Problem Statement

Price Transparency in NC Hospitals

Patients, policymakers, healthcare providers, and insurance companies are all affected by price transparency in hospital procedures. Currently, patients are unable to accurately plan for medical payments, face higher medical costs, and experience financial and mental strain when making decisions. This issue affects patients across various demographics, particularly those from rural areas, lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and minority or gender-diverse groups. Unfortunately, in North Carolina, many medical settings have been found to be noncompliant with federal price transparency requirements, contributing to these challenges. Addressing transparency gaps will improve financial planning for patients and benefit other stakeholders by enabling cost-effective decision-making and policy enforcement.

Approach

1. Select the Top 20 Hospitals in NC and Insurers to analyze
   - https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/area/nc
   - Blue cross blue shield, cigna, humana, united healthcare, & aetna
   - **** added spreadsheet into drive for websites of price transparency data

2. Identify and collect Relevant Data

   - Hospital Websites:
       - Search for Machine-Readable Files (MRFs) on each hospital's website.
       - Collect data required under the CMS Hospital Price Transparency Rule (https://www.cms.gov/priorities/key-initiatives/hospital-price-transparency/hospitals), which includes:
           - Gross charges
           - Discounted cash prices
           - Payer-specific negotiated rates
           - De-identified minimum and maximum negotiated charges
   - Insurer Websites:
       - Each insurer typically provides a dedicated section on their website with links to Machine-Readable Files (MRFs).

3. Identify the Top 20 Service Codes with the Largest and Least Price Deviations

1. Aggregate chosen hospital and insurer price transparency data for all services.
2. Rank the service codes by frequency
3. Standardize Codes: Use CPT codes to ensure consistent comparisons across hospitals and insurers.
4. Filter Top 20 Codes: Focus on codes that appear most frequently or have the highest deviation in prices.
   - [Top CPT Codes](#)
   - [Hospital Compliance Data Set](#)
   - [Provider of Services File - Hospital & Non-Hospital Facilities](#)