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LETTERS

Hospital safety report is lacking

Preventable medical errors are the third-leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer ["Patient safety graded," News, Nov. 7]. The cost of injuries and death caused by negligent medical errors exceeds \$50 billion each year.

While the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, performed by a nonprofit group to improve health care quality, is a step in the right direction to better patient safety, it relies on incomplete sources of information: voluntary hospital surveys, Centers for Disease Control numbers, and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service statistics.

These sources list general conditions and outcomes, but that doesn't adequately report all recognized preventable errors. Many hospitals fail to report errors such as surgery on

the wrong body part, foreign objects left in patients, injuries to vital organs, blood clots, infections from urinary catheters, falls that cause fractures, and hospital-acquired infections.

State and federal governments should mandate hospital disclosure of all types of medical errors. Only then can consumers be assured of making informed choices of the safest and best hospitals and doctors.

*Alan W. Clark
Levittown*

Editor's note: The writer is a medical malpractice lawyer.

Mountains of leaves are a street hazard

Autumn brings nature's spectacular color show to Long Island, and invariably my neighbors think they should rake the piles off their lawns and into massive

curbside mountains. This reduces already narrow streets to one-lane hazards.

These leaf piles make navigating in the daylight a challenge for walkers, runners or cyclists, and it's even worse after dark. According to the Town of Hempstead, this action is illegal; however, officials tell me they cannot issue a summons unless a homeowner is caught in the act.

Leaf hills neatly lining a property's curbside are not evidence enough for our esteemed officials. People should just do the right thing and consider the dangerous conditions they create when they use the street as a dumping ground. Take the trouble to bag the leaves.

*Marleen Fenton
East Meadow*

How do the dogs know bar is safe?

I couldn't help but laugh at

this one pipeline. roxy for the broader battle of climate — with an unhealthy dollop of good measure.

ands is a dirty business. The pro-at drive climate change. Environ-that oil will stay in the ground.

ome Alberta crude is already being extracted and shipped by rail. So is oil from North Dakota that would be transported via the pipeline, and train derailments have resulted in a number of spills. The State Department's environmental review concluded that sending the oil by pipeline would do less environmental harm than moving it by rail, truck or barge. And blocking construction of the pipeline would not prevent extraction of the heavy crude. TransCanada's Plan B is to build a pipeline through Canada to transport the oil to the Pacific Ocean en route to China.

For many proponents, what's important is increasing 3,900 or more jobs to build the pipeline. Most of the jobs are temporary, but the best directed at putting in place carry the nascent alternative-energy industry permanent jobs.

ould be approved. But that's not, Senate Democrats suddenly help incumbent Sen. Mary Landry with Republican Rep. Bill Cassidy voted and oil is king.

o make, by law, because the pipeline promised a decision early next the route in Nebraska is resolved. t on fossil fuels. But for now it is. he political theatrics, the pipeline lists can move on to the climate

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