Preferential Funding for Primary Care vs. Specialty Care and Penalties for Readmissions (As Promoted in the ACA) Are Bad For Patients and Society And Will Not Decrease Costs

Bruce A. Perler, MD, MBA

Physician Shortage

The New York Times

No, There Won’t Be a Doctor Shortage

The Opinion Pages

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The New York Times.

The American Medical Association reports that there are currently 72,000 unfilled positions for physicians, and the shortage is expected to grow to 128,000 by 2025.

The Physicians Shortage

I Have No Financial Relationships to Disclose

Bruce A. Perler, MD, MBA

Medical Experts Say Physician Shortage Goes Beyond Primary Care

AAMC Report: February 2014

The AAMC’s Center for Workforce Studies estimates that by 2020, the United States will face a shortage of 45,000 primary care physicians and 92,000 surgeons and medical specialists. These estimates take into account an aging physician workforce, as well as the 15 million patients who will become eligible for Medicare and the 32 million younger patients who will become newly insured through the Affordable Care Act.
### Model: Population Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projected population</th>
<th>Vascular surgeons needed</th>
<th>Vascular surgeons in practice</th>
<th>Shortage</th>
<th>% Shortage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>336,000,000</td>
<td>3117</td>
<td>2927</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>364,000,000</td>
<td>3577</td>
<td>3047</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>392,000,000</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>420,000,000</td>
<td>3096</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Model: Workload Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vascular surgeons needed</th>
<th>Vascular surgeons in practice</th>
<th>Shortage</th>
<th>% Shortage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2925</td>
<td>2907</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>3181</td>
<td>2927</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>3446</td>
<td>3047</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>3711</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Impact of hospital teaching status on survival from ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm rupture**
- Patients: 6,636 rAAAs
- EVAR Mortality: rAAAs
  - Vasc/Surg Teaching Hospitals: 19.8%
  - Non-Vasc Surg Teaching Hospitals: 39%
  - p = 0.001

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**Health Affairs, 2013**

- **EVAR Mortality: rAAAs**
  - Vasc/Surg Teaching Hospitals: 19.8%
  - Non-Vasc Surg Teaching Hospitals: 39%
  - p = 0.001

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**America’s Bitter Pill, 2014**

- ACA: Penalties for Hospital Readmissions
  - Hospitals: $200 Billion to $250 Billion Revenue x 10 Yrs
  - Government: Recover Hospital Profits
  - Solution: Tax Hospitals with Penalty for Readmissions
  - ??? Impact on Patient Care

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**The Medicare Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program**

- Time for Reform
- The latest numbers suggest nearly 80% of hospitals are now being penalized ($428 million in the 2014-2015 fiscal year).

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**The Care Span**

- An Aging Population And Growing Disease Burden Will Require A Large And Specialized Health Care Workforce By 2025

- “We project that the demand for adult primary care services will grow by approximately 14 percent between 2013 and 2025. Vascular surgery has the highest projected demand growth (31 percent).”

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**The New York Times**

- Obamacare blamed for killing hospitals
  - Closures by the multitudes seen as danger to patients, harbinger of worse

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**The Washington Post**

- Hospitals closings
  - Eighteen acute-care hospitals across the United States shut their doors in 2013.
  - At least 12 more hospitals have closed this year in rural areas alone.
  - Many are getting out of the hospital business because of the Affordable Care Act.
  - “It’s just the new normal under Obamacare,” says Lee Halt, M.D.

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**Washington Post**

- The latest news on hospitals
  - Obamacare threatens charitable hospitals

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**The Washington Post**

- No sacred soil
  - Obamacare threatens non-profit hospitals
  - Nothing sacred in this battle for funds.

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**The Washington Post**

- More news on hospitals
  - Obamacare backers say they will use $1 billion to save the hospital system.

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**The Washington Post**

- More news on hospitals
  - Obamacare backers say they will use $1 billion to save the hospital system.
Readmissions:
- 100 Patients (13.9%)
  - 28 (3.9%) < 30 days
  - 28 (3.9%) 30-60 days
  - 44 (6.1%) > 60 days

Limb Amputation:
- 64 (64%) Patients
  - BKA: 58
  - Through Knee: 2
  - AKA: 4

Primary Amputation to Reduce Readmissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patients:</th>
<th>717</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amputations:</td>
<td>Toe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years:</td>
<td>2000 - 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

- Need to Train More Primary Care Physicians
- Greater Need to Train Even More Vascular Surgeons
- Specialized Vascular Surgical Training Optimizes Patient Outcomes & Saves Money
- Penalties in the ACA, as for Hospital Readmissions, May have Unintended Negative Consequences of Compromising Patient Care