



## **RECENT STATISTICS RELATED TO QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA**

### Medical Errors

- Between 48,000 and 98,000 people die each year in hospitals from preventable medical errors. One million more are injured. <sup>1</sup> Medical errors kill more people per year than breast cancer, AIDS or motor vehicle accidents. <sup>2</sup>
- Medical errors have been cited as the nation's fourth leading cause of death according to the National Academy for State Health Policy. <sup>3</sup>
- The National Academy of State Health Policy reports that 106 medical-error related bills have been introduced in state legislatures since 1999 and legislation to address medical errors has been introduced in 26 states. <sup>4</sup>
- Forty-two percent of Americans report that they have been personally involved in a situation where a preventable medical error was made in their own care or that of a family member. <sup>5</sup>
- Thirty-five percent of physicians report that they have been personally involved in a situation where a preventable medical error was made in their own care or that of a family member. <sup>5</sup>
- Seventy-three percent of the public said that the government should require health care providers to report all serious medical errors, while 21% said reporting should be done on a voluntary basis. <sup>6</sup>
- Eighty-four percent of the public thinks that increasing efforts to reduce medical errors should be a very important priority for the nation's health agenda. <sup>7</sup>

### Providing Appropriate Care

- Doctors provide appropriate preventive care only 50% of the time, effective chronic care 60% of the time, and evidence-based acute care only 70% of the time. <sup>8</sup>
- 18,000 Americans die each year from heart attacks because they did not receive preventive medications, although they were eligible for them. <sup>9</sup>

- More than 50% of patients with diabetes, hypertension, tobacco addiction, hyperlipidemia, congestive heart failure, asthma, depression and chronic atrial fibrillation are currently managed inadequately. <sup>10</sup>
- The lag between the discovery of more effective forms of treatment and their incorporation into routine patient care averages 17 years. <sup>11</sup>

### Financial Implications of Poor Quality of Health Care

- Nearly \$400 billion -- almost one-third of the total spent on health care each year -- is wasted on poor quality health care. <sup>12</sup>
- Preventable medical errors drive up health care costs by as much as \$29 billion annually. <sup>13</sup>
- Medication-related errors for hospitalized patients cost roughly \$2 billion annually. <sup>14</sup>
- Nearly 66.5 million avoidable sick days and more than \$1.8 billion in excess medical costs can be traced to the health care system's routine failure to provide needed care. <sup>15</sup>

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