

Point Health partnered with The Accountable Care Learning Collaborative to release a brief on healthcare price transparency. The brief is full of excellent information, but if you're short on time, we've created this summary of key points:

Healthcare spending in the U.S. grew by one trillion dollars between 2009 and 2019, which equates to \$11,582 per person.

By some estimates, almost two-thirds of personal bankruptcies are due to medical bills. Noticeably, healthcare costs and increases are unsustainable for individuals and the U.S., and mandating price transparency is but one policy lever to help slow cost increases.

The ACA required publishing of hospital chargemaster information as of 2019, however, the utility of that information to consumers is questionable at best.

Starting in 2022 employer-sponsored group health plans and health insurance issuers will also be required to publish pricing information. In 2023, health plans will be required to provide an online self-service tool enabling members to view pricing information. While it should seem straightforward to publish consumer-friendly prices in healthcare (as is done in virtually every other industry), it is not.

Because of the complex nature of healthcare and the various stakeholders and regulations that govern healthcare documentation and transactions, information on the cost of services is often not readily available in a manner that is standardized, timely, or consumable.

Even when the data are reported, similar to hospital chargemaster data transparency implemented in 2019, there is no standardization. Plus, the wide range of prices for a given service within hospitals or hospital systems raises questions about the reliability of the reported data. Here are just two examples of the wide price disparities that exist in healthcare:

In Texas

PROCEDURE	HIGH PRICE	LOW PRICE
Colonoscopy	\$4,646	\$1,385
DISTANCE BETWEEN PROVIDERS 367 feet		

In North Carolina

PROCEDURE	HIGH PRICE	LOW PRICE
Complete X-ray of Foot with 3 views	\$6,932	\$93

In summary, not only are healthcare prices variable, but compliance with the 2019 regulation is variable. A few hospitals have dumped massive quantities of low-value information, while others have released limited amounts of carefully vetted information. Some hospitals have released information but made it almost impossible to find. Overall, there is a distinctive range between hospitals that have not made the effort to comply and also some that are diligently attempting to adhere to the regulations.

The Biden administration has committed to furthering efforts toward price transparency. Therefore hospitals, employer-sponsored group health plans and health insurance issuers should be prepared to comply with transparency regulations.

To read the whole brief go to:

<https://www.accountablecarelc.org/publications/revealing-value-hospital-price-transparency>