Medical Malpractice Suits Against Vascular Surgeons Increase: Shortcomings Of The Primary Certificate For Vascular Surgery And Why An Independent American Board of Vascular Surgery Will Make A Difference

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Brown said that this failure has most often been the result of an inability of the "lawyers" who comprise the majority of the membership of the legislative bodies in this country to compose a statute that both addresses the concerns of physicians and does not alter the existing legal system. "It is therefore imperative that the members of the medical profession, and in particular, vascular surgeons, assume a leadership role in implementing significant changes in how medical malpractice law suits are filed and pursued," Brown said.

Emphasizing that vascular surgeons must meticulously review the testimony of experts for inconsistencies and outright untruths, Brown noted that this testimony must be preserved in a database accessible to vascular surgeons. Pointing out when untruths are identified, their authors must be reported to the American College of Surgeons and to specific vascular societies, and that individuals providing inaccurate or purely false testimony must be at the least suspended, and perhaps expelled from these societies.

Referring to the newly created primary certificate in Vascular Surgery, Brown said, "Vascular surgeons must continue to emphasize the specialty status, as opposed to subspecialty status, of their profession. The establishment of the primary certificate in Vascular Surgery, though an appropriate initial step, unfortunately falls far short of the ultimate goal. In many states, the lack of an independent Board of Vascular Surgery has resulted in cardiac surgeons and general surgeons being permitted to give testimony against vascular surgeons. Unfortunately, since Vascular Surgery falls under the American Board of Surgery, it is still considered by many to be a part of General Surgery. The best method of preventing testimony by non vascular surgeons against trained vascular surgeons is to more clearly define Vascular Surgery as a distinct specialty by establishing a separate and independent American Board of Vascular Surgery." Brown said that the diagnosis and treatment of vascular disease must not be a hobby, but, as in the case of vascular surgeons, a lifetime devotion. Brown continued saying that it is the responsibility of the vascular surgical community to utilize any and all means to
make this distinction clear to other physicians, the legal community, and to the public at large. "The establishment of Vascular Surgery as a distinct and independent specialty will go a long way to decrease both the number of malpractice suits, as well as the incidence of inaccurate testimony in cases involving trained and certified vascular surgeons," Brown concluded.

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Now entering its fourth decade, VEITHsymposium™ provides vascular surgeons, interventional radiologists, interventional cardiologists and other vascular specialists with a unique and exciting format to learn the most current information about what is new and important in the treatment of vascular disease. The 5-day event features 300 rapid-fire presentations from the world's most renowned vascular specialists with emphasis on the latest advances, changing concepts in diagnosis and management, pressing controversies and new techniques.

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