



VBIDHEALTH

Greetings members of the Task Force on Low-Value Care,

We hope the first month of 2019 treated you well! Here is the (belated) round-up of readings in the world of low-value care, for your entertainment and information.

Upcoming Events

- **Webinar: Low-Value Care 101: Identify, Measure, Reduce, Report**
 - February 28, 2PM EST, [REGISTER HERE](#)
 - Join Mark Fendrick and Beth Bortz to discuss the basics of low-value care, including: identifying low-value care services, ongoing efforts to measure their burden, strategies to reduce utilization, and methods to report low-value care.
- **Watch the recording: [Too Much Medicine](#), webinar from NIHCM**
 - Originally aired on January 25
 - Initiatives like Choosing Wisely and Practicing Wisely seek to curb unnecessary medical treatments and spending
 - Speakers: Marty Makary (Johns Hopkins), Michael Drescher (BCBS-TN), Ty Gluckman (Providence Heart and Vascular Institute), Lucy Lui (Oliver Wyman)

Recent News

- (in drug pricing...) **The Center for Value-Based Insurance Design releases the ["Drug Price Iceberg"](#)** to illustrate the need to not only focus on what payers pay (the ice under the water), but the impact of out-of-pocket costs on consumers (the "tip" of the iceberg). Policies that shrink the bulk of the iceberg do not necessarily shrink the tip.
- In partnership with VBID Health, **Altarum published a [concept paper](#) this month** describing the potential for states to act as leaders in identifying, measuring, reducing, and reporting low-value care (a pilot project funded by the PhRMA Foundation).

Noteworthy Reads

- [Does Primary Care Add Sufficient Value to Deserve Better Funding?](#) (JAMA commentary) -- " In a landmark international study, Starfield and colleagues⁵ found that where primary care is available, per capita costs are lower, health status is better, and health disparities are fewer."
- [Patients with primary care doctors receive more high-value healthcare, study finds](#) [but also more low-value care] (Healthcare Finance) -- "Overall, the authors concluded that policymakers and health system leaders seeking to increase value should consider increasing investments in primary care... but patients with primary care were also slightly more likely to receive low-value care -- in particular, unnecessary antibiotics."
- [JAMA opinion piece slams our addiction to 'unnecessary' MRIs, CT scans](#) (WaPo) -- commentary on the JAMA piece below on curbing unnecessary imaging.
- [Have We Missed the Hidden Cause of Medical Overuse?](#) (Medscape) -- in short, the author proposes that low-value care is part of "conspicuous care", rather than rational decision making: "The provocative conclusion is that healthcare isn't just about health; it's also a grand signaling exercise called conspicuous caring. If healthcare was only a transaction about getting well, you would expect patients to pay for (and doctors to prescribe) only treatments in which benefits exceed costs."

Research on LVC (and prices)

- [Curbing Unnecessary and Wasted Diagnostic Imaging \(JAMA\)](#) -- "With aggressive testing, the yield of useful information increases only slightly. Further, some diagnostic tests generate the detection of mostly incidental findings ("incidentalomas") with the frequency proportional to the excess of testing performed."
- [ACOs With Risk-Bearing Experience Are Likely Taking Steps to Reduce Low-Value Medical Services \(AJMC\)](#) -- this study assessed awareness of Choosing Wisely among ACOs, and steps being taken to address low-value care. Just one-third of ACOs had taken steps in the first year to reduce low-value care. ACOs with more experience with risk-bearing arrangements were more likely to take on low-value care.
- [Hospital Prices Grew Substantially Faster Than Physician Prices For Hospital-Based Care In 2007–14](#) (Health Affairs)