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CENTER FOR JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY
CENTER FOR MEDICAL CONSUMERS
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
NEW YORK STATEWIDE SENIOR ACTION COUNCIL
PATIENT SAFETY ALLIANCE
PUBLIC CITIZEN
PULSE of NEW YORK**

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:

Tuesday, October 19, 2004

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REPORT DEBUNKS SO-CALLED CRISIS OF PATIENTS LOSING ACCESS TO DOCTORS; NY'S NUMBER OF DOCTORS HAS INCREASED, NOT DECLINED

NEW YORK STATE HAS AMONG THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF OB/GYNS, NEUROSURGEONS AND GENERAL SURGEONS IN THE NATION

The ranks of doctors have steadily increased in rural and urban New York State, according to a new report by a coalition of senior, patient safety and consumer groups. The groups urged patients to ignore the “fear mongering” of the medical lobby. The medical lobby has used the specter of patients losing access to their physicians as part of its push for limits on patients’ legal rights.

In fact, the number of active doctors in New York State rose by 16.4 percent from 1995 to 2003, far in excess of the growth in the state’s population during the same period (5.5%). The same steady increase was evident in New York’s urban and nonmetropolitan areas.

In addition, New York has the fourth highest number of OB/GYNs per capita in the country. The per capita number of New York general surgeons is *second* highest in the nation and New York has the *highest* per capita number of surgical specialists. New York State has increased the number of new doctors it annually licenses over the past six years.

The 30-page report – “The Doctor *Is* In: New York’s Increasing Number of Doctors” – is based on the most up-to-date federal, state and private sector data available. The report was authored by NYPIRG, Public Citizen and the Center for Medical Consumers. It is available at:

<http://www.citizen.org/congress/civjus/medmal/articles.cfm?ID=9142>

Other highlights of the report include:

- National data shows that the number of physicians per capita is increasing *faster* in New York than nationally.
- Physician shortages that exist in New York’s rural areas are longstanding and correlate to stagnating local economies and decreasing populations in those regions, not to lawsuits or the legal system.
- The total amounts paid on behalf of New York physicians to injured patients for malpractice judgments and settlements have risen at roughly the same rate as inflation throughout the medical services sector from 1993 through 2003.
- New York State significantly outpaces California, which imposes a draconian cap on medical malpractice damages, in the number of practicing physicians per capita indicating that limits on damages have nothing to do with availability of doctors.