

# NIH funds study of malpractice risk, cardiac testing incentives

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Photo courtesy: Bill Branson, U.S. National Cancer Institute

The National Institutes of Health has granted \$2 million to study the effect of malpractice risk and financial incentives on cardiac testing.

(HealthDay)—The National Institutes of Health has granted \$2 million to study the effect of malpractice risk and financial incentives on cardiac testing.

Steven Farmer, M.D., Ph.D., from the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Washington, D.C., will use the funds over the next five years to study the effects of medical malpractice on physicians' practice of [defensive medicine](#). A multi-disciplinary team made up of lawyers, clinicians, economists, and policy makers will conduct the work.

Specifically, Farmer will study interrelated motivations behind test orders, including patient benefit, [financial incentives](#), and malpractice

liability. Findings from this research can help inform state malpractice reform and federal payment reform. Ultimately, Farmer says the goal is improving the value of the health care the system delivers.

"Physicians and [health care providers](#) have multiple motivations for testing, first and foremost for the patient benefit," Farmer said in a university news release. "However, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that physicians also respond to financial incentives and frequently report they test patients because of concern for malpractice and lawsuits."

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

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