Bimonthly updates to Congress on RAND’s work in health policy

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HOT TOPICS

Helping Children Cope with Violence

Between 20 percent and 50 percent of children in the United States are exposed to violence in a community setting, either as victims or witnesses. The emotional impact may be profound. Children exposed to violence frequently develop post-traumatic stress symptoms. They are more likely to have behavioral problems, poor school performance, and feelings of depression and anxiety.

A new program, developed by RAND, UCLA, and the Los Angeles Unified School District, helps young victims of violence. The program works. Enrolled students experienced significantly reduced post-traumatic stress symptoms. Additional advantages: the program is school-based, is inexpensive, is designed to minimize interruption of the school day, and can be delivered by the school’s own mental health professionals. It not only addresses the current trauma, but also gives children a toolkit to use in the future. It works well with a wide spectrum of students, including minorities and children from disadvantaged neighborhoods. And the program was well-accepted by students, teachers, school officials, and parents.

Summary: Helping Children Cope with Violence
Full article: A Mental Health Intervention for Schoolchildren Exposed to Violence

Protecting Yourself in a Terrorist Attack

Guarding against the possibility of terrorist attacks is in the forefront of the national agenda. But what should you do if such an attack actually occurs, and you need to act immediately, before first responders arrive?

A new RAND publication provides a simple, step-by-step response strategy for avoiding or minimizing injury in four types of attacks: chemical, radiological, nuclear, and biological. The actions suggested by the RAND team are appropriate regardless of the likelihood or scale of an attack, and they are designed to be useful in a variety of situations. The RAND guide supports and extends the Department of Homeland Security’s “Ready” campaign and could provide the foundation for other preparedness programs.

The full study provides background on RAND’s unique approach, which is based on an analysis of terrorist attack scenarios. The Quick Guide focuses on preparedness and response strategies. Both publications contain removable wallet-size reference cards.

Summary: Quick Guide to Individual Preparedness
Full study: Individual Preparedness

Financing Health Care for Women with Disabilities

Twenty-seven million American women live with disabilities. They have critical health care needs. However, a new RAND study finds that women with disabilities do not receive adequate primary and preventive care. In addition to specialized care for their disability, women with disabilities need the routine gynecological exams and preventive care that all women need. But they face daunting financial barriers: As a group, they are poorer than nondisabled women and are more likely to be covered by public insurance.

Congress has addressed the financial needs of people with disabilities through two major programs: Medicare and Medicaid. However, current reimbursement methods, including Medicare and Medicaid, fail to adequately take into account the additional time and equipment needed to care for women with disabilities.

Policy Issues: New approaches for financing health care for women with disabilities should be considered, along with the cost effect on Medicare and Medicaid. Options include:

- Payers could create incentives for tailoring case management to women with disabilities.
- States could consider adopting coordinated programs for disabled women who are covered by Medicaid.
- Medicare could review its methods for risk-adjusting both fee-for-service and capitation payment rates to ensure that the rates reflect the higher costs of primary care for women with disabilities.
- Medicare could also consider covering the coordinated care programs developed by some states for Medicaid recipients, while sharing costs with those states for individuals enrolled in both programs.
- Improved physician training, education, and sensitivity to disability issues would enhance the quality of care.
- Coverage could be extended to services that typically are not covered by payers but can be shown to be cost-effective.

Read more: Financing Health Care for Women with Disabilities

FORTHCOMING PROJECT

Are older Americans getting appropriate care?

RAND Health conducts objective research on health, health behavior, and health policy. Access to all RAND Health research is available at www.rand.org/health/.

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