

ECRI's *Strategic Insights for Ambulatory Care* newsletter is being offered to CAPIC insureds at no cost. If you are interested in visiting any of the links in this edition, please contact Brad Dunkin, Assistant Vice President, at BDunkin@CAPphysicians.com.

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Strategic Insights for Ambulatory Care is a biweekly service provided by ECRI and the Cooperative of American Physicians (CAP). We welcome your comments; please send them to AmbulatoryCareRM@ecri.org.



Spotlight on Suicide Prevention

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and take meaningful action, [**according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness**](#). Risk managers must ensure that proper policies and procedures are established for suicide assessment and prevention, as suicide prevention is a serious concern across many care settings and can occur even among patients who do not present their suicidality or come into care due to suicidality.

ECRI Guidance & Tools

- [**Self-Assessment: Workplace Violence**](#)
- [**Informed Refusal**](#)
- [**Duty to Warn or Protect Third Parties**](#)

Ask ECRI Q&A

- [**Ask ECRI: Screening Patients for Substance Use, Anxiety, and Depression**](#)
- [**Ask ECRI: Peer Review for Behavioral Health Personnel**](#)

Resource Center: Behavioral Health

What's New?

- Blog: Promoting Clinician Well-Being through Human Factors Engineering [read now](#)
- Blog: ECRI Examines Reliability of Pulse Oximeters on People with Varying Skin Pigmentation [read now](#)
- Blog: Building resilient supply chains amid tariff uncertainty [read now](#)

Patient Safety & Relations

Illinois Joins States Restricting AI Use for Mental Health Services

What's the news. Illinois has passed a bill into law banning the use of artificial intelligence (AI) systems "for mental health or therapeutic decision-making without oversight by licensed clinicians," joining Nevada and Utah in specifically passing legislation around AI's role in behavioral healthcare, according to an [August 20, 2025, article](#) from the Association of Health Care Journalists.

Why it matters. AI continues to expand rapidly into healthcare with uneven results across applications. Some risks related to AI can be mitigated by creating policies and procedures governing when and how to use AI, either by governments or organizations.

How ECRI can help. ECRI named [Insufficient Governance of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare](#) a top patient safety concern in 2025.

New York Raises Alarm on Congenital Syphilis Cases After Three Infant Deaths

What's the news. The New York State Department of Health is raising awareness about the risks of congenital syphilis after three syphilis-related infant deaths have been reported in the state, all outside of New York City, according to an [August 12, 2025, release by the department](#). These cases reflect a concerning rise in congenital syphilis cases across the United States, the department says; "congenital syphilis-related infant deaths were considered rare in counties outside of New York City until 2024 at which time there were six reported in a single year."

Why it matters. Congenital syphilis is almost entirely preventable; nearly 90% of infant syphilis cases can be prevented with timely testing and treatment during pregnancy, according to a [2023 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

How ECRI can help. The article [Taking Action: Strategies to Combat the Congenital Syphilis Epidemic](#) outlines the issue and offers strategies for leadership, patient and family engagement, the workforce, and more.

New Report on Improving Communication with Older Adults

What's the news. Using patient-friendly language, avoiding medical jargon, and accommodating patients with vision or hearing impairments or cognitive changes are among the techniques covered in the report, ["Communicating With Older Adults: A Review of What Really Works,"](#) according to an [August 6, 2025, release](#) by the Gerontological Society of America. The report presents evidence-based strategies for effective communication with adult patients who are 65 years of age or older.

Why it matters. Effective communication between providers and patients is vital for providing person-centered care.

How ECRI can help. The guidance article [Person-Centered Care](#) offers strategies to actualize the principles of person-centered care, including provider-patient communication.

Legal & Regulatory

AI Systems' Reliance on Pattern Recognition Impacts Performance on Medical Questions

What's the news. Although artificial intelligence (AI) systems often perform well on standardized medical exams, they rely on recognizing familiar answer patterns rather than reasoning through clinical questions; when patterns were altered, the AI performed significantly worse, with one large language model's accuracy dropping from 80% to 42% when presented with modified questions, according to a [research letter published August 8, 2025, in JAMA Network Open](#). These findings suggest that improvements in medical AI should focus on "(1) development of benchmarks that distinguish clinical reasoning from pattern matching, (2) greater transparency about current reasoning limitations in clinical contexts, and (3) research into models that prioritize reasoning over pattern recognition."

Why it matters. AI is being incorporated into an ever-growing array of healthcare applications with uneven results across uses. When AI tools are used to replace functions that providers would have performed, the lack of clinical reasoning could contribute to preventable patient harm.

How ECRI can help. ECRI named [Insufficient Governance of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare](#) among the top patient safety concerns in 2025.

Improving Diagnostic Accuracy Requires Addressing System-Level Factors

What's the news. Improving diagnostic accuracy requires addressing system-level factors such as staff shortages and challenges related to electronic health records; mitigating cognitive biases through education and feedback; reducing health disparities among patients; and engaging patients and families throughout the diagnostic process, according to an [article written by an ECRI analyst](#) in the August 2025 issue of *Inside Medical Liability*.

Why it matters. Diagnostic error can include a missed, delayed, or wrong diagnosis, and may mean the difference between life and death for a patient because of the potential for delayed, incorrect, or lack of treatment.

How ECRI can help. ECRI named [Diagnostic Error: The Big Three—Cancers, Major Vascular Events, and Infections](#) a top patient safety concern in 2025.

White Paper on Diagnostic Error Offers Self-Assessment Tool, Actionable Strategies

What's the news. The recently published white paper, [Hidden in Plain Sight: Exposing the Drivers of Diagnostic Error—Office-Based Practices](#), examines diagnostic error in office-based practices based on analysis of closed medical malpractice events from 2020 to 2024, offering a self-assessment tool and actionable strategies to improve patient safety and mitigate risk. "Office-based practices were the second-most-common location for diagnostic error claims—representing 27% of events and 42% of indemnity paid. Cancer was the most frequently missed diagnosis, accounting for 45% of diagnostic error events in this setting."

Why it matters. Diagnostic errors can result in patient harm, reputational damage, and liability risk. Organizations must implement strategies to prevent missed or delayed diagnoses.

How ECRI can help. The [Resource Collection: Diagnosis: Safety and Screening](#) offers guidance, tools, and more to help organizations prevent missed, delayed, and incorrect diagnoses.



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