

Administrative costs estimated at health care system

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(HealthDay)—The estimated costs of billing range from \$20 for a

primary care visit to \$215 for an inpatient surgical procedure, according to a study published in the Feb. 20 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Phillip Tseng, from the Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, N.C., and colleagues estimated the [administrative costs](#) associated with physician billing in a large academic health care system using data from interviews conducted with 27 [health](#) system administrators and 34 physicians in 2016 and 2017.

The researchers found that the estimated processing time and total costs for billing and insurance-related activities were 13 minutes and \$20.49, 32 minutes and \$61.54, 73 minutes and \$124.26, 75 minutes and \$170.40, and 100 minutes and \$215.10 for a primary care visit, a discharged emergency department visit, a general inpatient stay, an ambulatory surgical procedure, and an inpatient surgical procedure, respectively. The corresponding time and costs for activities carried out by physicians were estimated at a median of three minutes or \$6.36, three minutes or \$10.97, five minutes or \$13.29, 15 minutes or \$51.20, and 15 minutes or \$51.20. Professional billing costs were estimated to represent 14.5, 25.2, 8.0, 13.4, and 3.1 percent of professional revenue, respectively, for the five patient encounters.

"Knowledge of how specific billing and insurance-related activities contribute to administrative [costs](#) may help inform policy solutions to reduce these expense," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical and [health care](#) industries.

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