

Denying payment reduces rate of early elective deliveries

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(HealthDay)—Implementation of a program denying payment to

providers for unnecessary early elective delivery is associated with a reduction in the rate of early elective deliveries, according to a study published in the March issue of *Health Affairs*.

Heather M. Dahlen, Ph.D., from the Medica Research Institute in Minnetonka, Minn., and colleagues examined the impact of a policy implemented by Texas Medicaid in 2011 to deny payment to providers for early elective delivery. The authors compared the effect on clinical care practice and [perinatal outcomes](#) in Texas relative to comparison states.

The researchers found that after the payment policy change there was a reduction in early delivery rates by as much as 14 percent in Texas; for births that were affected by the policy there were gains of almost five days in gestational age and 6 ounces in birthweight. The policy had a larger impact on early elective delivery for minority patients.

"Our findings suggest that even within states that have already begun voluntary efforts to reduce [early elective delivery](#) rates, Medicaid payment reform may lead to additional declines in these rates," the authors write.

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