

June 11, 2007, Issue #231

AHRQ News and Numbers

The rate of teenage and younger girls giving birth in U.S. hospitals dropped by a quarter between 1997 and 2004—from 55 to 41 admissions per 100,000 girls under age 18. Despite the decline, the United States continues to have the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates in the industrialized world. Medicaid was billed for nearly three of every four teen childbirths—with total costs of about \$348 million. Private insurers got the bill for 21 percent; 2 percent went to other payers, such as Tricare; and in 3 percent of the cases, the girls had no health insurance, [Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, HCUP, Statistical Brief #31: *Childbirth-Related Hospitalizations among Adolescent Girls, 2004*, [statistical brief](#).]

Today's Headlines:

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1. AHRQ'S Annual State Snapshots Highlight States' Gains and Lags in Health Care Quality

AHRQ released new *State Snapshots* that show States have made promising gains in health care quality while identifying needed improvements in areas ranging from cancer screening to treatments of heart attack patients. The 51 *State Snapshots*—every State plus Washington, D.C.—are based on 129 quality measures, each of which evaluates a different segment of health care performance. While the measures are the products of complex statistical formulas, they are expressed on the Web site as simple, five-color "performance meter" illustrations. AHRQ's annual *State Snapshots* is based on data drawn from more than 30 sources, including government surveys, health care facilities, and health care organizations. Select to read our [press release](#) and to access this year's [State Snapshots](#) tools.

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2. AHRQ Director Testifies on Strategies to Increase Information on Comparative Clinical Effectiveness

AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., testified today before the House Ways and Means Committee's Health Subcommittee on strategies to increase research and information on comparative clinical effectiveness. Dr. Clancy highlighted AHRQ's Effective Health Care program. Select to read Dr. Clancy's [statement](#).

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3. AHRQ's 2007 Annual Conference: Improving Health Care, Improving Lives

Register now for AHRQ's 2007 Annual Conference: Improving Health Care, Improving Lives, which will be held September 26-28 in Bethesda, MD. The conference will offer exciting opportunities to learn about the latest AHRQ research ready for use in addressing a variety of clinical and health policy issues. Sessions will feature leading experts active in research and implementation projects aimed at improving quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of care. Select to [register](#) and for additional information about attending this year's conference.

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4. Summary on Payment/Quality Alignment Now Available

The summary from a recent expert meeting co-hosted by AHRQ and the Commonwealth Fund, *Toward a Research Agenda on Quality-Payment Alignment: Findings From an Invitational Colloquium*, is now available. Recommendations for research resulting from the meeting specifically address two gaps in knowledge: 1) evidence on the impact of payment mechanisms rewarding health care providers for improving quality and ways to develop effective mechanisms that apply to different types of providers; and 2) evidence on financial incentives aimed at rewarding patients—the consumers of health care services—for choosing high-quality providers. Select to access this [summary](#), along with other AHRQ resources on pay for performance.

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5. Request for Information on the National Health Data Stewardship

Because of the growing demand for accurate health care data from multiple sectors, AHRQ has issued a request for information to gather information from stakeholders to achieve a broader understanding of the issues that a national health data stewardship entity may present. Responses are due by July 27. Select to read the June 4 *Federal Register* [notice](#) for more information.

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6. Latest AHRQ Healthcare 411 Podcast Focuses on Knowing Your Lab Numbers

AHRQ's latest Healthcare 411 audio podcast features AHRQ Director Carolyn Clancy, M.D. discussing the importance of common blood tests and other screening tests. Select to listen to the 9 1/2-minute [podcast](#). You can listen to the audio program directly through your computer if it has a sound card and speakers and can play MP3 audio files, or you can download it to a portable audio device. In any case, you will be able to listen at your convenience. To access any of AHRQ's podcasts and special reports or to sign up for a free subscription to the series and receive notice of all future AHRQ podcasts, visit our [Healthcare 411](#) series main page.

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7. 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.

Classen DC, Avery AJ, Bates DW. Evaluation and certification of computerized provider order entry systems. *J Am Med Inform Assoc* 2007 Jan-Feb; 14(1):48-55. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Wang YR, Alexander GC, Stafford RS. Outpatient hypertension treatment, treatment intensification, and control in Western Europe and the United States. *Arch Intern Med* 2007 Jan 22; 167(2):141-147. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Stukenborg GJ, Wagner DP, Harrell FE Jr., et al. Present-at-admission diagnoses improved mortality risk adjustment among acute myocardial infarction patients. *J Clin Epidemiol* 2007 Feb; 60(2):142-154. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Menezes NM, AyH, Wang Z, et al. The real estate factor: quantifying the impact of infarct location on stroke severity. *Stroke* 2007 Jan; 38(1):194-197. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

Green Conaway DL, Enriquez JR, Barberena JE, et al. Assessment of a physician response to glycemic control in diabetic patients presenting with an acute coronary syndrome. *Am Heart J* 2006 Dec; 152(6):1022-1027. Select to read the [abstract](#) in PubMed®.

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