

WHY MEDICAL ERRORS SHOULD BE IMPORTANT TO IOWA EMPLOYERS

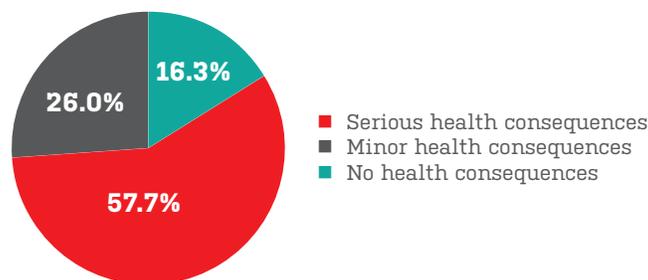
FINDINGS FROM A SUMMER 2017 SURVEY OF IOWA ADULTS AGE 18 AND OLDER¹

Medical errors cost money and possibly lives – whether the problems caused by errors are fixed or not. Often, errors may go unnoticed by the patient and family members and become yet another revenue source that is billed to payers, such as Medicare, Medicaid, health plans, employers and employees. Another silent, but costly consequence from these errors is lost productivity from employees who have been harmed. Even family members who experience a medical error may require help from the employee which would necessitate the employee missing work.

In the U.S., poor quality of care costs employers between \$1,900-\$2,250 per employee per year.² Leapfrog CEO Leah Binder recently stated that medical errors are hidden surcharges, "... though they aren't indicated as a line item on a [medical] bill, employers and purchasers are certainly paying for them."³

Below are some important takeaways for Iowa employers from the recent Iowa survey about medical errors. The information includes the attitudes of Iowans with employer-sponsored plans who had a medical error experience during the past five years, either personally or in the care of someone close to them.⁴

- ✓ **Overall, almost two in 10 Iowa adults (18.8 percent) have experienced medical errors within the past five years, either personally or in the care of someone close to them.**
- ✓ **One-third of Iowans responded they had employer-sponsored coverage when the medical error happened.**
- ✓ **Almost six in 10 Iowans with employer-sponsored plans say they suffered serious health consequences, while over one-quarter experienced minor health consequences.**



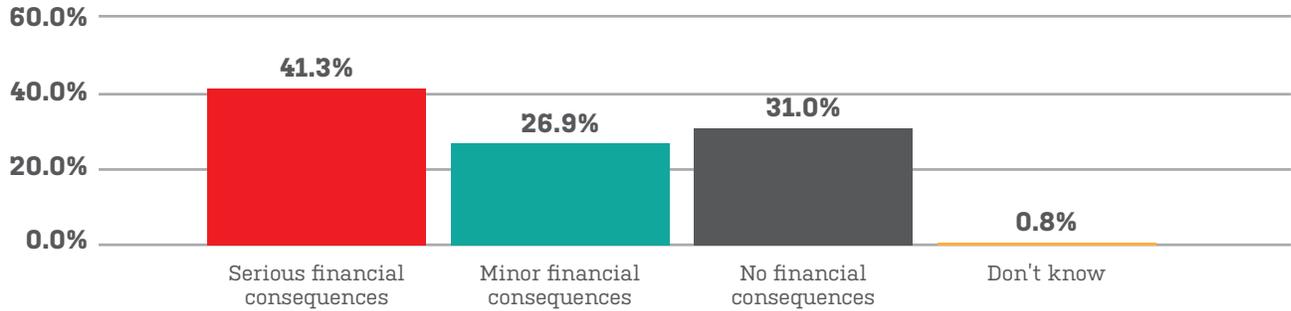
¹Heartland Health Research Institute. *Iowa Patient Safety Study: Iowans' Views on Medical Errors*® 2017

²Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (January 2013). *How Employers Can Improve Value and Quality in Health Care*.

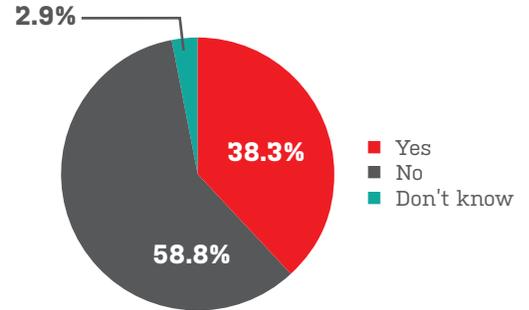
³Healthcare IT News, Beth Jones Sanborn, April 14, 2017. "Leapfrog medical errors calculator gives hospitals real cost of deadly mistakes."

⁴Heartland Health Research Institute. *Iowa Patient Safety Study: Iowans' Views on Medical Errors*® 2017

✓ **Four in 10 Iowans covered by employer-sponsored plans reported serious financial consequences when experiencing medical errors.**

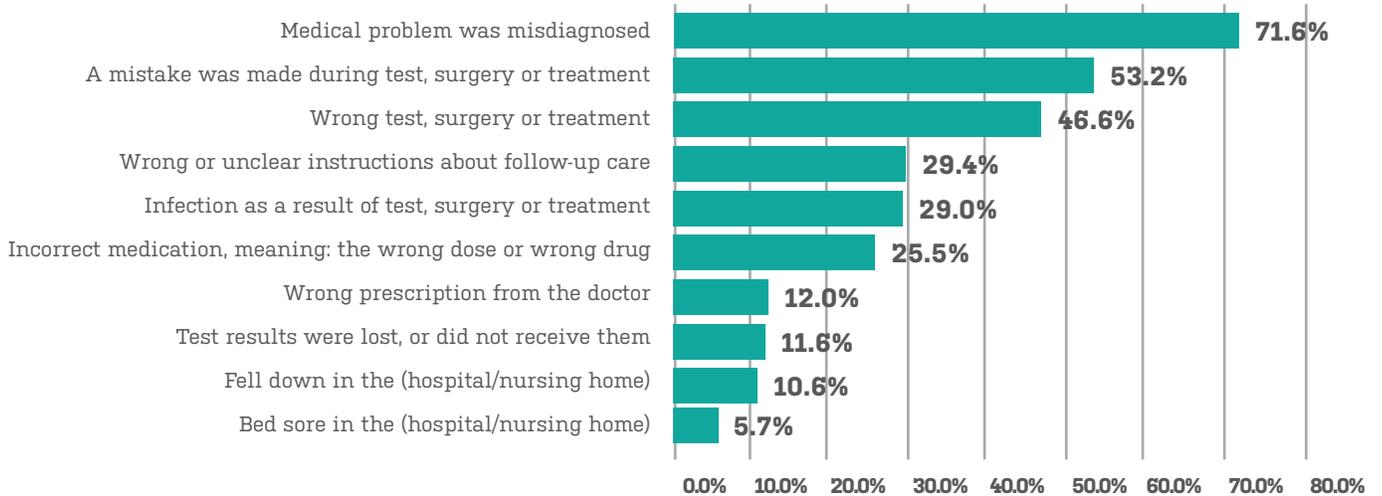


✓ **When Iowa employees do experience medical errors, only four in 10 say they were informed of the error by the health provider.**

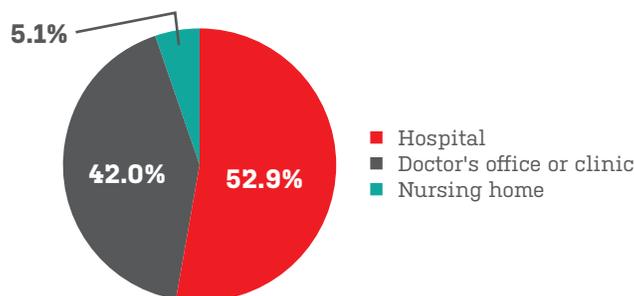


✓ **Seven in 10 Iowans with employer coverage reported the medical error they experienced was a misdiagnosis, while one-half say the mistake was made during a test, surgery or treatment. (Note: Diagnostic errors include delayed diagnosis, over-diagnosis and partial diagnosis).**

Type of medical errors experienced by Iowans with Employer coverage



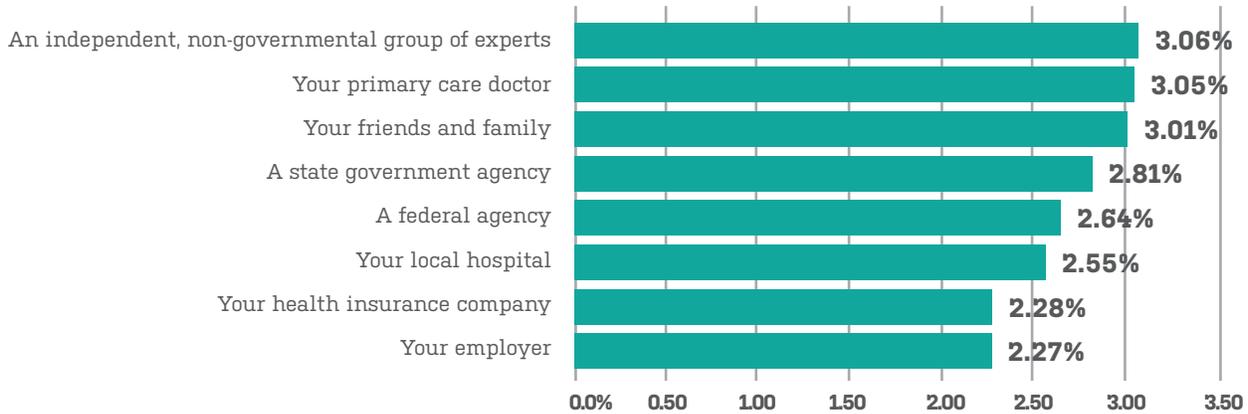
✓ **Over five in 10 Iowans say they experienced the medical error at a hospital, while over four in 10 indicate the error happened at the doctor's office or clinic.**



- ✓ To assess which sources of medical safety or quality information are trusted by Iowans covered by employer-sponsored plans, potential sources of information were presented to survey respondents. Iowa employees appear to trust independent, non-governmental group of experts most, followed by their personal primary-care doctor. Health insurance companies and employers are least likely to be trusted by Iowa employees on safety or quality information. Employers can use this negative outcome as an opportunity to improve as a trusted resource for their employees.

Average confidence ratings for sources of medical safety or quality information

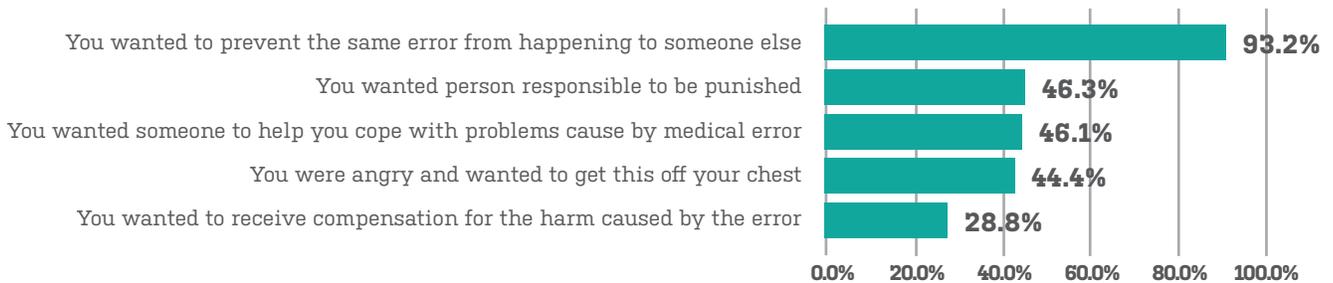
(Four-point scale: 1=No confidence, to 4=Great deal of confidence)



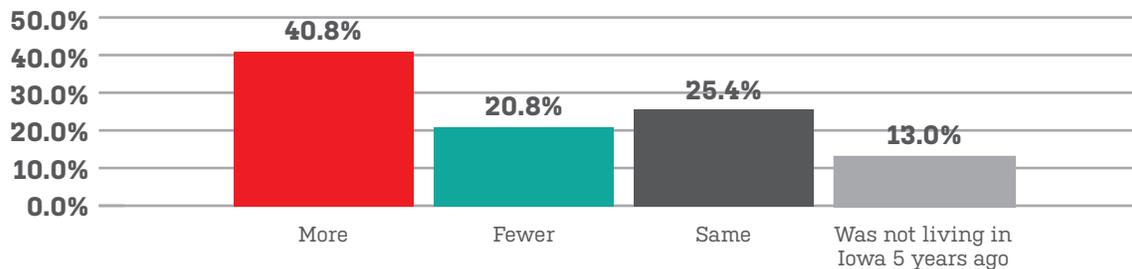
WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYEES?

- ✓ Reasons Iowa employees were motivated to report medical errors were primarily to prevent the same error from happening again to someone else (93 percent). This reason is the top result in a recent national study.⁵

Reasons Why Iowans Reported Medical Errors



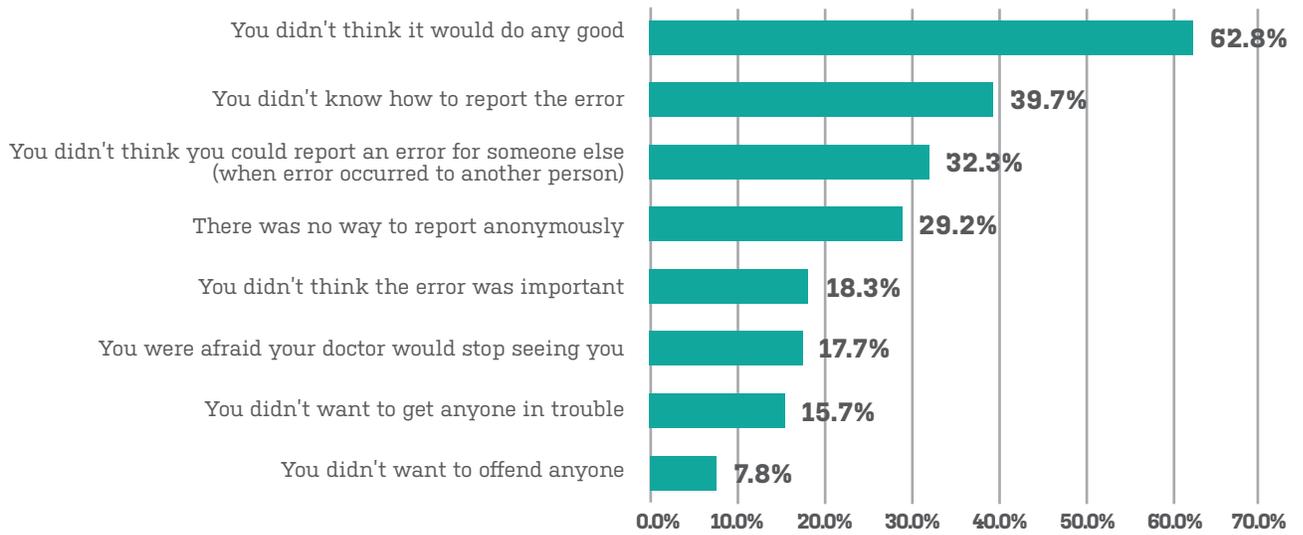
- ✓ Four in 10 Iowans with employer plans who experienced medical errors believe that more errors happen today than five years ago, while only two in 10 believe Iowa had fewer medical errors during this period. One-quarter say Iowa has about the same amount of errors.



⁵NORC at the University of Chicago and IHI/NPSF Lucian Leape Institute. (2017) *Americans' Experiences with Medical Errors and Views on Patient Safety*. Pages 25-26. CHICAGO, IL.

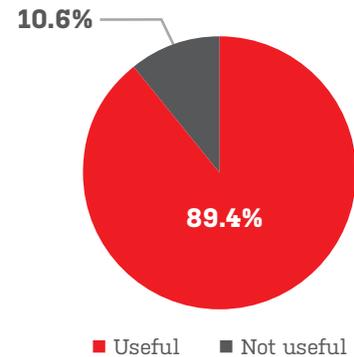
✓ Among those who chose not to report the medical error, 63 percent say a major reason why they did not do so was because they didn't think reporting the error would do any good. Forty percent say they didn't know how to report the error.

Reasons Why Iowans Did Not Report Medical Errors

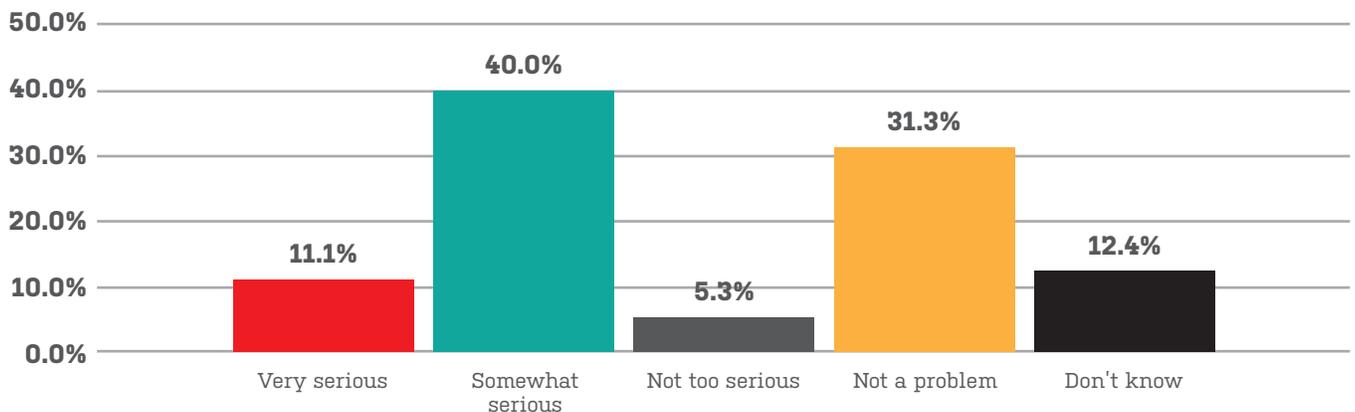


✓ Iowans were asked about having information on patient safety culture. By having access to results of safety culture perceptions by physicians and hospital staff on their own safety methods and protocols, would Iowans with employer coverage find this information to be useful when making a decision about where to seek care? Nine in 10 Iowans with employer coverage say this information would be useful to them.

Would safety and quality information be useful when making a decision about where to get care?

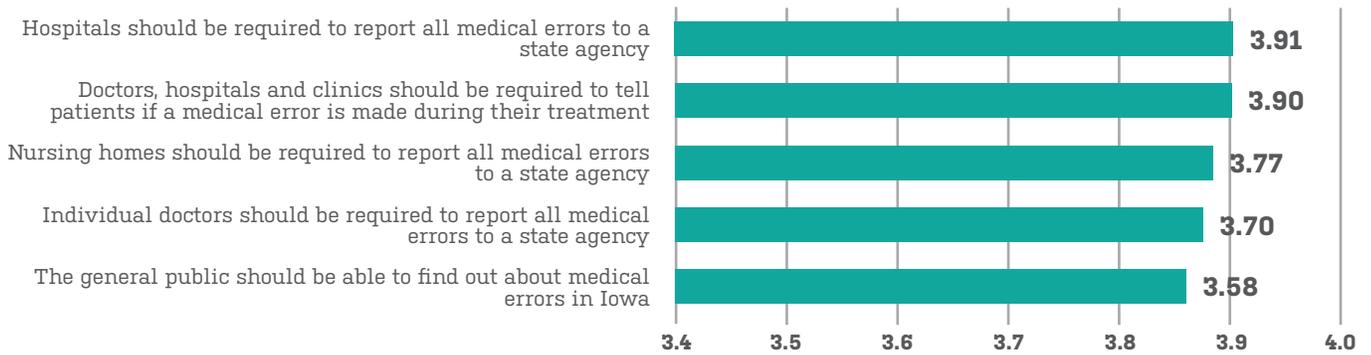


✓ Five in 10 Iowans with employer coverage who experienced a medical error believe their errors were at least somewhat serious.



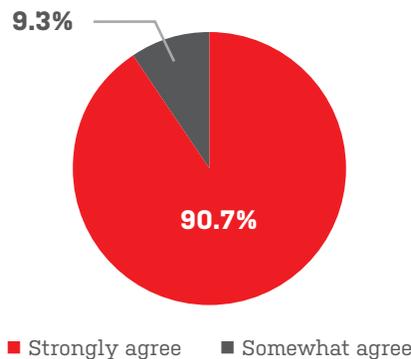
- ✓ Respondents strongly believe that the occurrence of medical errors must be reported and be made transparent to the public. Based on a four-point scale, with four being 'Strongly Agree,' employees strongly support reporting requirements for doctors, hospitals and clinics if a medical error is made during treatment.

Agreement with the following medical error reporting requirements



- ✓ Nine in 10 Iowans with employer coverage strongly agree that Iowa hospitals should be required to report all medical errors to a state agency.

Iowa hospitals should be required to report ALL medical errors to a state agency



- ✓ Similar to hospitals being required to report their medical errors to a state agency, Iowans with employer coverage feel that doctors should be required to report their errors. Eight in 10 feel strongly that this should happen.

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