

Emergency Department Costs by Methods of Payment



Doris J. Arevalo, Community Health

Research Mentor: Stephen Notaro, Lecturer, Community Health

Abstract

This study analyzes how the health care system is utilized by people living in the United States. The primary focus is on the use of Emergency Rooms and the forms of payment used by patients, as we are concerned with the costs of moving the uninsured population to Medicaid. This research analyzes data from the Health Care Utilization Project's (HCUP) 2006 National Statistics of all Emergency Department visits that resulted in discharge. Data specifically focuses on the recipients of Medicaid, the uninsured, recipients of Medicare, and those using private insurance. The 2006 population for each form of payment is also presented. Using the data, we have subtracted utilization rates between Medicaid and the uninsured and multiplied these rates by the mean cost of the Medicaid population. This result was then divided by 1,000 and multiplied by the total uninsured 2006 population to produce an estimated cost of moving the total uninsured population. After performing such steps, the results show that an estimated \$280,085,549,000 dollars would be the cost of insuring 47 million uninsured individuals with Medicaid from 2006. Still, there are numerous factors to be considered, such as the maximum percent each individual state will cover for its residents under Medicaid, as well as the health habits patients may adopt with Medicaid and the growth in population. Such research will contribute to the growing field of work on how to provide the best quality of care for patients at the best cost.