

Electronic Newsletter

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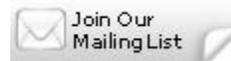
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One in Three Patients Experience Medical Mistakes



Current Measures May Detect Just 10% of Errors



The [Los Angeles Times](#) "Booster Shots" blog reported, "In the April issue of the journal *Health Affairs*, which focuses on medical error[s], a team of

researchers affiliated with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, a think tank in Cambridge, Mass., report that the number of 'adverse events' in hospitals -- injuries caused by medical error rather than patients' underlying conditions -- might be 10 times greater than previously measured." Researchers "used a new method to look for bad outcomes, reviewing medical records for 795 patients at three large US hospitals that had 'well-established operational patient safety programs.'" They "detected 354 adverse events among the patients -- 10 times more than other methods in use." The researchers concluded that in all, "adverse events occurred in 33.2% of admissions."

HHS Initiative Seeks to Reduce Medical Errors, Costs

The [Los Angeles Times](#) was among the many papers reporting last month that the Obama administration announced a broad new initiative "to reduce medical errors, partnering with private insurers, business leaders, hospitals and patient advocates to tackle a problem that kills thousands of Americans every year." This campaign, "funded by the healthcare overhaul the president signed last year, aims to cut by 40% over the next three years the number of harmful preventable conditions such as infections that patients acquire in the hospital."

According to the [CNN](#) "The Chart" blog, the initiative

Study: Medical Errors Cost Billions Each Year

The [National Journal](#) reported, "As much as 45 cents out of every dollar spent on US healthcare is related to a medical mistake, researchers reported on Thursday." In fact, "some kind of mistake or adverse event occurs in one-third of all hospital admissions -- far more than in previous estimates and in spite of 10 years of efforts to do away with these errors, one of several studies on the subject published in the journal *Health Affairs* found." Notably, the "single most expensive cause of harm is infection after surgery: More than 252,000 infections in 2008 cost \$3.36 billion, Jill Van Den Bos of Milliman's Denver Health Practice and colleagues reported in *Health Affairs*."

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"will save 60,000 lives over the next three years by reducing millions of preventable hospital-related complications and injuries. HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius says the new partnership will also save about \$35 billion in healthcare costs including \$10 billion in Medicare savings." Meanwhile, American Medical Association president Cecil Wilson, MD, said that the group's "physicians will be encouraged to do everything they can to reduce adverse events and hospital readmissions." Wilson added, "We know that if we ensure that a patient's primary care physician receives their discharge papers within 24 hours of their release from the hospital, the likelihood of hospital readmission will be reduced."

CBO: Malpractice Reform Savings Would be Minimal



Joanne Doroshov of the Center for Justice and Democracy wrote about a March analysis from the Congressional Budget Office indicating that savings from malpractice reforms would be minimal. Doroshov argued that reforms imposed by HR 5, which includes a \$250,000 noneconomic damage cap, will actually increase the US deficit. According to Doroshov, malpractice victims who cannot secure compensation through litigation will turn to avenues like Medicare and Medicaid. The CBO's prediction that reform will reduce health spending by 0.4 percent doesn't account for this. Nor does the CBO consider "that these kinds of extreme 'tort reforms' would weaken the deterrent potential of the tort system, with accompanying increases in cost and physician utilization inherent in caring for newly maimed patients." Read [more](#).

Safe Kids USA Launches Sports Safety Initiative

[Safe Kids USA](#) with support from [Johnson & Johnson](#) is launching a national initiative to educate parents, coaches and athletes on how to help children properly prepare for a sport, prevent injuries, and play safely. Key areas include the importance of a pre-participation evaluation; overuse injuries; dehydration and heat-related illness; and concussions.



Study: CT Scans May Put Kids' Health at Risk

The [South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#) noted that according to a [study](#) in the journal *Radiology*, "children underwent five times more CT scans" during emergency department visits in "2008 than they did 13 years before -- and 90 percent of the exams were done in hospitals that do not specialize in pediatrics." Perhaps that is "not too surprising in an age in which computed tomography...has proven revolutionary in the diagnosis of all kinds of injuries and ailments." But, with these rewards "come significant risks, especially for children most susceptible to them, and the danger doesn't seem to be lighting much of a fire, for parents or the doctors they're trusting with their children's lives."

Advances in Vehicle Safety Thanks to Litigation

In a [Washington Post](#) op-ed, American Association for Justice President Gibson Vance credited litigation and the civil justice system for driving "safety innovations in vehicles for more than half a century..." having "served as the most consistent and powerful forces in heightening safety standards, revealing previously concealed defects and regulatory weaknesses and deterring manufacturers from cutting corners on safety for the goal of greater profits." Noting the Ford Pinto, he argued, "Had compliance with federal standards been a complete defense of vehicle safety, Ford could not have been held accountable for the many burn victims that the company was later shown to have anticipated." Gibson says the auto industry's effort to limit its liability and skirt regulations is "devastating for consumers." Gibson hails litigation's crucial and continued role in ensuring safety and accountability.

New CDC Data on Older Drivers



CDC data shows "the risk of being injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash increases as people age. In 2008, more than 5,500 older adults were killed in motor vehicle crashes and more than 183,000 were injured. This amounts to 15 older adults killed and 500 injured in crashes on average every day." Read [more](#).

CDC's 2011 Data on Foodborne Illnesses

The CDC estimates that each year roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) gets sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Read [more](#).

Recall Central

To read about recent recalls and product safety news from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, click [here](#).

Get the latest recall information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [here](#).

The Dept. of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service regulate meat, poultry products and processed eggs. Check their recalls [here](#).

Click [here](#) for Food and Drug Administration recalls, market withdrawals and safety alerts.

For updates on the peanut products recall click [here](#).

FDA Website Allows For Tracking of Recalled Foods

The "Healthwatch" blog at [The Hill](#) reported that the FDA changed its [website](#) so consumers can keep track of recalled foods, a measure required by the Food Safety Modernization Act, which said the FDA should create "a consumer-friendly recall search engine." The act also "gives the FDA power to recall tainted food, quarantine geographical areas and access food producers' records." The website change went live last month.

Distracted Driving Includes Playing Loud

Hidden Threat to Drivers: Missing Airbags



In 2008, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released a study examining fatal accidents in which a car's air bag should have deployed but didn't. The most common reason wasn't poor manufacturing by automakers. It was that the air bag was simply missing, never replaced after a previous crash. Many used cars being offered for sale have been in accidents, then salvaged and resold, possibly without air bags. And the buyers may never know. Air bags cost \$1,000 to \$3,000, expensive enough -- and difficult enough to check on -- that some auto repair shops charge for replacing them but don't do the work. Read [more](#).

GAO: FDA Device Approval Process Endangers Patients

The [AP](#) reported, "Government investigators say the Food and Drug Administration is putting patients at risk by approving sensitive medical devices such as hip joints and heart defibrillators under the same streamlined system intended for power wheelchairs, stitches and catheters." The "Government Accountability Office told Congress Wednesday that the approvals remain a serious issue for the government -- more than two years after the watchdog agency first cited the problem to the FDA." In response, Dr. William Maisel, deputy director for science in FDA's device center, said that the agency "will reclassify the 26 types of high-risk devices cited by GAO before the end of 2012."

CQ reported that the GAO findings were based on an "analysis of 3,510 voluntary recalls from 2005 through 2009." The results were "discussed as part of a debate over whether the agency should update the so-called 510(k) process, which is the main procedure for approving medical devices. The process was intended to be an approval route for products similar to those already on the market; unlike another rarely-used and more stringent review for new products, known as the premarket approval (PMA) process, the 510(k) procedure does not require manufacturers to test devices in people before selling them in the United States."

Survey: Teens See Parents Driving Badly



A new national survey commissioned by Ford indicates 82% of teens "report seeing their parents drive carelessly on the road." The study found "that even though nearly all parents (95%) say they are good drivers, more than half say their teen or 'tween (9-12 years old) children have asked them to slow down, stop driving distracted, or practice other safe behaviors behind the wheel." Read [more](#).

About Our Firm



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The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC

Proud to support the [North Stonington Education Foundation](#), [Little League Baseball](#), [Children International](#), and the [Conn. Chapter of the Special Olympics](#).

*** Advertising Material ***

Music

Parents who want to improve their kids' safety behind the wheel already know enough to warn them against talking on phones, sending text messages, stuffing cars with too many passengers and going faster than the law allows. But how many of us ever warn our kids about the highly deceptive danger that many of us associate with driving pleasure? That's listening to loud music. A whopping 93% of teen drivers play loud, distracting music behind the wheel. A 2001 study by Canadian scientists at Newfoundland's Memorial University found that reaction time slows as much as 20% when someone is subjected to loud volume, a potentially fatal delay for motorists driving even at modest speeds. Read [more](#).

Don't Drive Distracted!

It Kills



KidsAgainstDistractedDriving.com

Proudly Serving Connecticut and Rhode Island

The trial attorneys at The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC represent individuals in all types of personal injury cases throughout the state of Connecticut and the state of Rhode Island, including, in Connecticut: New London County, New Haven County, Middlesex County, Hartford County, Tolland County, and Windham County; and in Rhode Island: Bristol County, Kent County, Newport County, Providence County, and Washington County.

Referrals Welcome

Remember we are here if you need a referral to an attorney in a different area of law.

