

Patients' Call to Action

We are the innocent victims of this tragedy. We are the ones who went to these health care providers and trusted them as patients. Are we infected now? Did we unknowingly infect someone else? Are we going to die from this? What about our friends and family members?

We are the ones who trusted our doctors to adhere to certain basic codes of ethics and responsibility. They failed. They failed miserably. They failed *us* in unimaginable ways. As a result, they left us full of emotions. Many of us have never felt these emotions, and none of us with such fervor.

We are OUTRAGED that this could happen in our city. Where were the safeguards? Where were the protocols? Where were hotlines to report violations of safe medical practices by staff members?

We are SCARED for our health. Where do we go to find out what could be wrong with us? If something is wrong, what kind of treatment should we get? How will we be able to pay for it? Will we lose our jobs? Who will take care of our families?

We are DISAPPOINTED with our state and local health officials who have done so little to keep us informed and provide us assistance. Don't they realize this is a CRISIS?

We are using today's opportunity to establish a PATIENTS' CALL TO ACTION. We encourage everyone in our city to get involved, to assist us, and to assure that something like this can never happen again.

We are asking for the following:

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- First and foremost, transparency is necessary. If further dangerous situations are found in investigations, swift and effective communication must be provided to the patients and the community at large.
- We ask that the city hold monthly meetings in a suitable facility to address developments and allow us to ask questions.
- We ask that the city send a monthly update letter to all known patients of the involved clinics.
- We ask that the city provide a monthly insert into all of the area papers to update the entire community of developments.
- We want meetings with our elected officials. We want open meetings with the city council, the mayor, the governor, our state and federal

legislators and executive directors of every involved health authority, so that we can express our concerns and work with them to assure that situations such as this are never repeated.

- We would request that a hotline be established to allow staff members and/or patients to anonymously report concerns or wrongdoing at medical care facilities.

CRIMINAL CHARGES

What we already have learned from this tragedy shows unconscionable conduct on the part of some medical care providers. We ask the following:

- Convene a Grand Jury investigation into this tragedy immediately.
- That the courts intervene through the criminal justice system, to assure that the responsible parties not be allowed to flee their jurisdiction.
- That the assets of those involved are frozen, in order to thwart any effort by those involved to hide or transfer assets that will likely be subject to liability attachment.

INVESTIGATIONS

- We ask for a statewide comprehensive investigation of all outpatient surgical centers for potentially similar practices.
- We ask that a Blue Ribbon Panel of distinguished health care authorities be appointed to investigate this matter.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- We ask that a state fund be established immediately to provide financial assistance for patients at these facilities. This includes blood work to ascertain any medical problems and expenses for any treatment necessary as a result of any health problems due to the unsanitary practices of the involved facilities.
- We ask for this assistance for all the potential victims, without regard for whether any of us have health insurance.

All of these steps are needed, and needed immediately, if the city and our state and federal government are to give us any hope and faith that this matter is being treated with the sense of urgency it deserves.