



Citizens' Council for Health Freedom

Health Freedom Minute

March 1, 2019

Does Obamacare Readmission Penalty Cause Patient Death?

Instead of Obamacare death panels, consider the Obamacare hospital readmission reductions program, which penalizes hospitals that readmit Medicare patients within 30 days after discharge. In short, the penalty can encourage hospitals to keep patients home who should be re-admitted.

A group of researchers has now looked into deaths during those 30 days. They studied 8.3 million hospitalizations of Medicare patients with heart failure, heart attacks and pneumonia. After this Obamacare policy was implemented, there was a significant and troubling increase in mortality for patients with pneumonia and heart failure during those 30 days.

“Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP),” NEJM Catalyst, April 26, 2018: <https://catalyst.nejm.org/hospital-readmissions-reduction-program-hrrp/>

“Association of the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program With Mortality Among Medicare Beneficiaries Hospitalized for Heart Failure, Acute Myocardial Infarction, and Pneumonia,” Rishi K. Wadhwa, MD, MPP, MPhil, et al, JAMA, December 25, 2018: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2719307>

“Decreases in Readmissions Credited to Medicare’s Program to Reduce Hospital Readmissions Have Been Overstated,” Christopher Ody et al, Health Affairs, January 2019: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.05178>

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*The Health Freedom Minute is now heard in 47 states:
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