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AHRQ News and Numbers

The number of Americans treated in hospitals for septicemia—a potentially deadly bacterial infection of the bloodstream also known as blood poisoning—increased from 666,000 cases in 1993 to over 1 million cases in 2003. [Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, [HCUPnet](#).]

Today's Headlines:

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1. AHRQ Listening Sessions on Patient Safety Organizations Set for March 8, 13, and 16

As part of its work to implement the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-41), AHRQ is inviting the public to provide information to assist the Agency, either in person or by telephone call-in, at three public meetings next month. The three public meetings will be held on March 8, March 13, and March 16 from 12:30 p.m. EST until finished (no later than 3:30 p.m. EST). The meetings on March 8 (on PSO relationships, contracts, and disclosures) and March 13 (on operation of a component PSO) will be held in the AHRQ Conference Center, 540 Gaither Road, Rockville, MD 20850. The meeting on March 16 (on security and confidentiality issues) will be held at the Hilton Washington Embassy Row, 2015 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036. Select to read the [Federal Register](#) notice. Select to [register](#).

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2. Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance Announces Pilot Project

The Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance (AQA)—a group of 125 organizations that seeks to improve health care quality through a process in which key stakeholders agree on a strategy for measuring, reporting, and improving performance at the physician level—has announced six sites for a pilot project that will, for the first time, combine public and private information to measure and report on physician practice in a meaningful and transparent way for consumers and purchasers of health care. The pilot will not only measure care quality, but will identify those high

quality providers who are able to deliver efficient care to patients, avoiding unnecessary complications and costs. It is expected that the results of this pilot will provide a national framework for performance measurement and public reporting. The organizations selected by AQA as initial pilot sites are the following: California Cooperative Healthcare Reporting Initiative, San Francisco, CA; Indiana Health Information Exchange, Indianapolis, IN; Massachusetts Health Quality Partners, Watertown, MA; Minnesota Community Measurement, St. Paul, MN; Phoenix Regional Healthcare Value Measurement Initiative, Phoenix, AZ; and Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality, Madison WI. The pilot project will be supported with funding from CMS and the AHRQ. "AHRQ is very pleased to help support this pilot project, which will help set the stage for effective, useful reporting of physician practice and performance," said AHRQ Director Carolyn Clancy, M.D. Visit to read our [press release](#).

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3. AHRQ Pediatric Quality Indicators Software and Documentation Is Available

AHRQ's Pediatric Quality Indicators (PedQIs) module, Version 3.0, the software and documentation, are now available for download or viewing on the [AHRQ Quality Indicators](#) site. The PedQIs are indicators of children's health care utilizing inpatient administrative data and are designed to help hospitals examine both the quality of inpatient care and the quality of outpatient care that can be inferred from inpatient data, such as potentially preventable hospitalizations. The module consists of 13 provider-level indicators, such as iatrogenic pneumothorax in at-risk neonates and non-neonates and postoperative respiratory failure, plus five area-level indicators, including admission rates for children with asthma, diabetes, short-term complications, and gastroenteritis.

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4. AHRQ Annual Report Is Available

The *AHRQ Annual Report on Research and Financial Management, FY 2004*, highlights the research and financial management activities and accomplishments of AHRQ and its employees. This report demonstrates AHRQ's resolve to improve the quality and delivery of health care services provided in the nation, as well as the Agency's continued commitment to assure sound investments in programs that will make a difference. Through this report, the Agency describes its efforts to strengthen the financial environment, to improve accountability and performance, identify approaching challenges, and better protect the integrity of the resources entrusted to AHRQ. Select to read the full [report](#). A print copy of the report is available by sending an e-mail to ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov.

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5. AHRQ and CMS to Host 10th National CAHPS® User Group Meeting on March 29-31

AHRQ and CMS are sponsoring the 10th National CAHPS® User Group Meeting: A Decade of Advancing Patient Centered-Care, on March , in Baltimore, MD. The conference will feature presentations and discussion forums for and by users of CAHPS surveys and data. The keynote speakers are AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., and Jennifer Daley, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at Tenet Healthcare Corporation. Select to [register](#).

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6. New ExpectMore.gov Web Site Launched

A new Web site—ExpectMore.gov—was launched this month to provide the public and Congress with candid, easy-to-understand assessments of Federal programs. By making this information more accessible than it has been in past years, taxpayers can see which programs work, which do not, and what we are doing to improve. We want to be held accountable for how our programs work and we want everyone to know how we're doing. ExpectMore.gov includes assessment summaries about the nearly 800 Federal programs assessed to date. Each summary provides a program overview, some of the key findings of the assessment, and the followup actions agencies are taking to address those findings and improve program performance. Each summary also links to the full program assessment details, the program's Web site, and the search results for similar federal programs. Select to access the ExpectMore.gov Web site.

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7. Do You Know How AHRQ's Research Is Being Used?

We are always looking for ways in which AHRQ-funded research, products, and tools have changed people's lives, influenced clinical practice, improved policies, and affected patient outcomes. AHRQ's impact case studies describe AHRQ research findings in action. These case studies are used in testimony, budget documents, and speeches. We would like to know if you are aware of any impact your AHRQ-funded research has had on health care policy, clinical practice, or patient outcomes. Contact AHRQ's Impact Case Studies Program at Jane.Steele@ahrq.hhs.gov or (301) 427-1243 with your impact stories.

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8. AHRQ in the Professional Literature

We are providing the following hyperlinks to journal abstracts through PubMed® for your convenience. Unfortunately, some of you may not be able to access the abstracts because of firewalls or specific settings on your individual computer systems. If you are having problems, you should ask your technical support staff for possible remedies.

Newsome BB, Warnock DG, Kiefe CI, et al. Delay in time to receipt of thrombolytic medication among Medicare patients with kidney disease. *Am J Kidney Dis* 2005 Oct; 46(4):595-602. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Halm EA, Wisnivesky JP, Leventhal H. Quality and access to care among a cohort of inner-city adults with asthma: who gets guideline concordant care? *Chest* 2005 Oct; 128(4):1943-1950. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Murray PK, Love TE, Dawson NV, et al. Rehabilitation services after the implementation of the nursing home prospective payment system. *Med Care* 2005 Nov; 43(11):1109-1115. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Janssen WJ, Collard HR, Saint S, et al. Clinical problem solving: a perfect storm. *N Engl J Med* 2005 Nov 3; 353(18):1956-1961. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Clarke PS. Analyzing change based on two measures taken under different conditions. *Stat Med* 2005 Nov 30; 24(22):3401-3415. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

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