



Critical Care Factsheet

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About Critical Care

- Critical care refers to treatment of patients with life-threatening conditions, such as heart attack, pneumonia, surgical complications, stroke and trauma.
- The Leapfrog Group estimates that 500,000 patients die in intensive care units (ICUs) each year¹
- There are more than 4.4 million ICU admissions annually in the U.S.¹
- Intensivists are physicians who are trained as specialists in critical care.
 - 70 percent are also pulmonologists trained in acute respiratory care.
- Intensivist staffing has been shown to reduce risk of death in ICUs by 40 percent.²
- The Leapfrog Group estimates that full intensivist staffing would save 162,000 lives each year and \$3.4 billion annually in the U.S.^{3,4}
- Sepsis is a severe inflammatory reaction to an infection that claims 215,000 lives each year⁵
 - Contributes to more deaths than breast cancer, colon cancer, and AIDS.

Critical Care Costs

- The annual cost of critical care in U.S. exceeds \$90 billion annually.⁴
- The daily cost per bed for critical care services is in the range of \$2,300-3,000.⁴

A Look Ahead

- The Baby Boomer generation starts to turn 65 in 2011.
- There are 78 million Boomers heading toward retirement.⁶
- By 2030, one in five people will be 65 or older and consume more than half of all medical care.⁶

Critical Care Workforce Shortage

Physician staffing

- Currently there are only 35,000 intensivists serving more than 4.4 million patients.
- Dedicated intensivist staffing is currently employed in only 10-20 percent of U.S. ICUs.⁴
- The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services projects a worsening of the gap between intensivist supply and patient demand.⁷

Nurse staffing

- By 2010, approximately 40 percent of the U.S. nurse workforce will be over 50 years old.⁸
- The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services projects the nursing shortage to grow to one million by 2020 across all 50 states.⁹
- 91% percent of nurses surveyed say that the shortage has impacted the time nurses can spend with patients; 78 percent say that it has impacted the quality of patient care.¹⁰

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- 10 Peter I. Buerhaus, Karen Donelan, Beth T. Ulrich, Linda Norman, Catherine DesRoches, and Robert Dittus, "Impact of the Nurse Shortage on Hospital Patient Care: Comparative Perspectives," *Health Affairs*, May/June 2007, p. 857. Survey results from 2004.