



Health Watch USA Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org April 27, 2009

2009 Conference on Healthcare Transparency and Patient Advocacy

Sponsored by the Kentucky Medical Association and Consumer's Union.
Nov. 13th, 2009 – Lexington, Kentucky

A few of the speakers for this year's event:

- **Keynote: [Dr Regina Herzlinger](#):** Professor and Chairwoman of the Harvard School for Business. Best selling author of " Who Killed Health Care in America ? "
 - **[Dr. Joycelyn Elders](#):** Past U.S. Surgeon General. Presenting on the need for health care reform.
 - **[Dr. L.D. Britt](#):** Chairman of the Board of Regents, the American College of Surgeons. presenting on the physician shortage.
 - **[Nadeem Esmail](#):** Director of Health System Performance Studies and Manager of the Alberta Policy Research Centre at the Fraser Institute. Presenting on the Canadian Health Care System.
 - **[Dr Garret Adams](#):** Kentucky State Coordinator of Physicians for a National Health Care Program. Presenting on the single-payer system.
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Online registration is now open: Go to www.healthconference.org

Health Care News

2008 Leap Frog Study has been released: "The Majority of Hospitals Fail to Meet Important Quality Standards."

<http://www.leapfroggroup.org/>

The Leap Frog report shows we have a long way to go in healthcare safety. I would suggest that everyone should read this report. A total of 1282 acute care hospitals in 44 states participated in the data reporting.

Some important items in the report:

- Six percent of hospitals had 10 times the pressure ulcers as those hospitals that fully met the leap frog standards.
- Sixty-five percent of participating hospitals do not have all recommended policies in place to prevent hospital-acquired infections.
- Only 30% to 25% of hospitals are fully meeting standards to prevent hospital-acquired pressure ulcers or hospital-acquired injuries, respectively.
- Relatively low percentages of reporting hospitals are fully meeting volume and risk-adjusted mortality standards, or adhering to nationally endorsed process measures for eight high-risk procedures, where following nationally endorsed and evidence-based guidelines is known to save lives.

http://www.leapfroggroup.org/media/file/2008_Survey_results_final_041309.pdf

On the Up Side:

- Sixty three percent of surveyed hospitals have adopted Leap Frog's "Never Event Policy."
- And 35% of hospitals (up from 13% in 2007) meet all of Leap Frog's Standards.

In Kentucky, only six hospitals participate in the Leap Frog Survey initiatives. None meet all of Leap Frog standards. Only two surveyed Kentucky hospitals, both HCA facilities, were reported to have adopted Leap Frog's policy on "Never Events" (essentially the same as the National Quality Forum).

http://www.leapfroggroup.org/media/file/Copy_of_RRO_Hospital_Detail_ReadOnly.xls

Hospital Acquired Infections

Consumer Union Launches New Initiative for "Cutting Surgical Infections".

This website reports how well hospitals are doing in following procedures to prevent health care acquired infections. The website compiles the CMS Hospital Compare data into a user-friendly format. The site can be viewed at:

www.stophospitalinfections.org/infection_prevention/

The Kentucky data can be found at http://www.stophospitalinfections.org/infection_prevention/state/19-Kentucky

A new article on prevention of MRSA surgical infections was published in the January issue of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery. Similar to the testimony given by Dr Marty Evans in 2008 (http://www.healthwatchusa.org/mrsa/mrsa_presentations.html) this study found a 13.4% MRSA colonization rate in patients admitted for surgery. The controlled study found that identification and treatment of the colonized group resulted in a decrease in infection. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19130957>

It should be noted that the usual preoperative antibiotics given to patients before surgery do not always cover MRSA.

Drug Company Gifts to Doctors

Pharmaceutical gifts to doctors has always been a matter of concern but is coming to the forefront of health care policy. Op-Eds in a number of papers are bringing this problem to the attention of policymakers and the health care industry.

http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/editorials/hc-bell0407.artapr07_0,1926091.story

Massachusetts has set rules for doctor contact with drug company representatives, has banned gifts to doctors and requires pay disclosures. <http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/04/06/prsc0406.htm>

The AMA reports that one in four doctors currently refuse to see drug representatives and believes their ranks will be cut by 25% by 2012, saving the industry over 3 billion dollars.

<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/03/23/pr10323.htm>

American College of Surgeon's (ACS) Statement on Medical Tourism:

Medical Tourism is the traveling to a foreign country to receive health care. Many times this is driven by the need to obtain care at an affordable cost but it can also be driven by the desire to receive care not available in the patient's native country. The ACS discusses in its recent publication the new world of health care globalization and what it means for the practicing surgeon.

http://www.facs.org/fellows_info/bulletin/2009/unti0409.pdf

The American College of Surgeon's position statement and patient guidelines on Medical Tourism can be found at the below link.

http://www.facs.org/fellows_info/bulletin/2009/statement0409.pdf

To view a recent presentation at the HW USA 2008 Conference by the CEO of one of the largest medical tourism companies go to: <http://www.healthwatchusa.org/conference2008/rupak.htm>

Hospital Readmissions are Common in Medicare Fee-For Service Patients:

A new study released in the New England Journal of Medicine (April 2, 2009) found that one in five Medicare fee for service patients are readmitted within one month of hospital discharge. The cost in 2004 of these readmissions was 1.7 Billion.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/360/14/1418?ijkey=3CQjS3yxXjOtY&keytype=ref&siteid=nejm>

Kevin T Kavanagh, MD

Health Watch USA

A man must sit in a chair with his mouth open a very long time before a roast duck will fly in. – Old Chinese Proverb.

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