

# Health Care in Trumbull County is on Life Support

## *An Open Letter to the Community from Trumbull County Physicians:*

We are very concerned about the future of health care in Trumbull County as a result of the climate in our local courts, as evidenced by a recent court case. We believe everyone who is part of our community should share in this concern. We are doctors who practice in this community, are committed to the patients of this community and have an unwavering belief in our community.

For that very reason, we must address the adverse ripple effects that all of us may suffer as a result of the extreme developments in proceedings against a local doctor. We want 2012 to be the year that this negative and destructive environment begins to change.

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We respect the rights of patients who have truly suffered malpractice to be compensated. We appreciate our court system and the right of every citizen to have a day in court.

However, morally and ethically reprehensible actions against some of our very own respected physicians have brought to the forefront the need for meaningful medical liability reform to fix a broken system. If allowed to continue unchecked, these actions will create a devastating effect on our community, with these impacts:

- **Reduced access to quality health care.** Good, young doctors who represent the future of our community will look to less hostile environments to serve patients.
- **Shortage of physicians in all medical specialties.** The driving up of medical malpractice rates could prompt some local doctors to either retire or relocate rather than try to run cost-prohibitive practices. Obstetrics is the hardest hit by rising medical liability insurance rates. If current trends continue, it is likely that women may no longer be able to deliver their babies in Trumbull County because obstetricians will no longer be able to afford malpractice insurance, to accept the risk, or to establish practice here.
- **Higher health care costs.** Punitive actions taken against physicians in malpractice cases may force local doctors to practice in a manner that discourages lawsuits but also drives up health care costs.
- **Fewer jobs.** As quality, cost-effective health care for employees is a primary demand for any successful company, a community that does not respect and value its health care risks alienating current and future employers.

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*As a community, we cannot stand by and let these shocking and extreme actions continue.*

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As a community, we cannot stand by and let these shocking and extreme actions continue. As a new year begins, we need to take a fresh look at our local courts and understand the negative impact they can have on our health care system and our quality of life. We hereby call on community leaders to:

- **Become more aware** of and sensitive to the impact of these types of legal actions.
- **Work for medical liability reform** that balances the individual's right to legal action with the community's need for quality medical care.
- **Use their influence** to discourage reckless attacks on the doctors and other health care professionals who take care of us.

Sincerely,

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Dr. Jose Arbona

Dr. Bahaa Awadalla

Dr. Rony Awaida

Dr. Pedro Ballester

Dr. Robert Bennett

Dr. Leonard Berenholz

Dr. Leonard Blass

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Dr. Joseph Fonagy, Jr.

Dr. Steven Frank

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