



Health Watch USA Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org May 14, 2009

2009 Conference on Healthcare Transparency and Patient Advocacy

The Nov. 13th 2009 healthcare conference has a preliminary agenda posted on www.healthconference.org. A large array of nationally renowned speakers will present at the conference whose main theme is healthcare reform.

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 ?"
 - **[Lt Gov. Daniel Mongiardo, MD](#):** Lieutenant Governor State of Kentucky
 - **[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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For more information download the conference's brochure at:

http://www.healthconference.org/2009conference_downloads/HCTPA_Brochure.pdf

The importance of this topic is exemplified by the new AHRQ report which found that fewer families who are not covered by group policies can afford health insurance.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/news/press/pr2009/faminspr.htm>

Register now for the Nov. 13th, 2009 Conference at www.healthconference.org

Patient Safety Measures Have Worsened

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius reports that "patient safety measures have worsened and that a substantial number of Americans do not receive recommended care."

<http://www.ahrq.gov/news/press/pr2009/grdr08pr.htm>

- “40 % of recommended care is not received by patients.”
- “Only 40% of diabetic patients received three recommended diabetic preventive exams in the past year, and this rate has not improved over time.”
- “Only half of obese adults and children are given advice to exercise more and eat a healthy diet.”
- “Seven out of ten adults with mood, anxiety, or impulse disorders received inadequate treatment or no treatment at all.”
- “Disparities in health care persist. Minority patients receive disproportionately poor care compared to Caucasian patients. At least 60 percent of quality measures have not improved for minorities compared to Caucasians in the past six years.”
- “One in seven hospitalized Medicare patients experience one or more adverse event.”
- “Patient safety measures have worsened by nearly 1% each year for the past 6 years.”
- “Central line associated blood stream infections (CLABSIs) strike hundreds of thousands of patients each year.”

In 2006, a study in the NEJM found that “overall, participants received 54.9% of recommended care.”

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16540615?ordinalpos=4&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

The distressing finding is that things are worsening. Change is definitely needed, but our healthcare system is already undergoing rapid changes. Thus, some of these changes and trends may be responsible for this deterioration.

To learn more go to: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/05/20090506a.html>

Reduction in Hospitalizations Touted as a Way to Save the Healthcare Dollar

Improved ambulatory care utilization may prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and save up to 3.1 billion dollars in hospital services. <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb72.pdf>

Secretary Sebelius Announces HHS Office of Health Reform Personnel

Secretary Sebelius has appointed key staff members to the Office of Health Reform. To view members go to: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/05/20090511a.html>

Healthcare Acquired Infections:

Should the statements regarding the principles of prevention for the N1H1 Flu also be applicable to other infectious outbreaks such as MRSA ?? You decide.

"This is a rapidly evolving situation. There's a lot of uncertainty," Besser said, noting that too much is better than not enough when it comes to prevention. "We are not overreacting to this outbreak."

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/05/03/officials-encouraging-signs-swine-flu-urge-precautions/>

Rural Health Care:

“Rural residents spend more on health care out of pocket than their urban counterparts. Indeed, one in five rural residents spends more than \$1,000 out of pocket in a year,⁶ and rural residents pay on average for 40% of their health care costs out of their own pocket, compared with the urban share of one-third. {Ziller, E. C., Coburn, A. F., & Yousefian, A. E. “Out-of-pocket health spending and the rural underinsured.” *Health Affairs*, Nov/Dec 2006; 25(6), 1688-1699.}”

“The high costs of health care hit farmers particularly hard. In a multi-state survey, one in five insured farmers had medical debt. {The Access Project. (Sept. 2007). “Issue Brief: 2007 Health Insurance Survey of Farm and Ranch Operators.”

http://www.accessproject.org/adobe/issue_brief_no_1.pdf”

“There were half as many specialists per 100,000 residents in rural areas compared with urban areas, and a third as many psychiatrists {Fordyce MA, Chen FM, Doescher MP, Hart LG. (2007). *2005 physician supply and distribution in rural areas of the United States*. Final Report #116. Seattle, WA: WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington.}”

Read more at Hard Times in the Heartland: <http://healthreform.gov/reports/hardtimes/>

Nursing shortage:

NPR reports that the economy has affected employment and job opportunities for many professions. One of these is the nursing graduates at the University of Pennsylvania. It appears that the “nursing shortage” may be over, at least in Pennsylvania.

"For example, our nurses are experiencing difficulty in finding jobs," Rose (director of career services at the University of Pennsylvania) says in dismay. "This is the first time in my memory that a University of Pennsylvania nurse is having trouble finding a job."

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103862921>

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