

High-Tech Gets The Headlines But Low-Tech Can Cut Health Care Costs And Save Lives



By Henry Miller — January 23, 2020

High-tech medical advances make for sexy headlines, but the use of common-sense low-tech checklists can provide more than an ounce of prevention. ACSH advisor Dr. Henry Miller explains.



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Much of the progress in medicine during the past half-century has involved expensive, high-tech diagnostic tests and therapies. The trend in this direction worries health economists and politicians because it has the potential to send already high health care costs into the stratosphere. Health care spending in 2017 reached \$3.5 trillion, or a whopping 17.9% of the nation's gross domestic product, according to [government statistics](#) [3].

However, there is an important role as well for ingenious, low-tech, less-expensive approaches to improved health and increased longevity. The question is, how do we make them financially attractive?

The high-tech miracles will continue to garner headlines, but to control health care costs we will also need simpler and relatively inexpensive innovations. That has policy implications. Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger wrote (in a different context): "We must continue to seek the affordable and plentiful at the expense of the exquisite and few." That applies to health care as

well.

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