

My Employer Already Has Liability Insurance... Why Should I Get More?

For nurses, it is often difficult to justify getting their own liability/malpractice insurance. In most cases, a simple query to your employer's HR department will most likely reveal that they carry some type of liability or malpractice insurance. For most medical offices and hospitals, minimum liability or malpractice insurance requirements are set forth by state laws. In the rare event that no such laws are present, any hospital or private practice participating in government programs or contracts including Medicare or Medicaid will most likely be required to obtain a certain level of liability or malpractice insurance to maintain compliance.

That same inquiry to the HR department may even leave you with a deterrent: "Don't worry, we already have liability insurance, you don't need your own." In fact, this could not be further from the truth.

Medical professionals and staff can be sued at any time, for any reason. Payouts from medical malpractice suits equal close to \$4 Billion in 2013, in the US alone. Some areas of the country are more prone to malpractice suits than others: there are 5 states: Florida, California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York that all carry an overwhelmingly larger number of malpractice payouts than the other 45 states according to a 2012 Diederich Healthcare analysis.

"But I am so careful at work, and all the patients love me... I'll never get sued!" Once again, this could not be further from the truth. With the amount of doctors, assistants and nurses handling each patient, and their confidential medical information, a medical-related failure or breach of information could occur at any time, without your contribution or even awareness. Even without a mistake, a chance at their own slice of a \$4-Billion-Dollar pie could potentially turn even the kindest patient into a greedy monster.

Once you get a malpractice suit notice, it will ALWAYS come as a surprise. Even if the suit does not go to court, be prepared for scrutiny, stress and uncertainty. You will most likely find that same liability insurance that your employers assured you is sufficient protection is tailored very well towards protecting the EMPLOYER and not you. Nothing against you... that is simply what their lawyers are paid to do.

In the likely malpractice suit scenario where your interests and the interests of your employer diverge, the best practice is to have your own malpractice help. Your own malpractice insurance gives you your own lawyers, there to protect you, your career, your livelihood, and your reputation.

