

Second Workshop on Medicare Claims Data

National Bureau of Economic Research

February 16, 2007

1050 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02138

There are many potential uses of Medicare claims data in health economics and health policy research. The data are detailed and cover nearly every elderly person age 65 and over. Longitudinal analysis is possible, and there is very little attrition, except through death.

However, the data files are also quite complicated and need to be used with great care. Research questions may not be adaptable to standard research designs or to any single data file that is currently offered by Medicare. A key variable may require combining data from multiple claims and enrollment files, and there are many pitfalls in constructing decades-long panel data.

On February 16, 2007, the National Bureau of Economic Research will host a second workshop to help researchers understand and use the full set of Medicare claims files, and to give greater exposure to ongoing research using the Medicare claims data. The workshop will consist of two types of presentations: tutorials on how to use the databases, and specific research projects by participants. To begin, two experts in the use of Medicare claims data, Thomas Bubolz and Daniel Gottlieb, will provide further information about the structure and uses of Medicare claims data, with a particular emphasis on the construction of cohort and longitudinal files. These will be followed by specific papers, which will be short presentations of either completed papers or “works in progress.”

Please submit your abstracts for presentation to Jonathan Skinner (jon.skinner@dartmouth.edu) by January 19th, 2007.

The workshop will be held at the NBER in Cambridge, MA from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM on Friday February 16, 2007. A light lunch will be provided. There are limited funds to assist in travel for the workshop. It is open on a space available basis to all academic researchers and graduate students in economics or any related field. (Thus if your colleagues are interested in attending, feel free to let them know.) If you would like to attend, please RSVP online at <http://www.nber.org/confer/reply/cms.html>. The cap on attendance is 60, so sign up early. If you would like to request funds for travel, please send an email with your anticipated costs to Joan Stillwell at stillwel@nber.org.

Thomas Bubolz has been on the faculty at Dartmouth Medical School since 1986. He is Senior Research Associate and Senior Lecturer in Community and Family Medicine. Dr. Bubolz was a member of CMS's Research Data Assistance Center (ResDAC) where he was Deputy Project Director for training and outreach activities. From 1993-2002 Dr. Bubolz taught ECS 143, a practicum in claims data analysis for health policy and epidemiology in the graduate program at Dartmouth's Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences.

Daniel Gottlieb, M.S., is a statistician and analyst who has worked with the Center for Evaluative Sciences at Dartmouth since 1999. His expertise is in the design and analysis of large cohort studies, small area analysis and the evaluation and use of Medicare claims files. He also has experience working with several large federal and private surveys such as the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey and Community Tracking Survey. Recently, he's been involved in analysis for MEDPAC looking at growth in utilization by hospitals, and evaluating prostate outcomes using linked SEER data.

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