



Health Watch USA Newsletter

www.healthwatchusa.org April 1, 2011

Member of the National Quality Forum and a designated "Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

HW USA Op-Ed in the Lexington Herald Leader on the Importance of Nursing and the Magnet Certification

<http://www.kentucky.com/2011/03/21/1679291/uk-wrong-to-downplay-loss-of-nursing.html>

Response from CMS regarding Hospital Survey Visits

Last November, HW USA took the lead with several consumer groups to question the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services regarding a proposed plan which seemed to substitute accreditation visits with self-reporting. The link below is the Nov 2010 letter of inquiry.

<http://www.healthwatchusa.org/downloads/20101110KY-ResponseToCMSProposal-KYHAL.pdf>

In response, we received the following explanation from Director Thomas Hamilton.

"I wish to thank you for your consistent advocacy for safe and effective health care, and for the recognition of the importance of our survey and certification efforts. As my quoted remarks make clear, I do believe there is the potential for reducing the need for surveys, but please do not confuse this hope with an intention to reduce the number of surveys. As I hope to make clear in the remarks that follow, my intention is both to increase the number of onsite surveys of hospitals and to increase the focus of such surveys on the responsibility of each hospital to ensure that it has an effectively functioning, internal Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) system."

<http://www.healthwatchusa.org/downloads/20110318-Hamilton-Response-Survey.pdf>

National Quality Forum Initiative

HW USA has sent in a comment regarding the following reportable event:

"2B. Patient death or serious injury associated with the use or function of a device in patient care, in which the device is used or functions other than as intended."

In reponse, the NQF has proposed the following modifications in the final Reportable Serious Events to be voted upon: "Definition of device added to glossary. Suggested addition significantly expands the event and will be considered at next update."

Thus, an Endotracheal Tube or Feeding Tube can now be defined as a device. Passage of a feeding tube into the lungs and then feeding the patient will now be clearly reportable under this event.

Superbug on the Rise and has a 50% Mortality.

Carbapenem-resistant *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (CRKP) has caused over 250 infections in Southern California. The bacteria is highly resistant to nearly all antibiotics.

http://www.thirdage.com/news/superbug-crkp-increasing-california-350-superbug-infections_3-30-2011

"Here is the bottom line – first, now is the time to act! We have prevention recommendations – they just need to be enacted. We must tackle these bugs before they become endemic (widespread). Secondly, the Los Angeles County experience demonstrates the important role that state and local health departments are playing in monitoring and prevent healthcare-associated infections. Lastly, tracking infections is key. These findings demonstrate the vital need to continue to monitor drug-resistant bacteria. If we want to stop resistant bacteria in their tracks, we have to know where to begin and how we are doing. -- Dr Arjun Srinivasan, MD -- CDC."

<http://blogs.cdc.gov/safehealthcare/?p=1450>

Reductions in Nursing Staff Risks Increasing Patient Mortality

Needleman, et. al., published in the New England Journal of Medicine, a nurse staffing study which controlled for high patient turnover owing to admissions, transfers, and discharges. This well-controlled study found an increase in overall patient mortality with reduced registered nurse staffing.

Needleman J, Buerhaus P, Pankratz VS, Leibson CL, Stevens SR, Harris M. Nurse staffing and inpatient hospital mortality. *N Engl J Med.* 2011 Mar 17;364(11):1037-45.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21410372>

Outragious Cost of Pregnancy Prevention Drug

The cost of just one drug to our healthcare system for the prevention of premature labor has gone from 200 million to 30 billion dollars. An example of where regulations and private industry have gone berzerk.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/fda-approval-of-drug-to-prevent-preemies-prompts-price-jump-from-10-to-1500/2011/03/04/AFmRo6qB_story.html

Nevada Considering Requiring Hospitals to Publicly Admit Harm

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2011/mar/27/admitting-harm-protects-patients/>

In Nevada, the Las Vegas Sun is the driving force in the promotion of patient safety. The newspaper has not only won awards for its efforts in hospital safety[i] but also has spurred the introduction of several laws regarding hospital safety.[ii] Their multi-issue investigative reporting was outstanding.

[i] Staff Sun. Sun reporters win investigative reporting award for hospital series. Las Vegas Sun. Las Vegas, Nevada, March 8, 2011.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2011/mar/08/sun-reporters-win-award-hospital-series/>

[ii] Schwartz DM. Bills would make hospitals' data on safety issues public. Las Vegas Sun. Las Vegas, Nevada, March 27, 2011. <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2011/mar/15/bills-would-make-hospitals-data-safety-issues-publ/>

Communication Breakdowns Lead Nurses to Not Speak Out on Medical Errors.

A study by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses found that 58% of 6,500 nurses failed to speak out regarding safety issues. Four out of five nurses have concerns regarding dangerous short-cuts, incompetence and disrespect demonstrated by their colleagues. However, these issues were addressed less than 20% of the time and over half of the nurses stated that disrespect prevented them from getting their professional opinion acted upon. A call for a culture change in healthcare organizations is needed to allow for the effective reporting and correction of "undiscussables."

<http://www.aacn.org/wd/pressroom/docs/SilentTreatment%20Release%20FINAL.pdf>

<http://www.hfma.org/templates/blogpost.aspx?id=25881>

<http://www.silenttreatmentstudy.com/Silent%20Treatment%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Physician Sunshine Act

If a drug, device, biologic or supply is covered by Medicaid or Medicare and the healthcare provider accepts \$10 in payment from a U.S. Manufacturer, then starting in 2012, the manufacturer is required to report the payment. These payments, along with the names of physicians, will be posted on a publicly searchable database.

<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Stories/2010/April/26/physician-payment-disclosures.aspx>

The Archives of Internal Medicine published in March of 2011 a report which found more than 50% of physicians writing practice guidelines for cardiology have a conflict of interest with industry.

<http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/171/6/577>

Wall Street Journal Article on Cardiology Practice Guidelines:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703739204576228850121858250.html>

Institute of Medicine Guidelines on Avoiding Conflict of Interest in development of practice guidelines and standards of care:

<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Finding-What-Works-in-Health-Care-Standards-for-Systematic-Reviews.aspx>

Long Term Outcomes and Complications Raise Questions on Gastric Banding for Obesity.

Treatment caused more complications than loss weight. Almost half of the patients needed the device removed. Only 18% of patients lost weight. Erosion caused by the device was a significant problem.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-03-21/obesity-lap-bands-may-cause-more-complications-than-weight-loss.html>

<http://archsurg.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/archsurg.2011.36>

Potentially, How Much Does Overutilization of Services Cost Medicare ?

Dr Elliott Fisher, Director of Population Health and Policy at the Dartmouth Institute, estimated in an email to Health Watch USA that if US Medicare regions with spending above the best performing 20% were able to improve their care and achieve equal results, there would be savings equal to 30% of the Medicare budget.

<http://www.healthwatchusa.org/downloads/20110327-Fisher-MoneySaved.pdf>

Arizona Request Waiver to Defund Medicare Recipients

Even the poor may be impacted by the high cost of healthcare services, with States considering cutbacks in the Medicaid program, similar to the request Arizona made to defund 5,500 citizens including 1000 children

Source: Reinhart MK. Arizona aims to cut health program. Mar. 20, 2011.

<http://www.azcentral.com/12news/news/articles/2011/03/20/20110320arizona-state-budget-ahcccs.html>

2011 HW USA 5th Annual Conference

This year's topic is Healthcare Acquired Infections, although other issues involving transparency or patient advocacy can be presented. The date is Nov. 11, 2011 and is being held at the Embassy Suites.

Initial confirmed speakers are:

- a. John Santa, MD, Director of the Health Ratings Center for Consumer Reports.
- b. Maryn McKenna best selling author of SUPERBUG: The Fatal Menace of MRSA
- c. Dr. Joycelyn Elders, Past US Surgeon General
- d. Dr. Marvin Feit. Editor of the Journal of Social Work in Public Health

We also have exhibits which are FREE for non-profits who provide two registrations. The cost for attendance is \$50 and \$25 for students.

The conference's website can be viewed at www.healthconference.org.

As with previous years' conferences, CME credits are planned to be available for RNs, MDs, JDs, Social Workers and Human Resource Managers.

If you would like to give a 25 minute presentation at the conference, please submit a 300 word abstract for consideration to contact-mail@healthwatchusa.org

HW USA Meeting April 20th

Speaker Helen Haskell - Founder of Mother's Against Medical Error

To attend contact Kevin T Kavanagh, MD
606-875-3642



HW USA Meeting May 18th

Rosemary Gibson - Best Selling Author of "the Wall of Silence" and "The Treatment Trap"

To attend contact Kevin T Kavanagh, MD
606-875-3642

