

# The Liability Crisis

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In this year State of the Union Address delivered to the US Capital on January 28, 2003, President George W. Bush raised an important goal regarding healthcare, that is, high quality, affordable healthcare for all Americans.

To many, quality does not come cheap but we should be able to contain the spiraling cost that threaten the universal access to healthcare. Indeed the President was right when he made a comment that medical care cost too much and if nothing is done more Americans than ever, will not be able to receive medical care they so needed.

A new system should be created in which all Americans have a good insurance policy, choose their own doctors and seniors and low-income Americans receive the help they need.

Here in Thailand, a new system has been created since the beginning of the year 2001. It is safe to say that nowadays every Thai, rich or poor, has universal access to healthcare due to universal coverage sponsored by the current government. Although much has to be fine tuned or polished so that the Thai UC/UA system can work better.

Other important issue, the President proposed that we must put doctors, nurses and patients back in charge of American medicine instead of bureaucrats, lawyers and HMOs since these are the prime cause of higher healthcare cost due to the constant threat of physicians and hospitals will be unfairly sued.

Excessive litigation is driving many fine doctors into exile, some stopped practising or limited their service to the point that many parts of the mainland US have no obstetric service.

Medical liability reform is urgently needed in the USA.

Here in Thailand, the excessive litigation is looming on the horizon unless the universal coverage health bill article 42 is removed. Since the article encourages the public to sue their health-care providers anytime they think the service does not meet the expected outcome.

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