

MEDICAL MISTAKES

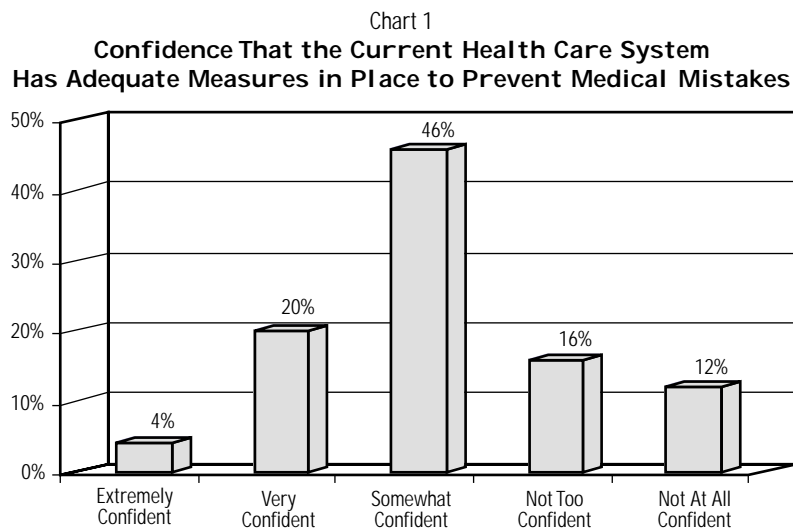
Patient safety and medical mistakes are an important public policy issue. An Institute of Medicine report paints a disturbing picture of patient safety and medical errors in the nation's health care system. According to the report, as many as 98,000 Americans lose their lives each year as a result of preventable medical errors. In addition, up to 7,000 deaths are attributable to errors in prescribing medicine. The cost of these errors adds as much as \$29 billion to health care spending annually.

Many Americans Have Been or Know Someone Involved With a Medical Mistake

- 46 percent of the adults in our survey report that they or a close friend or relative was involved in a situation where they believe a medical mistake was made.

Despite the High Incidence of Medical Mistakes, Americans Are Confident in System

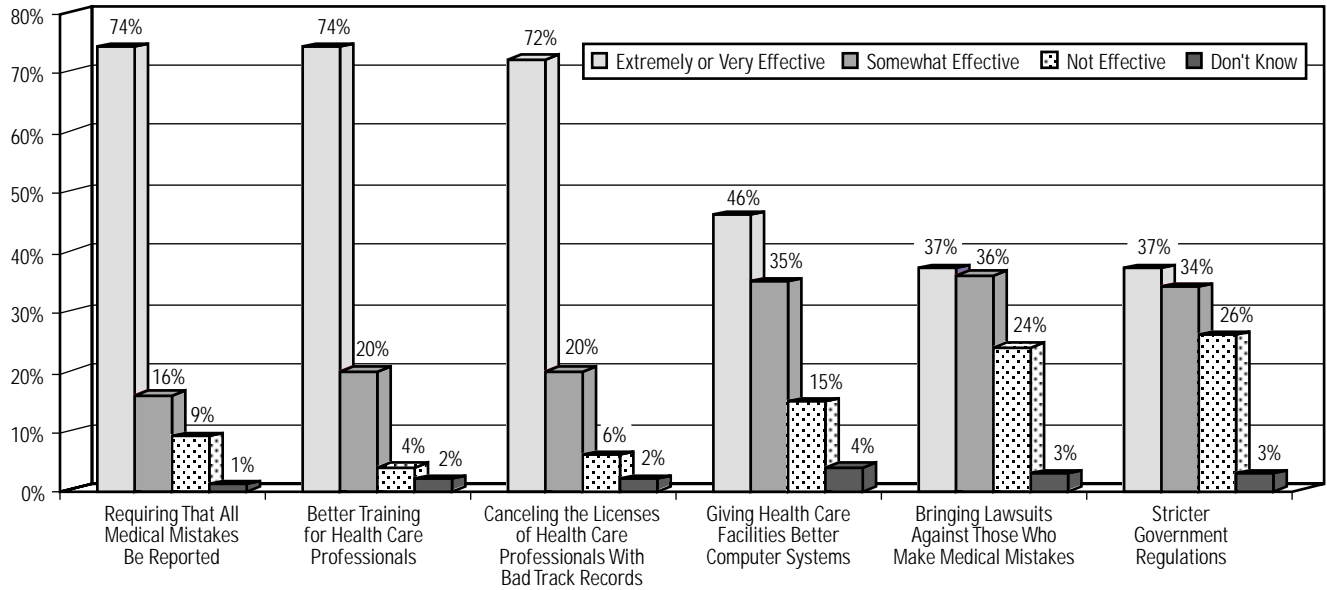
Most Americans are confident that there are adequate measures in place to prevent medical mistakes, though confidence is not high.



Training, Credentialing, and Reporting Rank Higher Than Government Intervention

Americans report that better training of medical professionals, requiring that all medical mistakes be reported, and the risk of losing a license to practice medicine would be the most effective solutions to prevent medical mistakes. Lawsuits against those making medical mistakes and stricter government regulation, while seen as effective solutions, were seen as least effective when compared with other possible solutions.

Chart 2
Effectiveness of Possible Solutions to Prevent Medical Mistakes



Source: 2000 Health Confidence Survey.