

# MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY SAVES AND IMPROVES LIVES



Tremendous progress has occurred in the development of advanced medical technology in the last 50 years. Medical progress and improvements in the technologies that physicians, nurses and other care-givers use to treat patients allow for improved outcomes, health system savings, and even stimulate the U.S. economy. Here's how:

- Medical technology helped **add five years** to the average U.S. life expectancy since 1980.<sup>1</sup>
- Disability rates **declined by 25 percent** from 1982 to 2000, and disability-free life expectancy has **increased** over time.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 1980 and 2010, advanced medical technology helped reduce the number of days spent in hospitals by **59 percent**.<sup>3</sup>

Medical technology is used at different points along the disease continuum—providing earlier diagnosis, improved surgical methods, or innovations in disease management. These all lead to markedly improved clinical outcomes and quality of life in a number of disease categories.

Since 1980, medical technology has reduced fatalities from heart disease and stroke by more than half, and deaths from breast cancer by more than a third.<sup>4</sup>

**Heart Disease:** Angioplasty and stenting saves lives and heart muscle for patients suffering a heart attack, and improves quality of life for patients suffering from symptomatic coronary artery disease.<sup>5</sup>

**Diabetes:** Studies have shown that insulin pump usage results in better blood sugar control, resulting in fewer clinical complications, reduced emergency room visits, and decreased hospital admissions.<sup>6</sup>

**Osteoarthritis:** Patients who received total hip replacements and total knee replacements transitioned away from disability within one year.<sup>7</sup>

**Breast Cancer:** Since 1975, medical advancements have helped increase the five-year survival rate for breast cancer patients by 40 percent.<sup>8</sup>

**Colorectal cancer:** It is estimated that the use of colonoscopy/sigmoidoscopy screening tests prevented 560,000 people from developing colorectal cancer.<sup>9</sup>

**Telemedicine:** The use of telemedicine expands access to health services for people living in rural or remote areas, and can facilitate health care outreach to those who are infrequent users of health care and may be vulnerable to untreated chronic conditions.<sup>10</sup>



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7. George, Linda K., et al., "The Effects of Total Hip Arthroplasty on Physical Functioning in the Older Population," *Journal of American Geriatrics Society* (June 2008): 1057-1062.
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