

The Affordable Care Act is the Lit Match for Our “Escape Fire”

In *Escape Fire*, we see many of ways the health care system has been failing doctors and patients – and many ways the system needs to change. The good news is the new health reform law (the Affordable Care Act, or ACA) is already beginning to make many of these “escape fires” a reality. The bad news is these reforms are being threatened by misinformation and myths about the law. Get informed about the facts. Then join doctors and patients in taking a stand through the Doctors for America Patients Over Politics Campaign – www.patientsoverpolitics.org.

ACA Invests in Primary Care

The ACA responds to the challenges that primary care providers and patients face in making sure people get the routine care they need – instead of being rushed in and out of a doctor’s office or getting pushed into procedures.

Helps Primary Care Providers Focus on Quality Care

- Medicare and Medicaid are leading the way on new models of paying primary care providers (Patient-Centered Medical Homes and other models) so they can focus more attention on counseling, prevention, and preventing complications of chronic disease – instead of needing to squeeze in as many short patient visits as possible.

Increases Access:

32 million people will get insured under the ACA through new insurance exchanges, Medicaid expansion, rules ending the worst insurance company practices, and providing subsidies and tax credits to both Americans purchasing private insurance through the exchanges and small businesses providing coverage for their employees. These new policies will make it easier to get insurance especially if you have a pre-existing condition, are self-employed, or own a small business. Being insured makes it much more likely that you can see a primary care provider to take care of illness before it gets serious.

Increases the Number of Primary Care Providers:

- Funds residency training programs to train 500 new primary care physicians by 2015.
- Trains 600 new physician assistants, who practice medicine as members of a team with their supervising physician.
- Trains 600 more nurse practitioners to provide comprehensive primary care.
- Establishes 10 new nurse-managed health clinics, which assist in the training of nurse practitioners to provide comprehensive primary health care services to populations living in medically underserved communities.
- Gives States resources and grants to plan and implement innovative strategies to expand their primary care workforce by 10-25% over 10 years to meet increased demand.
- Gives primary care doctors a 10% bonus to make it more enticing to practice primary care.



ACA Shifts the Focus Towards Preventing Disease

To address all the time and money that is spent on treating out-of-control preventable diseases, the ACA is starting an unprecedented shift toward prevention – both in health care and in the community and workplaces.

- Insurance companies and Medicare are required to make it easier for people to get preventive care by charging no co-pays or deductible for 16 preventive services for all adults, 22 additional services for women, and 27 additional services for children.
- The new Prevention and Public Health Fund is helping workplaces and communities build new programs that focus on prevention, including:
 - o A program for businesses of all sizes to focus on programs aimed at reducing rates of chronic disease among employees and promoting workplace health activities.
 - o New grants are helping communities tackle problems like childhood obesity and tobacco smoking that have long-term health and financial consequences for individuals and communities.

ACA Shifts the Focus Towards Quality – Not Just Quantity

Too many providers feel the pressure to increase the number of patients they see instead of focusing on the quality of the care they provide them. Fortunately, the ACA has begun to change that.

- *The Partnership for Patients: Better Care, Lower Costs* is a new public-private partnership of providers, patient advocates, and other leaders who are making hospital care safer, more reliable, and less costly.
- The new Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute focuses on research that looks at what treatments work best – instead of industry-sponsored studies that skew toward what makes the most money.
- Hospitals will be paid based on not only on the number of patients they see, but how well they take care of those patients – by focusing on decreasing complication rates.
- Accountable Care Organizations are patient-centered organizations where the patient and providers are true partners in care decisions. This provides coordinated care and less fractured care, increasing the overall quality.

ACA Moves the Conversation in the Right Direction

The Affordable Care Act is the first step in the right direction. Dr. Don Berwick, who stars in the film, has played a key role in implementing the law during his year as the administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in 2010-2011.

Because of the Affordable Care Act and the efforts of thousands of people who working to implement it, we are beginning to focus our care and efforts on increasing the quality of the care, access to that care, and decreasing the expensive, highly fractured care many of our patients have come to rely on. Our patients, hospitals, and providers can't afford to stop now. We must continue to change the conversation from talking plain numbers to talking about healthy lives.