

# Dozens of medical groups join forces to improve diagnoses

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(HealthDay)—Every nine minutes, a patient in a U.S. hospital dies

because a diagnosis was wrong or delayed—resulting in 80,000 deaths a year. That sobering estimate comes from the Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine (SIDM).

To help remedy this situation, more than 40 [health care](#) and patient advocacy groups have joined forces to improve the quality of diagnoses, especially those that can result in patient harm. The effort is called ACT for Better Diagnosis.

In addition to the deaths of [hospital patients](#), diagnostic error affects 12 million outpatients and is the most common cause of medical errors that [patients](#) report, according to SIDM. The society says obstacles to accurate and timely diagnoses include: (1) incomplete communication when patients are transferred between facilities, doctors, or departments; (2) lack of standardized measures for hospitals, health systems, or doctors to understand how well they are doing in the diagnostic process, to guide improvement or report errors; (3) patients and doctors both report feeling rushed by limited appointment times, which is a risk in getting a complete medical history essential to making a working [diagnosis](#); and (4) the diagnostic process is complicated, and limited information is available to patients about the questions to ask or whom to notify when changes in their condition occur or what symptoms are serious.

Some of the groups that have joined the ACT for Better Diagnosis include the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, and the American Heart Association. Also participating are the following federal agencies: the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Veterans Health Administration.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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