

May 29, 2010

Expert Blog Highlights: Health Care

SECTION: OPINION

LENGTH: 783 words

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What is the most effective use of health reform money to promote prevention and wellness?

A recent Towers Watson release expects that more than 60 percent of employment-based plans will be subject to the excise tax for high-cost health plans in 2018. Although it may seem too early for employers to be thinking about 2018, they may move to consumer-driven health plans sooner than 2018 in order to avoid the excise tax.-- **Paul Fronstin, director of health research and education program, Employee Benefit Research Institute**

Obamacare's price controls are no less a threat. The new law requires insurers to charge enrollees of the same age the same average premium, regardless of health status. That's a price control, and it will cause premiums for healthy people to rise dramatically and thus lead to massive adverse selection. Healthy people will gravitate to less comprehensive insurance -- in particular, HSA-compatible high-deductible plans -- where the implicit tax is smaller.-- **Michael F. Cannon, director of health policy studies, Cato Institute**

Beginning in January, insurers will have to direct 80 to 85 percent of collected premiums to medical services and quality improvements. Could that cause insurers to drop quality initiatives?

We are extremely concerned that narrow medical loss ratio definitions would adversely impact spending on such important health plan activities as case management, wellness, disease management, and fraud- and abuse-prevention programs. If these important aspects of medical care and health plan coverage are no longer supported, the quality of care delivery for consumers will deteriorate and health care costs will surely increase.-- **Janet Trautwein, CEO, National Association of Health Underwriters**

Medicare, which has low administrative health care costs, spends the least on quality-improvement strategies and on improving spending safeguards. If we aren't careful, we are likely to mimic exactly what's most wrong with Medicare onto the rest of health care -- hardly a move in a positive direction.-- **Gail Wilensky, senior fellow, Project Hope**

