



Healthcare Cost Control: What Is The Path Forward?

March 14, 2018

The Grand Hyatt, 1000 H Street NW, Washington, DC

Co-Sponsored by National Pharmaceutical Council

9:15 a.m. Does the US Have a Healthcare Spending Crisis? What are We Willing to Sacrifice in order to Control Costs?

At various times over the past 30 years, observers have declared that the US has a healthcare spending crisis. US health spending will soon surpass 20 percent of GDP, government health care obligations are squeezing resources from priorities like infrastructure and education, and financial burdens on individuals are growing. But slowing or reducing spending require potential trade-offs like fewer healthcare jobs, reduced access to services, higher individual cost sharing, less choice of providers and services, and perhaps lower quality or diminished access to innovative new therapies. If spending is constrained there may be need for explicit policies to address healthcare resource allocation in ways that increase value? A key issue is whether stakeholders have the will to move forward with serious cost control.

Stuart Altman, Ph.D., Professor of National Health Policy, Brandeis University

Panelists: Robert Galvin, MD, CEO Equity Healthcare
Frederick Isasi, Executive Director, Families USA
Robert Dubois, MD, Executive Vice President, National Pharmaceutical Council

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. How Much Can We Rely on Market Forces to Lower Healthcare Spending?

Why is US healthcare spending so much higher than other developed countries? In the words of Uwe Reinhardt, "it's the prices stupid." Despite America's strong belief in competitive markets, classic healthcare market failures (e.g., moral hazard, information asymmetry) and widespread provider consolidation have led to rising medical prices. Recent efforts to enhance competition include insurance exchanges, narrow network products, provider price transparency and payment reforms. Whether these approaches could create sustainable spending reduction is uncertain. This session will discuss the outlook for markets to address high healthcare prices and contain health spending growth.

Speaker: Bryan Dowd Ph.D, Professor, University of Minnesota
Panelist: Len Nichols Ph.D, Professor, George Mason University

11:45 a.m. Is it Time to Reconsider Regulation of Health Spending?

In areas without effective competition government regulation is an option for controlling healthcare prices and total spending. The historical effectiveness of healthcare regulation to contain costs has been mixed. Maryland's hospital rate setting system is generally considered successful and has recently evolved towards a global budget model that has initially performed well. This session will explore the potential for both comprehensive and targeted forms of regulation to address high prices created by market consolidation.

Speaker: Robert Berenson MD, Institute Fellow, The Urban Institute
Panelist: James Capretta, Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

12:45 p.m. Lunch Served

1:15 p.m. Moving Forward on Healthcare Cost Control: A Call to Action

Serious efforts to control healthcare spending are challenging because the advocates for cost control are frequently less forceful than interests determined to maintain the status quo. An important step forward would be a national discussion about the consequences of high healthcare spending and potential trade-offs that would be necessary to control spending while improving the value Americans receive for their healthcare dollar. This session will discuss how such a national debate could be framed for different types of stakeholders. It will also begin to explore potential steps that could be taken by different stakeholders to more actively address health spending.

Moderator: Stuart Altman Ph.D, Professor of National Health Policy, Brandeis University

Panelists:

Robert Dubois, MD, Chief Science Officer, National Pharmaceutical Council
Mollyann Brodie Ph.D, Senior VP, Kaiser Family Foundation
Brian Marcotte, President and CEO, National Business Group on Health

2:30 p.m. Meeting adjourns