

Health Care Research



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As the nation debates the need for changes in health care delivery and financing, policy makers must rely on meaningful data and rigorous analysis to inform their decisions. NORC's expertise and ongoing research in the areas of health information technology, payment and delivery-system reform, benefit design, and quality measurement is advancing stakeholders' understanding of new initiatives, facilitating implementation, and contributing to significant cost and quality improvements as policies and programs evolve.

Within NORC's Health Care Research department there is extensive knowledge of all parts of the health care system: from private insurance to Medicare and Medicaid; from large urban health systems to small rural clinics; from the needs of children to those of older adults and ethnic and racial minorities. The team includes leaders in the fields of primary data collection, prominent health-policy experts, skilled analysts, and individuals with real-world experiences as health care providers and policy makers. This combination gives NORC a unique ability to provide new insight for decision makers.

NORC in general, and the Health Care Research Department in particular, has a reputation for building long-lasting partnerships through collaboration, transparency, and respect. NORC's work is guided by a commitment to conducting high-quality, nonpartisan research that serves the public interest and improves health and health care for all people.

Areas of Expertise:

- Health information technology and health information exchange
- Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP
- Innovations in delivery systems and benefit designs
- Disability and long-term care policy
- Employer-sponsored insurance
- Chronic disease management and health care quality
- Health of older Americans and children
- Access to care for vulnerable populations
- Prescription drug use, expenditures, and formulary design
- Research on preventive services
- Health education and training initiatives
- Public health informatics

Major Capabilities:

- Telephone, mail, web, and in-person survey data collection
- Survey methods, instrumentation, and sample design
- Key informant interviews, site visits, and focus groups
- Expert panels and stakeholder meetings
- Analysis of primary and secondary data (e.g., claims data)
- Content analysis of qualitative sources
- Program evaluation and performance measurement
- Health-policy analysis and formulation
- Technical assistance and program support
- Research dissemination, translation, and knowledge management
- Biomeasure and environmental data collection
- Human subject protections and Paperwork Reduction Act clearance



Sample Projects

Financial Alignment Initiative Operation Support. Providing high quality, cost-effective support programs for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees represents an important priority for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). NORC and its partners work with CMS to support the implementation of state demonstration programs for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees under capitation or managed fee for service models. NORC and its partners work closely with CMS to support plan reviews, readiness assessments, analyses of public comments, beneficiary education and other management and coordination component central to the success of this important initiative.

Assessing Health Department Health Information Technology Infrastructure. For the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), NORC is conducting a comprehensive assessment of the funding, policy, and program landscape for information systems (IS) used by state and local public health agencies. The project describes current models for funding and programming public health initiatives and highlights opportunities for logical and sustainable advancement of IS to support public health objectives. The focus will be on investigating and describing cases where public health agencies receive and share information with health care providers who have leveraged funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This project also focuses on agencies that have taken advantage of provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) to fund sustainable IS initiatives.

Evaluations of Health IT Programs. NORC is evaluating three major programs funded through ARRA, including the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program, the IT Professionals in Health Care ("Workforce") Program, and the Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) Program. To conduct these formative and summative evaluations, NORC is fielding wide-scale surveys, visiting grantees, conducting interviews and focus groups, and analyzing administrative data.

National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP). NORC conducts this longitudinal study designed to better understand the role that social support and personal relationships may play in healthy aging. A nationally representative sample of more than 3,000 older adults and their spouses or partners are interviewed every five years. Each wave of multimode data collection combines in-home interviews with the collection of a wide-ranging set of biomeasures.

Bureau of Primary Health Care Program Value Analysis. NORC, working with the University of Chicago, will assess how the community health center program relates to overall health care costs, quality of care, and utilization for vulnerable populations in the United States. The study will use Medicaid administrative data and data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey to understand how the experiences of individuals who receive primary medical care from community health centers vary on key measures that can be derived from these data. The study will also shed light on discernible changes in the role of health centers following ARRA and ACA.

Evaluation of Models that Examine the Benefits of Preventive Services. For the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), NORC will describe and assess current modeling capacity and model characteristics for examining societal and other benefits of clinical and community-based prevention services. This project will identify and assess the capacities, strengths, and limitations of existing cost-benefit models related to preventive services and will help ASPE identify robust ways to prioritize high-value programs and services.



Other Projects

Medicare Personal Health Record Pilot Evaluations

Trends in Health Insurance Premiums

Educational Tools and Resources to Support Meaningful Use of Electronic Health Records

Evaluation of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Synthesis Project

Effects of Implementing Insurance Market Reforms

Health Information Technology Technical Assistance Center for the Health Resources and Services Administration

Evaluation of Automated Online Dispute and Error Correction Technologies

Consumer Outreach and Planning Including e-Health Tools and Technologies

Study and Report on Open Source Health Information Technology Systems

Analysis of Medicare Part D Formularies

Aging Services Technology Study

Development and Implementation of Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Quality Measures

Medicare Part D Customer Interaction Survey

Juvenile Diabetes Artificial Pancreas Project

Comparing Group and Non-group Plans Against the Health Reform Standard

Hospital Quality Initiative Measure Implementation Support

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