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Hospitals Oppose Medicare Penalty Plan

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

Expensive patients may soon be unwelcome at hospitals. Obamacare requires measurements of efficiency, including spending per Medicare beneficiary. Medicare plans to count costs before, during and after hospitalization. Hospitals with higher costs may be penalized.

By linking payment to government performance standards, the administration plans to redistribute Medicare dollars to 3,100 hospitals, according to The New York Times. Medicare acknowledges concerns that hospitals will avoid high-risk patients.

No agreement exists on how to define or measure efficiency. But he who has the best-looking data will end up the winner, regardless of how good or poor the care. Performance scoring using patient data begins in July. Financial bonuses and penalties start October 2012.

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