

## A Malpractice Commission

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With Governor Spitzer set to name in the coming days the members of a task force to confront the crisis in medical malpractice premiums, New Yorkers will soon get a chance to see how serious the governor is about tackling the problem. A press release from the state insurance department last month announcing a 14% increase in malpractice insurance premiums, along with the news of the creation of the task force, promised that the group would include "a broad range of representatives from physician and hospital associations, the insurance industry, consumer groups, health plans, trial lawyers and the Legislature."

Which of those groups is not like the other? Trial lawyers are the one group with no incentive to solve the problem. Their financial interest is in more medical errors and larger verdicts from which they can profit by charging huge contingency-based legal fees. Mr. Spitzer may be under the illusion that by including the trial lawyers in the process he can get them to buy into an eventual solution, or at least agree not to block such a solution. Fat chance. Naming the trial lawyers to a task force on medical malpractice is like naming Michael Vick to a task force on animal welfare.