



Press Release

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The Quality of Health Care Explored in Four-Part PBS Series *Remaking American Medicine™...Health Care for the 21st Century*

As many as 98,000 Americans die each year in hospitals due to preventable medical errors. One million more are injured. In fact, medical errors kill as many people per year as breast cancer, HIV-AIDS and car accidents. These and other equally startling statistics underscore the chaotic conditions within the American health care system. *Remaking American Medicine™...Health Care for the 21st Century* explores the quality crisis and the innovative solutions being undertaken by providers, patients and their families to transform the care provided by the institutions we all depend on. The four one-hour programs are scheduled to air on PBS on October 5, 12, 19 and 26 at 10 p.m. (check local listings).

Each program examines critical health care issues facing Americans today including patient safety, medical and medication errors, hospital-acquired infections, family-centered care and effective management of chronic disease. But rather than assign blame for the failings in health care, Crosskeys Media®, series producers, offers solutions by showcasing the stories of individuals and institutions who are working to ensure better health care for everyone.

"We wanted to present detailed and emotionally engaging profiles of people like Dr. Donald Berwick, founder of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, who are struggling to fix our broken health care system. *Remaking American Medicine* is their story, told through the eyes of doctors, nurses, administrators and patients, showing their struggles, their setbacks and their victories. We call these people and their institutions *Champions of Change*," said Frank Christopher, executive producer, Crosskeys Media.

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The first program, "**Silent Killer**," sets the stage for the issues that will be explored throughout the series. The program highlights the efforts of Sorrel King, whose 18-month-old daughter died at one of the most respected hospitals in the world, Johns Hopkins. King has gone from grieving victim to engaged activist, partnering with Johns Hopkins to make safety a top priority at the institution. Says Tony King, Sorrel's husband, "We never really even heard the term medical error or knew that this was going on."

Sorrel has joined forces with Dr. Berwick to save 100,000 lives in American hospitals, the equivalent number of people who die each year from medical errors according to the Institute of Medicine. Notes Dr. Berwick, "What we need is outrage. We need the public to say, 'No, I don't want a health care system at any price, let alone close to two trillion dollars, which is going to hurt me when it tries to help me.'" "**Silent Killer**" will be broadcast Thursday, October 5 and was produced, directed and written by Marc Shaffer.

Program Two, "**First Do No Harm**," takes a critical look at the impact of medical errors and patient safety in two hospitals and follows the efforts of physicians who are challenging their colleagues to live up to their oath to "first do no harm." In Pittsburgh, Penn., Chief of Medicine Dr. Richard Shannon is confronting an epidemic of hospital-acquired infections that are shattering the lives of their victims.

In New Jersey, Hackensack University Medical Center is engaged in an effort to completely transform the way the institution delivers care. The imperative for this change is dramatically illustrated in "**First Do No Harm**" through the needless suffering of 89-year-old Anna Terrano, a victim of a medication error at Hackensack. The introduction of information technology is now being used to prevent patients like Anna Terrano from being harmed from the care they receive. "**First Do No Harm**" will be broadcast on Thursday, October 12 and was produced, written and directed by Marc Shaffer and Frank Christopher.

The series then moves to the challenge of treating chronic diseases that affect nearly 100 million Americans. "**The Stealth Epidemic**" examines the human and economic costs of effectively managing diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions that consume nearly 70 percent of all health care resources. According to Dr. Ed Wagner, a physician, epidemiologist, and internationally recognized expert on care systems for chronic illness, "If we don't improve the basic care of diabetic patients, I worry for the financial survival of those systems."

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"The Stealth Epidemic" will air Thursday, October 19 and examines the groundbreaking efforts in two very different communities -- Los Angeles and Whatcom County in the state of Washington -- that are fundamentally transforming the physician-patient relationship. These initiatives offer a glimmer of hope for patients struggling with their chronic conditions. The program was produced, written and directed by Matthew Eisen.

As medicine continues to become more and more technologically sophisticated and the systems that deliver medical care become increasingly complex, the relationship between providers and patients and their families is more important than ever. The final program, **"Hand in Hand"** tells the story of patients and families who have formed a unique bond in a teaching hospital in Augusta, Georgia.

While a number of patients are featured throughout this program, the story of the Moretz family is especially compelling. Daniel Moretz was born with serious heart disease and has had numerous medical procedures, culminating in a heart transplant. Throughout his illness and many hospitalizations, his mother Julie vowed to be by Daniel's side, something not easily achieved in a hospital. But through Julie's efforts and the insistence of other families, the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) Health System in Augusta has transformed itself into a nationally recognized facility where partnership among patients, their families and providers has become the guiding vision for the care it delivers. This final program was produced, written and directed by Frank Christopher.

"The media is filled with tragic stories of medical errors and innocent victims who have been killed by the health care system," says Co-Executive Producer Matthew Eisen, who has been working with Christopher on the series for five years. "What we wanted to do was tell inspiring stories of a wide variety of people – consumers, health care providers, policy-makers, who are transforming systems of care. Our goal is to show what is possible when people confront the problems head-on, and work together to reduce harm and save lives."

To help accomplish this, an outreach campaign managed by Devillier Communications, Inc. was developed to engage major health care groups at the national and local level. "We have 46 National Partners and hundreds of local groups including PBS stations, Quality Improvement Organizations, consumer groups, health care providers and businesses participating. With their help, we are creating awareness about health care quality and generating viewership for the series," said Christopher.

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"Creating *Remaking American Medicine* has been an extraordinarily enlightening project due largely to the individuals and institutions we've met along the way. These people and the institutions they work for really are champions. They've taught us that while there are serious problems in our health care system, solutions are being sought. Everyone has a stake in health care, which is why we adopted the phrase for the campaign, 'it's your health ... you call the shots.' Consumers must be active partners with their caregivers in order to ensure quality health care," concluded Christopher.

Crosskeys Media[®], producers of *Remaking American Medicine*[™]...*Health Care for the 21st Century*, is a group of highly accomplished filmmakers with a long history of creating award-winning theatrical films, television programs, documentaries and non-broadcast videos. Frank Christopher is Executive Producer and Matthew Eisen is Co-Executive Producer of the series. Peabody Award and Emmy Award winner John Hockenberry, formerly of NBC and NPR, serves as the series host.

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Additional information is available by visiting www.RAMcampaign.org.

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