

## The \$17.1 billion problem: the annual cost of measurable medical errors.

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Van Den Bos J, Rustagi K, Gray T, et al. The \$17.1 Billion Problem: The Annual Cost Of Measurable Medical Errors. Health Aff. 2011;30(4):596-603. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0084.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/171-billion-problem-annual-cost-measurable-medical-errors>

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The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services stopped [reimbursing](#) hospitals for additional costs associated with certain preventable adverse events in 2008. Despite the widespread controversy engendered by this policy, the actual financial effect has been [small](#), leading to calls for expansion of the policy. This actuarial study used a case-control approach to estimate the annual marginal cost of preventable adverse events in hospitalized patients at \$17.1 billion, largely attributable to post-surgical complications, [health care–associated infections](#), and pressure ulcers. [Never events](#) accounted for approximately \$3.7 billion in excess costs. The results of this study provide targets for policy efforts to control health care costs and improve patient safety.