





NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ONLINE
THE WORLD'S LEADING PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR JOURNALISTS

April 14, 2010

The Club
Club Activities
Facilities
Restaurants
Join
Members Only
Library
Events
Training
Speakers
Jobs

▶ [Broadcast Operations Center](#)

Home



NEW & NOTEWORTHY

Posted by Sylvia Smith - 04/12/2010 | Email the editor

Actor Seeks Media Aid in Sounding Alert for Health Care Safety



Dennis Quaid
Photo: Al Teich

Watching his newborn twins hang in the balance between life and death for 41 hours, actor Dennis Quaid realized he had found a new role to play -- front man for the reform of health care safety.

Calling health care accidents one of the leading causes of death in America, he implored the news media in the National Press Club audience April 12 to "help us tell, not just the stories of harm, but of great caregivers dedicated to safe, high-performance care."

In Washington to announce the release of a new patient-safety manual, the 56-year-old star described the desperate moments that followed learning that his children were the victims of an accidental dose of the anti-coagulant, heparin.

"I had faith I was in a safe place. ... Little did I know how dangerous any hospital could be," he said.

The twins pulled through, and today are active, energetic kids. But the incident launched Quaid and his wife, Kimberly Buffington, on a mission to serve as advocates for improving the quality and safety of healthcare in the United States.

"I believe there was a reason this incident happened," he said. "It gave me an opportunity to turn lemons into lemonade."

Asked about the role faith played in his family's crisis, he said, "I always had strong faith in God ... (The accident) really woke me up to the power of prayer. It really does work."

Establishing the Quaid Foundation for Patient Safety as a vehicle to raise awareness of the dangers of health care safety, the couple dedicated themselves to an effort that focuses on improvements through medical leadership, safe practices and technology. Health care safety accidents can be reduced to almost zero, he Quaid said.

"My mission is to drive awareness," he said. "Real healthcare reform is impossible without dramatically cutting harm."

He said he is confident the private sector can improve health care safety, saying he would like to see more of that sector's involvement, not just "government handouts."

Asked if he was just another celebrity with a cause, Quaid said that serving as a highly visible advocate was something he didn't plan on, but after witnessing the danger faced by his twins and realizing that so

many people don't have a voice to express their concerns, he and his wife were compelled to get involved.

-- Terry Hill, terry@terryhillcommunications.com



Copyright 2008 The National Press Club. All rights reserved.
