

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

Health Care Innovation Awards. NORC leads two evaluations of awardees in the Health Care Innovation Awards (HCIA) portfolio for the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) within CMS. The evaluations examine new care and payment models advanced by the awardees in the management of complex / high-risk patients in the community (23 awardees) and patients with specific diseases (18 awardees), such as diabetes and cancer. NORC and its partners will evaluate the relative success of the models in achieving their pre-identified targets of improved care, better outcomes, and lowered costs; as well as provide ongoing rapid-cycle feedback to CMMI and to the awardees themselves. The research questions to be answered address program drivers and specific theories of action; the processes and methods by which awardees pursued their goals; and program outcomes in terms of utilization, cost, health status, patient experience, and workforce development.

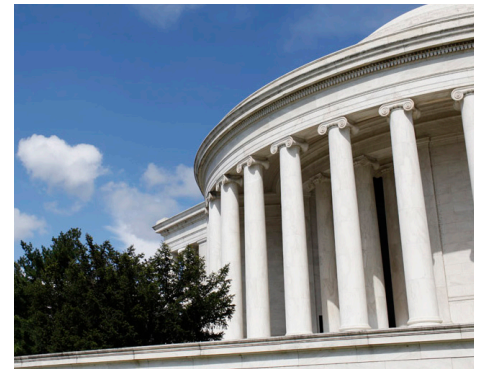
State Innovation Model (SIM) Resource Support. NORC is supporting CMS' Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) and the states in designing and testing multi-payer delivery systems and payment models that accelerate health system transformation. This support includes consultation with states as they develop and implement their proposed models. NORC also provides technical assistance to states and is assessing states' readiness to implement their plans. The SIM program fosters multi-payer initiatives that can leverage and multiply the power of individual payers' investments in creating health system change.

Evaluations of Health IT Programs. NORC is evaluating several major programs funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, including the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program, the Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) Program, and the Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program. To conduct these formative and summative evaluations, NORC is fielding wide-scale surveys, visiting grantees, conducting key informant 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 multi-mode data collection combines in-home interviews with the collection of a wide-ranging set of biomeasures.

Survey of Employer Health Benefits. In conjunction with the Kaiser Family Foundation and other partners, NORC conducts an annual survey to better understand how employer health insurance coverage is changing over time in terms of availability, costs, and coverage. The survey captures trends in employer health coverage, including changes in premiums, eligibility and enrollment, cost-sharing policies, and retiree health benefits. NORC takes a lead role in the survey and sampling design for this grant, along with data collection, database construction, analysis, and writing of the annual reports.

Aligning Quality and Public Reporting Programs. The Affordable Care Act and the National Quality Strategy have placed unprecedented emphasis on the importance of public reporting to consumers and other audiences as a way to improve health care quality and enhance efficiency. In this project, NORC is supporting the development of a strategic plan to align quality and public reporting programs for physicians and other practitioners for CMS' Center for Clinical Standards and Quality. NORC is working on an environmental scan of evidence-based best practices consistent with the strategic plan and supporting the development of a redesigned style guide for the Compare Websites.



Other Projects

Financial Alignment Initiative
Operations Support

Commercial Health Insurance and
Public Sector Health Coverage
Technical Assistance

Comparing Employer and Non-
Group Health Plans Against the
Health Reform Benefit Standard

Trends in Health Insurance
Premiums

2013 California Employer Health
Benefits Survey

Evaluation of Automated Online
Dispute and Error Correction
Technologies

Understanding the Impact of Health
IT in Underserved Communities and
Those with Health Disparities

Development and Implementation
of Accountable Care Organization
Quality Measures

Medicare Personal Health Record
Pilot Evaluations

Survey and Interim Report to
Congress on the Medicaid Health
Home State Plan Option

Section 1115 Demonstration
Management and Evaluation

Qualitative Analysis of Dual-Eligible
Beneficiaries in Select States

Adult Medicaid CAHPS Survey

Interim and Final Reports to
Congress on the Community First
Choice Option

Hospital Quality Initiative Measure
Implementation Support

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