

# NPs practicing without restrictions could lower costs

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(HealthDay)—Independently practicing nurse practitioners (NPs) seeing patients at retail health clinics can cut health care costs, according to a study published in the November issue of *Health Affairs*.

Joanne Spetz, Ph.D., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues utilized multistate insurance claims data from 2004 to 2007 to analyze whether the cost per episode associated with the use of retail clinics was lower in states where NPs are allowed to practice independently and to prescribe independently. Associations between retail clinic use and scope of practice and emergency department visits and hospitalizations were also examined.

The researchers found that visits to retail clinics were associated with

lower costs per episode, compared to episodes of care that did not begin with a retail clinic visit. The costs per episode were even lower when NPs practiced independently.

"Eliminating restrictions on NPs' scope of practice could have a large impact on the cost savings that can be achieved by [retail clinics](#)," the authors conclude.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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