

Study: doctors keep practicing, despite history of serious errors

Written by Australian Business

September 12, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- As unfortunate as it may be, getting sick is a fact of life. But, when an illness strikes -- especially a serious one -- the average person does not have the skills or experience necessary to understand why it happened or how to treat it. Instead, we rely on medical professionals to make these decisions for us.

However, while most doctors are trustworthy and well-qualified, there are many who are not. What's more, a recent investigation suggests that these doctors may be escaping the oversight of state medical boards.

The newspaper USA Today recently conducted an investigation into physicians whose state boards of medicine allowed them to continue practice medicine despite having made a number of [medical malpractice](#) payouts or having had their privileges revoked by hospitals or other facilities. The investigation was spurred, in part, by a Texas case involving a woman who died from a medication error involving prescription painkillers. It was later discovered that the doctor had several other reported medication errors and was even under investigation for a similar death. Despite this, he was allowed to continue to practice medicine.

In conducting its [investigation](#), USA Today reviewed a number of public sources, including data from the National Practitioner Data Bank. It reviewed records from 2001 to 2011 and found some very alarming information. For example, it found that approximately 52 percent of doctors who had their clinical privileges taken away or restricted by a medical facility never incurred any discipline from their state medical board.

What's more, almost 250 of these doctors had been cited by their hospitals as an "immediate threat to health and safety." Another 900 had been cited for serious violations including malpractice, incompetence, negligence or substandard care. Yet, none of the doctors never had their licenses restricted, suspended or revoked.

Much of the problem, the investigators concluded, comes from the fact that state medical boards are reactive as opposed to proactive. Instead of making an active effort to root out dangerous physicians, they use investigative procedures that could take months, or even years, to make any significant process. Making matters worse, many state medical boards are limited by tight budgets and small staffs.

Pursuing medical malpractice lawsuits

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When serious [physician errors](#) do happen, it is important for injured patients to know that they have the right to take independent action. Patients who have been injured by negligent doctors can sue for medical malpractice. This right exists regardless of whether the doctor has been punished by his or her medical board or the facility where the bad conduct occurred.

If you or a loved one has been hurt by a doctor's negligence, it is a good idea to consult with an experienced medical malpractice attorney. The attorney will be able to review the circumstances of your case to help you understand your options for moving forward.

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