

Advocates Consider Amending Patient Safety Initiative To Include Reforms Legislature Failed to Pass

SANTA MONICA, Calif., Sept. 11, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The California Medical Association blocked another bill aimed at improving patient safety yesterday, prompting consumer advocates and families harmed by dangerous doctors to consider amending a pending patient safety ballot measure to include those reforms the legislature fails to enact this year.

SB 670 (Steinberg) would have given the state Medical Board greater authority to impose temporary restrictions on physicians' prescribing licenses when reckless or illegal prescribing practices pose an immediate threat to patient health. The bill had already been significantly watered down to limit when the Board could act against a dangerous prescriber and keep most records confidential. It failed in the face of opposition by the California Medical Association after receiving just nine votes on the Assembly floor.

Bob Pack, who lost his young children to a drug-addicted driver who was overprescribed narcotics, introduced a ballot measure in July to enact patient safety reforms the physicians' lobby has consistently blocked in the legislature.

"I was forced to introduce a patient safety ballot measure because action by the legislature to stop overprescribing and dangerous doctors is long overdue. Now even modest reforms we thought the legislature could handle are failing because of the California Medical Association's stranglehold on politicians in Sacramento. If the legislature can't address these urgent patient safety issues, including emergency suspensions of doctors' licenses when their prescribing habits pose a threat to patient lives, we may have to add them to the initiative to ensure patients are protected," said

Bob Pack.

The Troy and Alana Pack Patient Safety Act would require physicians to check the electronic prescription drug database before prescribing narcotics, index for inflation the state's 38-year-old cap on compensation for victims of medical negligence, mandate random drug testing of doctors and require physicians to report when they have knowledge of peers who

Physicians' Lobby Kills Bill To Suspend Privileges of Doctors Whose Prescribing Led To Overdose Deaths

Written by Australian Business

abuse alcohol or drugs on duty. The measure is awaiting a title and summary from the Attorney General.

A second patient safety bill passed out of the Senate last night in weakened form. SB 809 (De Saulnier) provides funding for the electronic prescription drug database, CURES. Amendments backed by the doctors' lobby deleted a provision, now included in the Troy and Alana Pack Safety Act, that would have required physicians to check the database for a patient's prescription history before prescribing narcotics.

SB 304 (Lieu), the California Medical Board sunset legislation, is awaiting an Assembly floor vote. The bill was meant to be the vehicle for broad reform of the doctor discipline system in California

. Amendments last month eliminated a key enforcement reform that would have moved all staff investigating dangerous doctors into the Department of Justice. The bill now moves investigative staff to the Department of Consumer Affairs, keeping enforcement staff split and ineffective. It was also amended to extend the life of the California Medical Board for four years; it had previously allowed the Board to sunset.

SOURCE Consumer Watchdog

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