

## Article

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### Operational Excellence in Health Care

There is a lot of concern about the need for additional funding in the health care system. There is less talk about the ability to close some of the gaps through quality and productivity techniques, which have strengthened many other sectors.

There is evidence that hospitals can simultaneously improve patient care, while reducing medication errors, wait time in emergency rooms, infection rates, and nursing turnover, which prevents hospitals from delivering consistent care.

In the US it is estimated that preventable medical errors cost \$9 billion and thousands of lives annually. Consider another quality issue—serious infections acquired in hospitals are estimated to cost \$35,000 US per patient. Improvements in just these two problems can create huge savings.

Chainsaw budget cutting can destroy any system, whether its a private company or a public service. Thoughtful and collaborative approaches to improving quality can radically improve the bottom line and overall effectiveness of any organization.

