

Doctor danger

Worst of medical malpractice across the U.S.

By Anthony DeCeglie

Medical errors are one of America's leading causes of death and injury. The Institute of Medicine estimates that 98,000 people die annually as a result of errors by health care professionals.

The Daily obtained figures from the medical boards of the five U.S. states that saw the most patient complaints against doctors in 2010.

High-profile medical malpractice lawyer Tommy Malone said the figures were just the "tip of the iceberg."

"The incidence of medical carelessness, and even intentional acts of misconduct, are far underappreciated or not appreci-

ated at all," said Malone, whose practice, Malone Law, is based in Atlanta.

"There's an epidemic of medical carelessness in this country, not an epidemic of people seeking windfalls."

American Medical Association president Cecil B. Wilson said the vast majority of physicians uphold the high ethical standards that society expects of the profession.

"We are working to help weed out the few bad apples who tarnish the medical profession, without burdening honest physicians focused on caring for patients," he told The Daily. ■

FIVE STATES WITH THE MOST COMPLAINTS:



NEW YORK

1st



(State Board for Professional Medical Conduct)

Obstetrician Steve Song-Shan Ho fled to Taiwan last year after being charged with 11 counts of gross negligence relating to abortions he performed on seven patients. Some of the abortions were performed with limited medical equipment and took just four minutes. The obstetrician routinely left major fetal organs and limbs behind. In one 2004 incident, a patient awoke from her abortion surgery writhing from abdominal pain. Instead of sending her to get proper medical attention, he tried to give her a \$20 bill so she could take a taxi home. The obstetrician has been banned from working in New York again.