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Who Decides “Right” Amount?

Welcome to the Health Freedom Minute. This is Twila Brase, president of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom.

A new report shows that “Medicare patients with heart disease in Elyria, Ohio are 10 times more likely to have an angioplasty than those in Honolulu.” The report suggests the difference is due to physician preference and poorly informed patients.

True or not, who should be able to decide what the right number of procedures is? If Georgia has more knee replacements than Iowa does that necessarily mean Georgians are getting unnecessary surgery or Iowans are being deprived?

The authors want doctors to use shared decision-making, which researchers say will reduce “unwarranted variation in rates of treatment.” Shared decision-making is a standardized process of presenting information to patients prior to a decision. Would such a process be objective or could it have a bias toward rationing?

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