

Your Expectations are Our Mission.

A Message from America's Hospitals

Health care is always changing. But there's one thing that can never change...your hospital must always be there when you need it.

That's what you expect, and that's what we demand of ourselves.

We're used to it. In fact, the expectations placed on hospitals go far beyond those placed on any other health care provider:

- Hospitals must be properly staffed to provide care every hour of every day—including holidays.
- Hospital staff must be prepared to respond to every natural or man-made disaster, and every new illness.
- Hospitals must treat everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.
- Hospitals must employ the latest technologies and procedures.

Meeting these expectations is a 24/7 challenge made more difficult by a complicated payment system. Nationally, hospitals deal with hundreds of insurers, each having different plans, all with multiple and often unique requirements for hospital bills. Add to that decades of governmental regulations, which have made a complex system even more complex and frustrating for both patients and the providers. And many patients—both uninsured and those with insurance—cannot afford to pay for care. As a result, hospitals have provided more than \$413 billion in uncompensated care since 2000.

Nearly a third of American hospitals operate in the red. At the same time, hospitals are in the midst of a major transformation, making huge investments in information and other technologies as



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they transition from a payment system that reimbursed them for the volume of procedures performed to one that holds them accountable for the quality of care provided.

Hospitals understand that their communities are experiencing profound social and economic change as well. America's hospitals began to change to meet evolving needs long before the passage of the Affordable Care Act. Their goals are simple to describe, but challenging to accomplish:

- Provide better, safer and more coordinated care to an aging patient population.
- Improve the health of communities where chronic illness is increasing at an alarming rate.
- Reduce the per capita cost of delivering health care.

And hospitals are delivering on these goals:

- The growth of health care spending has fallen to the lowest rate since the federal government began tracking it half a century ago.
- At the same time, study after study confirms that hospitals are improving the quality and equity of care they deliver and are doing a better job keeping patients safe.

The women and men of America's hospitals believe that every person has a role in building healthier communities, where everyone can reach his or her highest potential for health—and health care coverage is the key to success. We are proud of our progress and we're committed to continuing to improve in every way we can, to best meet the needs of our communities.

America's hospitals are leading the way.

To read more, go to: www.AHA.org



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