



Common Fund's Health Economics Program Makes First Awards

The NIH Common Fund Health Economics program has granted awards to 21 research proposals for fiscal year 2011. The awards span four significant and challenging areas of Health Economics with the goal of increasing knowledge surrounding the economics of prevention, understanding the market dynamics for long-term care insurance, analyzing the integration of comparative effectiveness research findings into clinical practice, and examining the economics of health care delivery.

New awardees and projects are as follows:

Economics of Prevention (R21 RFA-RM-10-015)

This initiative is aimed to advance research addressing costs of health care benefits to the health care system and other sectors of the economy, and cost-effectiveness within the context of prevention and health. The Health Economics program is supporting ten new awards in this area.

- Dr. Adam Atherly at the University of Colorado, Denver will be analyzing the effects of changes in Medicaid fees on the use of preventative care (1-R21-HD071550-01).
- Dr. Kirsten Fleischmann at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) will assess the comparative effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of promising novel risk markers for coronary heart disease to determine which markers are best suited in relation to health and cost (1-R21-HL112255-01).
- Drs. Edward Foster and Asheley Skinner at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill will develop a model to comprehensively examine the cost-effectiveness of obesity treatments and preventions among children to better understand obesity as a public health concern (1-R21HD071569-01).
- Dr. Peter Muennig at Columbia University will establish a randomized controlled trial to determine the impact that well-informed patients could have on persuading physicians to reduce the number of inappropriate screening tests while increasing the number of appropriate preventative screening tests (1-R21-HD071561-01).
- Dr. Mark Pletcher at University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) will collaborate with Dr. Michael Pignone at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill to develop a method for evaluating biomarkers that can aid in identifying persons at risk for heart attack and stroke to help shape policy-making surrounding these tests (1-R21-HL112256-01).

- Drs. Ya-Chen Tina Shih and Yu Shen at the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center will explore the economics of secondary prevention by examining the association between the diffusion of treatment technologies and the cost-effectiveness of secondary prevention as it relates to mammography for women of age 65 or more (1-R21-CA165092-01).
- Dr. Jody Sindelar at Yale University will explore financial motivations for smoking cessation, particularly in low-income individuals, and compare this to health incentives in an attempt to prevent smoking-related morbidity, mortality, and medical care expenses among smokers (1-R21-DA032905-01).
- Dr. Roland Sturm at the RAND Corporation will apply behavioral economics to evaluate a reward program for preventative care with the goal of increasing preventative care in a cost-effective manner (1-R21-HD071568-01).
- Dr. Sujha Subramanian at the Research Triangle Institute will build a prototype model of colorectal cancer prevention and screening to examine the impact of personalized medicine on the cost-effectiveness of preventative medicine (1-R21-CA165093-01).
- Dr. Shailender Swaminathan at Brown University will test the effect of policy changes in the Medicare program on the use of preventative health care measures, which will be helpful for understanding the current impact of health insurance coverage for preventative medicine (1-R21-AG042302-01).

**Science of Structure, Organization and Practice Design in the Efficient Delivery of Effective Healthcare (R21)
RFA-RM-10-016**

The goal of this initiative is to foster research projects that will lead to increased efficiency in the delivery of health care with the ultimate goal of slowing the ongoing rise of health care costs in the United States. The Health Economics program is supporting three new awards in this area.

- Dr. Rita Tamara Konetzka at the University of Chicago seeks to improve the quality of health care by examining the responses of nursing homes to the public reporting of quality information (1-R21-AG040498-01).
- Dr. Harold Luft and at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute seeks to explore whether increased time spent face-to-face between primary care physicians and patients can substitute for costly tests and referrals (1-R21-DK094387-01).
- Dr. Eric Slade at the University of Maryland, Baltimore will study biases in national household survey data on expenditures for mental health care services and develop an innovative methodology for correcting these biases (1-R21-MH096285-01).

Integrating Comparative Effectiveness Research Findings into Care Delivery through Economic Incentives (R21) RFA-RM-11-001

This initiative was developed to advance knowledge on the ways in which comparative effectiveness research can bring about meaningful changes in clinical practice that could improve the quality of care for patients while helping to restrain growth in health care costs. The Health Economics program is supporting three new awards in this area.

- Dr. Jay Bhattacharya at Stanford University will identify factors influencing provider adoption of evidence-based, cost-saving practices. He will specifically examine the influence of provider networks on the use of evidence-based practices and costs of care in the Medicare population (1-R21-AG041112-01).
- Dr. Shailender Swaminathan at Brown University will gain insights into the effects of health policy on reducing mortality by studying the impact of warnings and incentives designed to reduce the use of the drug Epeotin to treat anemia in end stage renal disease (1-R21-DK09548501).
- Dr. John Wong at Tufts Medical Center will examine whether personalized risk and benefit information in combination with economic incentives will result in more diabetic patients having routine cholesterol testing and remaining on treatment regimens with statins (1-R21-AG04232601).

The Market for Long-Term Care Insurance (R01) RFA-RM-11-002

This initiative aims to advance the knowledge base on the economics of long-term care (LTC). LTC represents a substantial uninsured financial risk in the United States despite current programs to enroll participants. The Health Economics program is supporting five new awards in this area.

- Dr. Michael Hurd at the RAND Corporation will examine the value of long-term care insurance to both married and single persons with the goal of better understanding why the market for this type of insurance is not well developed in the United States. This work will lead to suggestions for improving long-term care insurance packages for different populations (1-R01-AG-04111601).
- Dr. Rita Tamara Konetzka at the University of Chicago will investigate the extent and nature of covered care utilization in the population with long-term care insurance coverage. This type of study is essential to understand the financial viability and sustainability of the market (1-R01-AG-041108-01).
- Drs. David Stevenson and David Grabowski at Harvard University Medical School will use two key databases to study the factors influencing the demand for long-term care insurance and the potential roles of government policy moving forward. Their studies will shed light on the key determinants used by individuals in their decision to purchase LTC insurance (1-R01-AG041109-01).
- Dr. Courtney Van Houtven at Duke University will examine family structure, informal care, and long-term care insurance to explain how one's family situation affects planning for long-term care needs in the future, including long-term care insurance purchase decisions and long-term care services use (1-R01-NR013583-01).
- Dr. Anthony Webb at Boston College will collaborate with and Dr. Leora Friedberg at the University of Virginia to study married couples' long-term care insurance purchase decisions and investigate factors contributing to the rise in long-term care insurance premiums and the withdrawal of companies from the market (1-R01-AG041105-01).