



Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Advancing Excellence in Health Care

www.ahrq.gov

Health & Cancer Policy for 2008 and Beyond

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Case Presentation: Stage III Melanoma

- JG, 70-year-old white woman is diagnosed with Stage III melanoma at a renown cancer center
- Six years later, she is admitted due to diffuse back pain and fatigue, and is found to have extensive metastases – is given palliative care
- She was transferred from the cancer to a rehabilitation facility, but had extensive difficulty with pain management
- Two weeks later, she was readmitted to the cancer center with extensive pulmonary infiltrates, and expired within 48 hours

This case illustrates:

- Suboptimal quality of care
- Poor patient adherence
- How bad a disease cancer is





The Quality Challenge

What Is Quality?

**The Right
Care**

**For The
Right Person**

**At The
Right Time**

A Quality Disconnect

**Health care
costs up 8%
per year**

**Health care
quality up
3.1% in 2006**

Health Care Quality



- Varies – A LOT; **NOT** clearly related to \$\$ spent
- Matters – can be measured and improved
- Measurement science is evolving:
 - Structure, process and outcomes
 - Broad recognition that patient experience is essential component*
- Strong focus on public reporting is good
 - Motivates providers to improve
 - Not yet ‘consumer friendly’



Key Cancer Findings: Quality Report

Cancer deaths per 100,000 population per years for all cancers, United States, 1999 and 2003

The 2006 National Healthcare Quality Report reveals improvements in virtually every category

- The greatest decrease of cancer deaths was in people 65 and over, 224.9 to 211.8
- Males registered the next largest decrease, 251.9 to 233.3
- The one increase listed was for people who did not complete high school, 143.2 to 157.9

Total

2003	Number	556,890
	Rate	190.1
1999	Number	549,829
	Rate	200.8



Getting to Value-Driven Quality Health Care

"All health care is local, and we need cooperative local action just as we need common national goals."

*Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary
US Dept. of Health and Human Services
January 5, 2007*





Using Health IT to Transform Cancer Care

The Technology Exchange for Cancer Health Network (TechNET): University of Tennessee Health Science Center

- An AHRQ-funded, multi-state collaborative to implement a systematic care program to improve cancer management in rural west Tennessee, north Mississippi and east Arkansas
 - A two-pronged approach to clinical decision support:
 - 1) Access to oncology, hematology and other specialists through the Center's tele-health network
 - 2) Electronic health records, integrated with decision support systems, online management of cancer protocols, electronic orders and medication management systems
 - Primary goal: To determine how a multi-state health IT collaborative can help develop measurable and sustainable improvements in health care quality and costs



AHRQ Cancer Research Activities

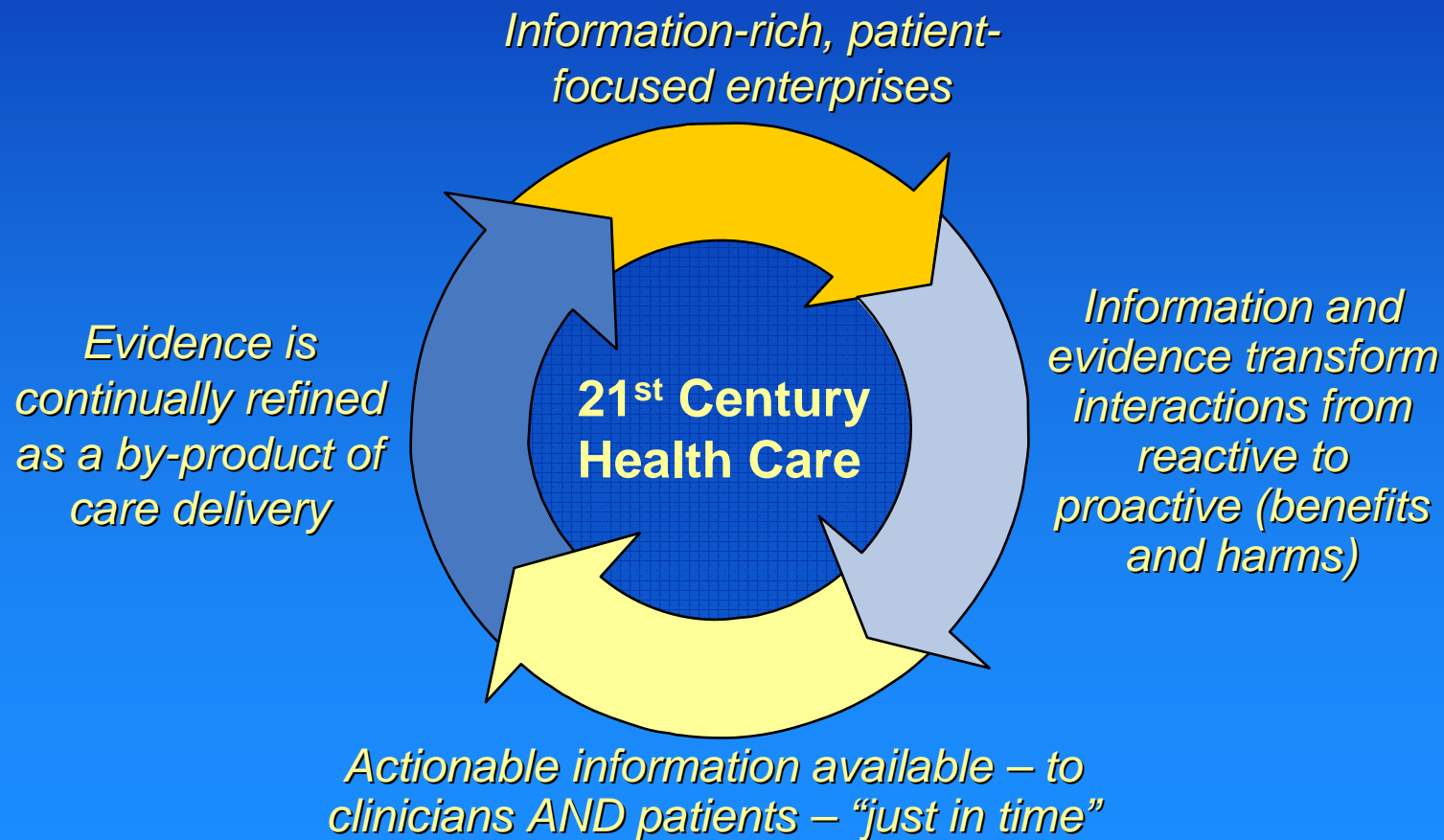
- Personalized Medicine: To assess the evidence that the use of genomic tests for ovarian cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment leads to improved outcomes – *AHRQ Evidence Report/Technology Assessment 145 May 2006*
- Cancer Care Quality Measures: To identify quality measures and the evidence for them to support quality assessment and improvement in the palliative care of patients with cancer, and to identify important gaps in related research – *AHRQ Evidence Report/Technology Assessment 137 October 2006**
- Communities as Partners in Cancer Clinical Trials: AHRQ GOLD Grant funding for Community-Campus Partnerships/Health to develop a national effort to improve participation of underserved populations in cancer clinical trials – *Project to run from 9/30/2006 – 9/29/2009*

*The Cancer Quality of Care Measures Project (CANQUAL), a joint initiative by AHRQ, NCI, CMS, CDC and the National Quality Forum



Would Anything Have Helped Aunt Jeanne?

It's unlikely, yet potential exists for major breakthroughs in a transformed health care system



Near-Term Frontier

- Continually ask the question, “What is it that we can do to accelerate the pace of change **right now?**”





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