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Letters to the Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20071

To Whom It May Concern:

Writing on behalf of Kaiser Health News in a Jan. 4 *To Your Health* column, Chad Terhune failed to address patient issues caused by shortfalls in the medical liability system.

States like California and Texas have been successful in compensating patients fairly, controlling costs, and increasing access. Thirteen years after passing reforms in Texas, 118 counties saw net gains in emergency room physicians – including 53 counties that previously had *none*.

Nationwide, however, women's healthcare suffers as surveys indicate that liability concerns forced 40 percent of all OB/GYNs to make changes to their practices and drove nearly four percent to stop delivering babies.

Healthcare costs linked to a broken system continue to rise as well. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that \$55 billion in federal health savings and \$62 billion in deficit reductions could be achieved over 10 years, if the federal government passed reforms like those in California and Texas.

Lawmakers, policy experts, and the public agree reform is needed. When 75% of claims are meritless, and 33% of the money intended for deserving patients goes to personal injury lawyers, it isn't a false alarm. It's fair warning that without reform, the medical liability system benefits lawyers – not patients.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Stinson, HCLA Chair
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