briefing on the program's launch. Researchers, clinicians, educators and members of both public and private health care agencies need to band together to make the program a success, said Dr. Fielding, chairman of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for 2020.

In response to the growing elderly segment of the American population, the new program includes a topic area for dementias, including Alzheimer's disease. Other new areas in the initiative are early and middle childhood and adolescent health; blood disorders and blood safety; genomics; global health; and health-related quality of life and well-being.

Like all children growing up in a technology-based society, Healthy People 2020 will incorporate the Internet and other technology media in both its message and its method. The newly designed Web site allows users to tailor information to their individual needs and look for evidence-based ways to put the program's recommendations to work in their lives.

Developers are also issuing a challenge to encourage the tech-savvy to create easy-to-use applications for those who are working with Healthy People 2020 objectives and community health data. Winning ideas will reap financial rewards – $4,000 in prize money is available.

"This milestone in disease prevention and health promotion creates an opportunity to leverage information technology to make Healthy People come alive for all Americans in their communities and work places," said HHS Chief Technology Officer Todd Park.

"The 'my HealthyPeople' applications challenge will help spur innovative approaches to helping communities track their progress using Health People objectives and targets as well as develop an agenda for health improvement." ■



# Primary Care Pay Lower Than Specialty Care

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF INTERNAL MEDICINE

Primary care physicians receive the lowest reimbursement of all physician specialties, indicating a need for reforms that would increase incomes or reduce work hours for primary care physicians.

J. Paul Leigh, Ph.D., and his colleagues at the University of California, Davis, used data from 6,381 physicians providing patient care in the 2004-2005 Community Tracking Study.

Medical specialties were broken down into four broad categories: primary care; surgery; internal medicine subspecialists and pediatric subspecialists; and an "other" category with physicians practicing in areas such as radiation oncology, emergency medicine, ophthalmology, and dermatology.

Wages of procedure-oriented specialists were approximately 36%-48% higher than those of primary care physicians, the investigators found (Arch. Intern. Med. 2010;170:1728-34).

Specialties with statistically higher-than-average wages perform neurologic, orthopedic, or ophthalmologic surgery, use sophisticated technologies such as radiation oncology equipment, or administer expensive drugs such as oncology drugs in office settings, they found.

Lower-paid specialties were largely nonprocedural and relied instead on talking to and examining patients, they noted, adding that "the major exception is critical-care internal medicine."

**–Jane Anderson**

VITALS

**Major Finding:** Physicians practicing primary care medicine are paid at least $20 per hour less than their colleagues who practice surgery and specialty medicine.

**Data Source:** Reimbursement data from 6,381 physicians providing patient care in the 2004-2005 Community Tracking Study.

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