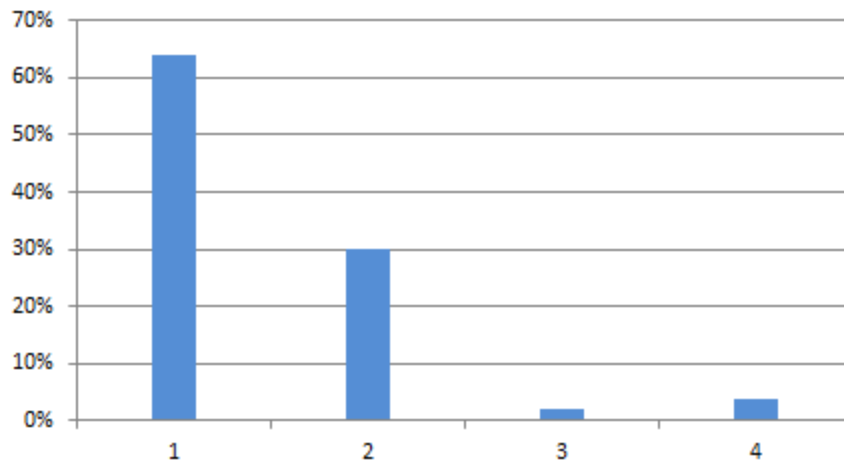
Average = 54%

Range = 2% to 90%

(n = 244)

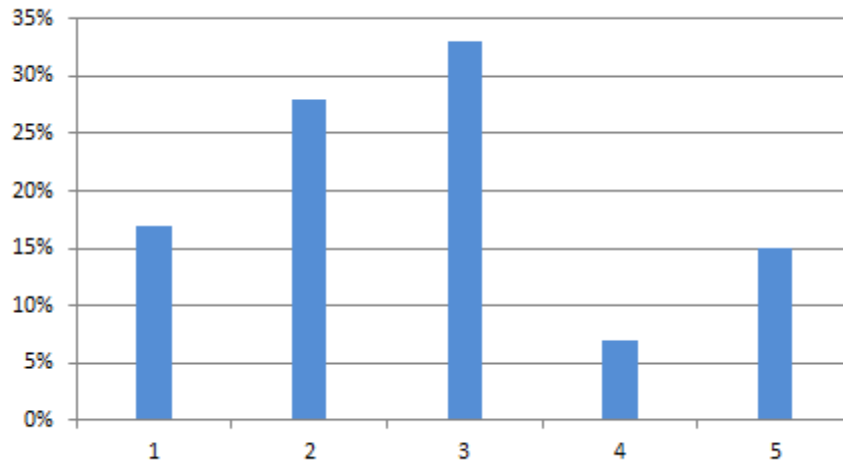
Participants were told that in 2016, legislation will be introduced to address defensive medicine. The legislation proposes to replace the current Medical Tort System with a no-fault system legally similar to Workers' Compensation. It will be called the Patients' Compensation System.

3. How likely are you to support this legislation and the new PCS solution?



- 1 = (64%) Very likely
- 2 = (30%) Somewhat Likely
- 3 = (2%) Not very likely
- 4 = (4%) Not at all likely

4. *If this legislation becomes law, what impact would it have on your tendency to practice defensive medicine?*



1 = (17%) It would have no effect on my practice of defensive medicine

2 = (28%) It would somewhat reduce my practice of defensive medicine

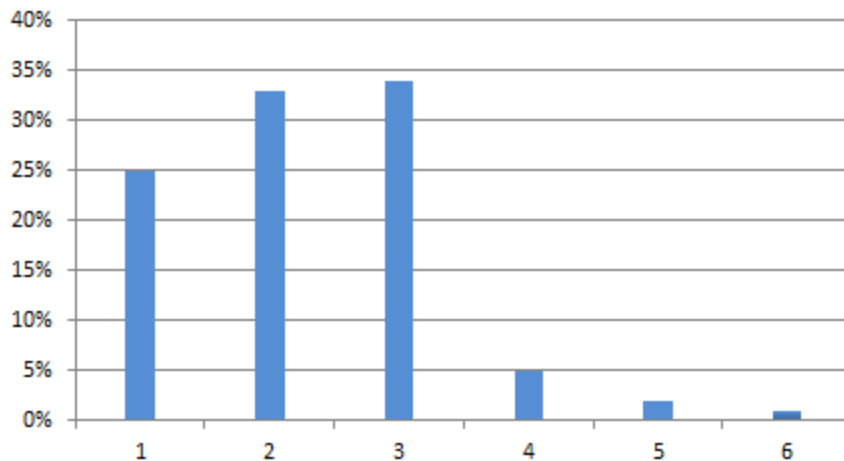
3 = (33%) It would significantly reduce my practice of defensive medicine,

4 = (7%) It would eliminate my practice of defensive medicine

5 = (15%) I do not practice defensive medicine)

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

If this law is passed, physicians will no longer live in fear of litigation. They will be able to admit mistakes. Further, they will be able to develop and share lessons learned and best practices with each other. This will result in improved quality of care and patient safety, and the cost of medical malpractice coverage will decrease by 30% to 50%.



1 = (25%) Very strongly agree

2 = (33%) Strongly agree

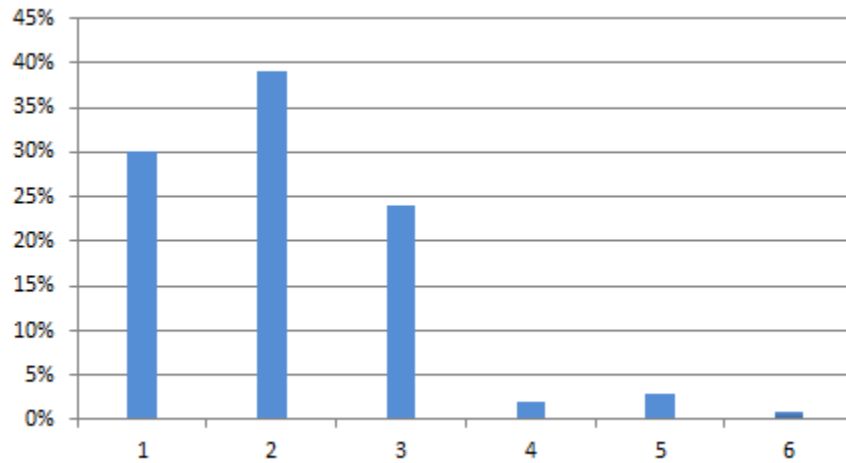
3 = (34%) Somewhat agree

4 = (5%) Somewhat disagree

5 = (2%) Strongly disagree

6 = (1%) Very strongly disagree

6. To what extent to you agree or disagree with this next statement?



If this law is passed, the new system will reduce the costs of healthcare by reducing the practice of defensive medicine.

1 = (30%) Very strongly agree

2 = (39%) Strongly agree

3 = (24%) Somewhat agree

4 = (2%) Somewhat disagree

5 = (3%) Strongly disagree

6 = (1%) Very strongly disagree

ABOUT THE SURVEY ADMINISTRATOR

Jay Rayburn, APR, CPRC, Ph.D., Fellow PRSA is an associate professor and division director of the public relations and advertising division in the School of Communication at Florida State University where he also serves as Director of the Communication Research Center in the College of Communication and Information. He has served as a member of the editorial boards of *Communications Research*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* and *Journalism Monographs*, and on editorial review panels for Random House, Wadsworth Publishing and Gilford Publishing. He has counseled a wide range of clients about research, strategic planning, crisis management, and other related communications activities. He has published chapters in academic and professional books, 14 articles in academic journals, and presented more than 150 papers at academic and professional association meetings. Throughout his career he has conducted hundreds of surveys and focus groups for corporations, governmental entities, and not-for-profit organizations.