



805 15th Street NW, Suite 650 | Washington, DC 20005 | (202) 466-8700
www.CriticalCareRoundtable.org

NATIONAL CRITICAL CARE AWARENESS & RECOGNITION MONTH

The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy Celebrates National Critical Care Awareness & Recognition Month

The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy joins the critical care professional and scientific societies in paying special tribute to the dedicated professionals who care for the sickest patients and their families during National Critical Care Awareness and Recognition Month (NCCARM) this May. The Roundtable will be celebrating NCCARM throughout the month in an effort to draw attention to the doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, and pharmacists among others, who provide care to the nearly five million Americans admitted into traditional, surgical, pediatric or neo-natal intensive care units (ICUs) each year, and the important role that critical care medicine plays in the U.S. health care system.

Critical care medicine—the care of patients whose illnesses or injuries present a significant danger to life, limb, or organ function—plays a significant role in providing high quality health care, yet it is not often understood as unique and distinct in the continuum of health care delivery. Providers of critical care require specialized training, the care delivered in the ICU is technology-intensive, treatment is unusually complex due to what may be a patient's system—or multiple system—challenges or failures, and outcomes have life or death consequences. Critical care medicine consumes a significant proportion of our health care expenditures, representing 13% of all hospital costs, with the total costs of critical care services in the U.S. exceeding \$80 billion annually.

These statistics take on special significance during National Critical Care Awareness and Recognition Month, as the critical care community continues to face inefficiencies in the current delivery system of critical care—from inadequate disaster preparedness, to challenges in providing appropriate care at the end of a patient's life, to a nationwide workforce shortage of critical care practitioners.

Since its inception in 2009, the nonprofit Roundtable on Critical Care Policy has provided a forum for leaders in critical care and public health to advance a common federal policy agenda designed to improve the quality, delivery and efficiency of critical care in the United States. Bringing together a broad cross section of stakeholders from among patient groups, provider entities, academia, public health advocacy and industry, the Roundtable has worked to engage key Members of Congress and the Executive Branch on some of the major issues facing the critical care community. These efforts led to the successful introduction of the bipartisan Critical Care Assessment and Improvement Act of 2011 (H.R. 971), legislation that calls for an evaluation of the current U.S. critical care delivery system, and advances a much-needed comprehensive critical care agenda in Congress.

The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy salutes the professionals and organizations dedicated to the care of the critically ill and injured. Now is a crucial time for the critical care community to remain focused and coordinated to ensure that the complex set of issues in the care of our nation's sickest patients are addressed, and the needs of critical care are reflected in current national policy discussions.

This Special Alert is an update from The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy. For further information on the Roundtable, please visit our website at www.CriticalCareRoundtable.org.