unintended consequences that may result from the unselective application of this performance measure, it may be prudent to explore metrics that also assess medication overuse to avoid treating those at higher risk for adverse consequences of therapy.

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Editor’s Note
Performance Measures: Better Outcomes, Not Better Grades

Performance measures are widely used with the goal of improving care of patients with heart failure and other illnesses. This study by Dharmarajan et al illustrates that performance measures may sometimes have unintended consequences. The authors show that in the enthusiasm to achieve the measure of placing patients with heart failure on beta-blocker therapy at hospital discharge, many patients who should not receive beta-blockers are getting them, while others who meet the criteria are not. It is likely that there was more thoughtful discussion and decision making behind these decisions that is not captured in administrative data used for this analysis. However, it must also be remembered that the purpose of performance measures is to improve patient care, not to get high grades. Too much focus on meeting a target can distract us from the care of the whole patient.

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Hepatitis C Virus Screening and Prevalence Among US Veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs Care

From 2.7 to 3.9 million Americans are living with hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection, and 45% to 85% are unaware they are infected.1-4 In August 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began recommending 1-time HCV screening for persons born from 1945 through 1965 because...