

Statement of Senator Larry Craig
Senate Special Committee on Aging
Technology and Prescription Drug Safety

Good Afternoon. Thank you all for joining us here today at the Special Committee on Aging as we examine the critical issue of Technology and Prescription Drug Safety.

It is alarming to find that every year between 44,000 and 98,000 people are injured or die due to medical errors. In fact, just last month, the American Pharmaceutical Association estimated that medication misuse cost the economy over \$177 billion per year.

As Chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, this issue is of particular concern to me. Senior citizens often must rely on multiple medications to control the many conditions associated with aging, conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. Each time a patient takes medication they risk an adverse drug event. Since seniors take several different kinds of medications each day, they face the additional risk of experiencing a drug to drug interaction. Therefore, it is imperative for us to identify and develop new strategies to reduce medication errors.

The private sector has been working hard to resolve the dangerous problems associated with prescribing and dispensing errors, and I commend them for their innovative ideas. As Congress considers legislation to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program, it is important to examine the medical technology available to reduce medication errors.

The first panel includes Dr. Janet Corrigan, the Director of the Board on Health Care Services at the Institute of Medicine, Dr. Harold H. Allen, Jr., MD an orthopedic surgeon and founder of Picos and Peter Klein the Vice President of En-Vision America, Neil Reed, the director of pharmacy at the Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

The second panel includes Dr. David Bates, Division of General Internal Medicine at Brigham Women's Hospital, America and Mr. Marty McKay, President of the Louisiana Pharmacists Association

Thank you for agreeing to testify before the Special Committee on Aging. I appreciate your participation and look forward to your testimony on this very important issue.