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It's All About Control

Medicare pays doctors through a pay-for-performance model. But one study found pay-for-performance made no difference on the mortality rate of 6 million patients nationwide. A university professor says doctors respond to payment incentives by doing what’s paid for and neglecting other aspects of care that aren’t easily measured.

Dr. Aaron Carroll at the Indiana University School of Medicine says, “One of the reasons that paying for quality is hard is that we don’t even really know how to define ‘quality.’ He says it’s hard to measure the things we really care about, like quality of life and improvements in functioning. Indeed, pay for performance has nothing to do with patient care. It’s all about control.