

Transparency key to improving value care for patients

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(HealthDay)—In order to ensure the provision of higher quality care and cost control in a post-Affordable Care Act health care system, data on price, utilization, and quality should be made publicly available unless there is a compelling publicly-acceptable justification for keeping it confidential, according to a study published online May 28 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Noting that many stakeholders in the [health care system](#) profit from concealed price and quality information, Bob Kocher, M.D., from the University of South California in Los Angeles, and Ezekiel Emanuel, M.D., Ph.D., from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, have proposed a transparency imperative, whereby all data on price,

utilization, and quality be made publicly available.

According to the authors, few patients have knowledge of prices for any [health care services](#). Although knowledge of utilization is critical for informed decision making, it is very difficult for patients to discover how many procedures a physician or hospital performs. Access to quality data is also limited. Price and quality information are crucial to the success of new payment models. Progress on transparency necessitates a change in attitude throughout the system. Payers should make their claims data publicly available, with adequate privacy protections. In addition, personalized pricing information should be available for patients.

"Transparency is essential for patients to consume care from providers who deliver greater value," the authors write. "The current health care marketplace is ripe for patients to capture large and unjustified differences in price and quality. As more patients do this, we all benefit from more effective competition and health care prices better reflecting value."

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