

## MISSOURI: REPORT CARD TALKING POINTS

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**OVERALL GRADE C**

**#23 IN THE NATION**

**CATEGORIES:**

**ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CARE, C, #18**

**QUALITY & PATIENT SAFETY ENVIRONMENT, C, #27**

**MEDICAL LIABILITY ENVIRONMENT, C, #22**

**PUBLIC HEALTH & INJURY PREVENTION, D-, #42**

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, B, #18**

### **Challenges**

- With the nation facing a financial crisis and a failing health care system (plus a primary care physician shortage that won't be solved overnight), the role of emergency care has never been more critical to this nation. It is an essential community service that can no longer be taken for granted and one that we all depend on in our hour of need.
- Missouri faces many challenges related to traffic safety: the state ranks 37<sup>th</sup> for traffic fatalities; 40<sup>th</sup> for seat belt use; and 41<sup>st</sup> for the percentage of traffic fatalities that are alcohol-related.
- Missouri's obesity rate is higher than the national average as is the percentage of adults who smoke cigarettes.
- Missouri spends \$25.38 per 1,000 people on unintentional injury prevention vs. the national average of \$155.97. The results speak for themselves: Missouri's rank for fatal unintentional injuries due to fires or burns is 40<sup>th</sup>, for falls 38<sup>th</sup>, for firearms 37<sup>th</sup>.
- Missouri does have a state-funded EMS medical director position, but no funding has been allocated for quality improvements within the EMS system.

### **Solutions**

- Missouri needs greater investment in injury prevention and health promotion activities to encourage positive lifestyle changes such as smoking cessation, healthy eating and increased seat-belt use.
- Missouri needs to invest in better public education and safety measures to reduce the high rates of fatal unintentional injuries from fire, burns, falls and firearms.
- Missouri should create further quality improvements and monitoring systems to improve the overall Quality and Patient Safety Environment.
- Missouri needs to implement additional liability protections for federally mandated emergency care.
- Missouri should increase the recruitment and retention of medical specialists and specialty care providers, especially in the areas of mental health and substance abuse.

## **Calls to Action**

- Missouri's emergency physicians are calling on state and national policymakers to address the escalating crisis facing emergency patients as part of health care reform. Go to [www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org) to send messages to your political representatives.
- When Congress reconvenes in January, they should immediately hold a hearing on the findings in this Report Card. Passing The Access to Emergency Medical Services Act, which will focus national attention on the critical problems facing emergency patients, must be a top priority of the 2009-2010 legislative agenda.