Washington, DC— On Wednesday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – New York) announced the introduction of a House Resolution in support of National Patient Safety Awareness Week. The resolution draws attention to the need to improve the safety of medical care while recognizing advancements toward this goal. “In recent years, the medical community has made significant progress in tracking and preventing medical errors. We must continue that vigilance and make improvements to protect patients,” said Rep. Israel. “I’m proud that a facility in my Congressional District, the Northport VA Medical Center, has been led by a champion of patient safety – Dr. Mark Graber. It is an honor to work with Dr. Graber and the National Patient Safety Foundation to support the efforts of National Patient Safety Awareness Week.” “Although a great number of challenges remain, Patient Safety Awareness Week recognizes the many accomplishments realized to date, and the commitment of the medical community to make medical care as safe as it can be. The goal is to achieve a meaningful culture of safety, supported by both patients and healthcare providers alike, in which the inherent risks of medical care are continuously identified, addressed, and minimized. There's a job for everybody in this quest,” said Dr. Graber, Northport VA Medical Center’s Chief of Medicine. “Patient Safety Awareness Week underscores the work being done nationally to improve the safety of our health care system,” said Diane C. Pinakiewicz, president of the National Patient Safety Foundation. “We are extremely gratified to have the U.S. Congress recognize the importance of these patient safety initiatives and the critical role that patients and their families play in this work.” The goals of Patient Safety Awareness Week, which runs March 6-12, include: focusing attention on the need to improve the safety of medical care, recognizing the safety innovations generated by frontline medical staff, celebrating patient safety successes, encouraging the medical community to adopt best practices that increase patient safety, encouraging patients to learn approaches to improve the safety of their healthcare, promoting research to identify effective solutions to patient safety-related problems, and acknowledging those individuals who have dedicated their time and talent to help promote patient safety. Dr. Graber helped launch the first Patient Safety Awareness Week in 2002. There are n0w more than 80 patient safety organizations nationwide and since 2000, the number of states with medical error reporting systems has nearly doubled. Despite these gains, errors, infections acquired during hospital stays and other issues remain concerns in the medical community. Rep. Israel is a co-chair of the House Cancer Caucus.