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Finance and Economics Discussion Series: Why the Geographic Variation in Health Care Spending Can't Tell Us Much about the Efficiency or Quality of Our Health Care System

By Louise Sheiner

Bibliogov, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 246 x 189 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.This paper examines the geographic variation in Medicare and non-Medicare health spending and finds little support for the view that most of the variation is attributable to differences in practice styles. Instead, I find that socioeconomic factors that affect the need for medical care, as well as interactions between the Medicare system, Medicaid, and private health spending, can account for most of the variation in Medicare spending. Furthermore, I find that the health spending of the non-Medicare population is not well correlated with Medicare spending, suggesting that Medicare spending is not a good proxy for average health spending by state. Finally, there is a negative correlation between the level and growth of Medicare spending: Low-spending states are not low-growth states and are thus unlikely to provide the key to curbing excess cost growth in Medicare.



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