Report Says Health Systems Are Key to Improving Cancer Outcomes in the United States

Latest in American Cancer Society series outlining blueprint for cancer control

A new report says without a national investment and commitment to transforming health care delivery in the United States, many people will not benefit from the substantial progress in reducing the burden of cancer already made, let alone the innovations and breakthroughs that are yet to come.

The article is the fifth in a series comprising a cancer control blueprint to identify opportunities for improving cancer control in the U.S. The latest chapter, authored by Robin Yabroff, Ph.D., and colleagues describes the state of cancer care delivery in the U.S.; provides an overview of its health care systems; and identifies goals for a high-performing health care system. It appears in the American Cancer Society Journal, *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*.

> *"No American should develop cancer, suffer needlessly, or die prematurely because they cannot access the care they need"*

Between 1991 and 2015, the cancer mortality rate declined dramatically in the United States, reflecting improvements in cancer prevention, screening, treatment, and survivorship care. However, cancer outcomes in the United States vary substantially between populations defined by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, health insurance coverage, and geographic area of residence.

Many potentially preventable cancer deaths occur in individuals who did not receive effective cancer prevention, screening, treatment, or survivorship care. At the same time, cancer care spending is large and growing, straining national, state, health insurance plans, and family budgets.

The article focuses on the role of health systems in helping ensure that all populations benefit from scientific research that has identified proven tools to reduce the cancer burden. The article identifies goals for a high-performing health system:

- Facilitate adoption of healthy lifestyles;
- Provides access to a regular source of primary care;
- Provide timely access to high-quality, evidence-based care;
- Be affordable for patients, payers, and society;
- Promote patient-centeredness, including effective patient-provider communication;
- Enhance coordination and communication between providers, including primary care and specialty care providers.

"No American should develop cancer, suffer needlessly, or die prematurely because they cannot access the care they need," write the authors. "[M]uch is already known about how to reduce the burden of cancer, but without a national investment and commitment to transforming our health care systems, many people will not benefit from the progress we have already made, let alone the innovations and breakthroughs that are yet to come."

Article: Minimizing the Burden of Cancer in the United States: Goals for a High-Performing Health Care System, CA J for Clinic doi: 10.3322/caac.21556.

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