

MEDIA ALERT

Contact: Linda Millevoi
Abington Memorial Hospital
PH: (215) 481-8966
CELL: (215) 834-0673

Jim Mathias
Montgomery Bar Association
PH: (610) 994-3660
CELL: (610) 213-2669

WHO: State Representative Josh Shapiro, 153rd Legislative District, Montgomery County

John J. Kelly, M.D., chief of staff and chief patient safety officer
Abington Memorial Hospital

Roger Mecum, executive vice president
Pennsylvania Medical Society

Robert Slota, immediate past president
Montgomery Bar Association

Mark Lopatin, M.D., chair
Mediation Task Force & board member,
Montgomery County Medical Society

State Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf, 12th Senate District

**Special guest: Lillian Scher, a Warwick woman available for interviews about her personal experience with mediation.*

WHAT: A press conference to announce the launch of a mediation pilot program at Abington Memorial Hospital on which leaders of the Montgomery County Medical Society and the Montgomery Bar Association have been working since 2005. The pilot program embraces a two-tiered approach that will promote early intervention to resolve conflicts related to medical care, with the hope of reducing the adversarial posture, costs and emotional distress inherent in traditional medical liability litigation. The group is unaware of any other coalition that combines the forces of the legal and medical communities in such an endeavor.

WHEN: Thursday, March 27, 2008
10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Frobese Conference Center Auditorium
Lenfest Pavilion, Abington Memorial Hospital
1200 Old York Road
Abington, PA 19001

WHY: While recent changes in the law have reduced the number of medical liability suit filings, and the establishment of the Patient Safety Authority has been effective in promoting safety in hospitals in Pennsylvania, doctors and lawyers are still looking for ways to further improve the system.

HISTORY: In 2005, former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice, William H. Lamb brought together the Montgomery County Bar Association (MBA) and the Montgomery County Medical Society (MCMS) to encourage cooperation in disputes about patient care. Since then, they have been working together to explore the use of mediation as an alternative to litigation in the courts in cases of potential medical liability. With the support of Lamb and the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, members of the MBA and MCMS formed a Mediation Task Force in 2005 to launch a pilot mediation program at Abington Memorial Hospital this month.

About the Montgomery Bar Association

Established in 1885 to professionalize the county's practice of law, the Montgomery Bar Association (MBA) is one of the nation's oldest and most respected bar associations, representing over 2,100 legal professionals in Montgomery County, PA. Now, as then, the MBA exists to uphold legal and ethical standards in our legal community. As the third largest Bar in Pennsylvania, the MBA has a longstanding tradition of service to its membership and the community. For members, the MBA offers an important arena for networking, professional development and education. For the community, the MBA serves as a legal resource offering education, legal assistance and funds and resources for individuals and agencies in need. The association is actively engaged in public service through community outreach, free educational events offered throughout the year, programs like the Montgomery Child Advocacy Project, the Mock Trial Competitions for high school students and more. For more information on the MBA, visit www.montgomerybar.org.

About Abington Memorial Hospital

Abington Memorial Hospital is an independent 570-bed, acute care teaching hospital with a medical staff of more than 900 physicians and 5,500 employees. These professionals provide medical care and health services to residents of Bucks, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. A regional provider, Abington Memorial Hospital has the only Level II accredited trauma center in Montgomery County and offers highly specialized services in cardiac care, cancer care, maternal child health and surgery.

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