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TO: Partnership for Quality Care
FROM: Danny Franklin, Senior Vice President
RE: National Poll Results: Executive Summary
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The Benenson Strategy Group conducted 1,000 telephone interviews from January 8-11, 2011 among adults nationwide. Both landlines and cell phones were called using random digit dialing. The margin of error for the entire data set is $\pm 3.10\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

Introduction

- Americans see the quality of care provided in hospitals today as adequate, but far from exceptional.
- This attitude underpins widespread and serious concerns about hospital acquired infections and, once people learn more about it, sepsis.
- Concern about these issues is intensified once people learn:
 - ✓ The scope of the problems
 - ✓ The severity of the problems
 - ✓ The lack of protocols in hospitals to address the problems
- Once they know the pervasiveness and severity of these issues, Americans show an intense desire for the health care community to prioritize time and resources to addressing them.
- There is a strong desire to establish solutions that put in place standardized procedures for hospitals to deal with the problems.
 - ✓ *For sepsis:* Create standardized protocols to screen, diagnose, and treat sepsis and ensure blood tests for sepsis are fast-tracked through hospital labs.
 - ✓ *For hospital acquired infections:* Encourage hospitals to invest in training and create a culture of cleanliness; require doctors to use a checklist for each patient; and publicize a hospital's track record on hospital acquired infections.
- In addition, nearly all Americans believe chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease are among the most urgent health problems facing this country.

Key Health Care Concerns

- Americans demonstrate a deep desire for improvements to the quality of health care in this country that is rooted in concerns that hospitals and health care providers are not currently providing the best possible care.
 - ✓ There is widespread and intense agreement that certain aspects of care could and must be improved through greater attention and standardization of hospital procedure.
- These concerns form the basis of broad and intense interest in action on two key health care challenges: sepsis and hospital acquired infections.
 - ✓ Intense concern about these issues, coupled with a desire to see the health care community take action, lead Americans to believe that addressing these conditions should be a high priority for health care institutions.
- Particularly in the case of sepsis, there is a confluence of dynamics extremely favorable for a public information campaign.
 - ✓ Relatively low awareness of the costs of sepsis, combined with a high degree of concern once facts are given, suggest that a well-crafted public information campaign could generate a groundswell of interest in policy changes both for government and health care institutions.
- The shock value of sepsis should not be underestimated, as concern about the issue climbs significantly when Americans learn the scope and severity of the problem.
 - ✓ After hearing a description of the condition and its effects, 83% believe sepsis to be a very serious problem, and 85% say it should be a top priority for time and resources.
- In line with a generally low estimation of the quality of hospital care, the public is already deeply concerned about hospital acquired infections.
 - ✓ After hearing details about the prevalence of such infections, 78% believe them to be a very serious problem, and 84% say they should be a top priority for time and resources.
- While acute childhood asthma and hospital re-admissions are each viewed as serious problems in their own right, Americans do not place the same priority on addressing these conditions as they do on sepsis or hospital acquired infections.
 - ✓ In the case of asthma, 78% believe it is a very serious problem, and 70% say it should be a top priority.
 - It is likely the relatively narrow scope of victims that is limiting prioritization of this issue, particularly in comparison to the universal reach of sepsis and hospital acquired infections.
 - ✓ In the case of hospital re-admissions, 52% believe it is a very serious problem, and 64% say it should be a top priority.
 - It is likely the less severe health consequences—relative to sepsis—made the problem seem less urgent.

Driving Up Concern about Key Issues

- There are clear avenues for driving up the intensity of concern on sepsis and hospital acquired infections as well as proposing solutions seen as both effective and replicable.
 - ✓ People react to key details about the scope and severity of the problems with a high degree of concern:

% Very Concerned

Sepsis is the number one cause of death in American hospitals and it is responsible for more deaths than cancer, heart disease or stroke combined.....74%

Nearly 2 million people a year in the US acquire an infection while in the hospital, and a very high percentage of those are considered preventable.....71%

- ✓ The lack of best practices, particularly standardized procedures and protocols, ratchets up the intensity of concern even further:

% Very Concerned

Many hospitals do not have a standardized protocol to identify and treat sepsis, and often the symptoms are not recognized by a hospital until it has reached a severe level.....78%

Hand washing is the single most important step in reducing the transmission of infections. Some hospitals with very rigorous hand washing requirements have cut the infection rate by more than half, yet doctors and nurses do not always take this simple step and many caregivers treat patients without washing their hands first.....81%

Providing Solutions

- The high level of concern around the lack of protocols leads to a desire for establishing such best practices. There was near unanimous consensus that the following would be effective:
 - ✓ For sepsis:
 - Create a standardized procedure for hospitals to use for screening, diagnosing and treating sepsis to catch it earlier and treat it before it becomes life-threatening.
 - Ensure that blood tests for sepsis are fast-tracked through the hospitals labs as high priority tests to allow for faster diagnosis and earlier treatment.
 - ✓ For hospital acquired infections:
 - Encourage hospital leadership to invest in the training necessary to prevent the spread of infections and to create a consistent and vigorous hospital culture of cleanliness.
 - Require doctors to use a checklist for each patient to ensure that they are taking necessary steps to avoid infection.
 - ✓ Americans also see the utility of publicizing a hospital's track record on hospital acquired infections to put public pressure on the hospital to take steps to improve its record.
 - Require hospitals to publicly report their rate of hospital acquired infections and the deaths caused by those infections to allow people to shop around for a hospital with lower rates of infection and low death rates and help the community put pressure on hospitals with high infection rates to improve their practices.
- Comprehensive solutions to both sepsis and hospital acquired infections already exist and are seen as both significant and replicable.
 - ✓ Instances where changes in hospital policy led to clear improvements in treatment should be centerpieces of any public information campaign to communicate that progress on sepsis and hospital acquired infections is within reach.
 - Kaiser Permanente's program to establish rapid-response sepsis teams to reduce deaths from sepsis is seen to have made a significant impact, and 79% are confident it can be replicated at local hospitals.
 - GNYHA's program to reduce hospital acquired infections is also seen to have made a significant impact, and 84% are confident it can be replicated at local hospitals.
- Americans want to see hospitals and health care professionals lead the way to solutions, rather than broad government-based efforts.
 - ✓ For sepsis:
 - 84% believe hospitals and health care providers can have a significant impact on reducing the death rate from sepsis;
 - 48% see doctors and nurses as most responsible for reducing sepsis, 23% look to hospitals and hospital administrators, and 16% see "government officials who can create requirements for hospitals to invest in solutions" as most responsible.
 - ✓ For hospital acquired infections:
 - 83% believe hospitals and health care providers can have a significant impact on reducing the rate of hospital acquired infections;
 - 42% see doctors and nurses as most responsible for reducing infections, 30% look to hospitals and hospital administrators, and 20% view "government officials who can create requirements for hospitals to invest in solutions" as most responsible.

Baseline Attitudes on the Quality of Health Care

- These responses grow from generally low attitudes on the quality of health care in general and hospital care in particular.
 - ✓ Americans see a pressing need for the health care industry to take steps forward to improve the quality and safety of the care they provide.
- Americans believe that hospitals and health care providers:
 - ✓ Provide adequate, not exceptional, care;
 - 41% say the quality of health care in America today is excellent or good
 - 53% say the quality of care in hospitals is excellent or good
 - ✓ Could provide better patient care than they do now (62% agree);
 - ✓ Make mistakes that could have been prevented (59% agree).