

November 2017

As a healthcare professional, consumer advocate, policymaker, or a concerned member of the public, you may be aware there is **a growing movement to lower professional standards for health care providers**. Individuals and groups at the state and national level are asking state legislatures and regulators to trust individual health care providers to stay up-to-date and knowledgeable as they see fit. They are asking states, employers, and patients to abandon the external, data-driven validation afforded by the certification and certification maintenance process.

We have grave concern about this movement to lower standards.

- At a time when the pace of medical advancements and treatment options has never been faster...
- At a time when our health care system has never been under greater strain to care for a growing population of aging, sicker people...
- At a time when avoidable medical errors and issues of quality remain on the forefront of the national dialogue about health care...

We should be trumpeting the importance of continuous professional development and regular assessment, not seeking to set aside reliable quality measures.

Incredibly, those who are leading the movement to lower standards have already experienced some significant wins. In Arizona, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Oklahoma, legislation has passed to undo current systems established to assure the public of the current competence of physicians. Similar bills are under consideration in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, and Tennessee. **This movement has now expanded to include other health care professionals.** Legislatures in West Virginia, New Mexico and Illinois are now considering lowering standards for physician assistants. **Altogether, that's 14 states that have lowered or are considering lowering standards— and we believe this is just the tip of the iceberg.**

By and large, the public is not yet aware of what's happening! Those of us who understand the value of certification and the important role that assessment plays in keeping providers current and identifying those who have not kept pace must speak up. A new Right to Safe Care Coalition is forming to educate stakeholders, including the public, about the importance of effective lifelong learning programs administered by voluntary credentialing organizations, health professional licensing boards, and hospitals and other health care delivery institutions. **These programs protect the public, promote patient safety and help ensure high quality health care services for everyone.**

(MORE)

The coalition will work to educate stakeholders to be sure the best interests of the public, and all who utilize health care, are represented in challenges to lifelong learning requirements for health care professionals. Also, the coalition will provide the public the information it needs to understand the implications of any efforts aimed at diminishing requirements for lifelong learning and continued competence.

If you share our concern and want to help preserve appropriate standards for U.S. health professionals, we urge you to get involved.

Sign on as a coalition member to receive regular updates on this effort and to participate in its initiatives.

With your support, we are confident we can win this fight to protect the public, promote patient safety and help ensure high quality health care services for everyone.

For more information, please contact the righttosafecarecoalition@gmail.com and visit righttosafecare.org. We have regular organizational calls and would welcome your participation. We look forward to working with you on this important mission.

On behalf of the coalition,

Karen Plaus, PhD, CRNA, FAAN, CAE
RTSCC Co-chair

Christine Reidy, RD
RTSCC Co-Chair

Donations to the RTSCC may be made to:

Right to *Safe* Care Coalition
c/o ICE
P. O. Box 79388
Baltimore, Maryland 21279-0388