



Consumers Union's Safe Patient Project (SPP) is a national campaign working to reduce medical harm, focusing on hospital-acquired infections, medical errors, drug safety, and physician and medical staff competency and accountability. The campaign advocates for more transparency in our health care system through public disclosure of health care information such as hospital infection rates. **As advocates for safer health care, we ask you to support the following:**

We need a national system for reporting health care-acquired infections using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Healthcare Safety Network. Currently 27 states have laws requiring hospitals to report their infections and 21 of those states have committed to using the NHSN system. It is time for a national system to require all U.S. hospitals to report their infection rates.

- We support the current proposal (May 4th Federal Register, pp 23970-23971) to report central line bloodstream infections and surgical site infections, two measures targeted in the HHS Action Plan to Prevent Health care Associated Infections-see <http://www.hhs.gov/ophs/initiatives/hai/actionplan/index.html>.
- We also support including public reporting on all measures set out in the Plan, in order to show hospitals' progress toward these goals over the next five years.

We support the nomination of Dr. Don Berwick as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) which is pending Senate Finance Committee Action. Please support with your colleagues the nomination of Dr. Berwick who has spent his lifetime working to improve the safety and quality of our health care system.

- Through his leadership at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, he has educated tens of thousands of health care workers and physicians on the steps they can take to prevent medical harm, leading to significant reduction in deaths due to such harm.
- His service on countless committees examining how our health care can be delivered to produce better patient outcomes has helped to provide a vision for an improved system.
- Throughout his career, he has steadfastly pushed for health care to focus on patient needs first-and that ultimately is what we need in our federal leaders.

We support the Administration's budget request for FDA user fees to reduce the huge backlog of approvals of safe, effective generic drugs. Reducing the backlog of hundreds of applications will make more affordable, quality drugs available to consumers. We also support drug import safety inspection legislation before there is another case of contaminated, deadly drugs, such as the Chinese heparin case. And we urge you to encourage FDA to require its 1-800 number for consumers to report adverse drug reactions on all broadcast and electronic ads. The 2007 FDA amendments required the agency to study the feasibility of requiring the number on TV ads, but the study has not been released and no action has been taken.

Contact Information:

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