Unique Challenges of Teaching Publicly Financed Healthcare Insurance

The Undergraduate Teaching Experience

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Guest Lecturer on Medicare & Medicaid

• HCMG 101: Health Care Systems 101
  – Wharton School’s Health Care Systems Department

• PSCI 198: Contemporary Issues in American Politics
  – University of Pennsylvania College of General Studies

The Health Care Systems Course

Health Care Systems
HCMG 101 Section 002
SPRING 2005 T/TH 10:30 - 11:50

• This course introduces and examines the various components of the U.S. health care system.
• It covers both private and public financing mechanisms, the forces of market competition and government regulation, and the impact of health policy on key stakeholders.
• While developing an understanding of the various parts of the U.S. health care system, students also learn how to apply simple economic reasoning to examine health policy issues.

Challenges of Teaching Medicare & Medicaid to Undergraduate Students
Main Challenges

• Lack of familiarity with the entire healthcare system
• Lack of familiarity with Medicare and Medicaid
• Complexity of public insurance programs
• Time constraints

#1 Lack of Familiarity with the Entire Health Care System

#2 Lack of Familiarity with Medicare and Medicaid

How many students have a family member/friend who is on Medicare?

How many students have a family member/friend who is over the age of 65?

#3 Complexity of Public Insurance Programs

The Example of Medicare

A, B, C’s….of Medicare

• Eligibility, Financing, Spending, Provider Reimbursement, Coverage, Cost-Sharing…
  – Medicare Part A
  – Medicare Part B
  – Medicare Part C
• Program Facts and Statistics
  – A detailed lecture on Medicare would throw 100+ numbers and statistics about the program at the students

Medicare Part D

adds further complexity

Legislation

600+ pages
#4 Time Constraints

- Undergrad courses are rarely designed to focus only on public insurance programs.
- Most teach Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP programs as part of a health policy or health care systems course.
- A majority have only one or two lectures dedicated to teaching Medicare and Medicaid during the semester.
- 1.5 to 3.0 hours to introduce, explain, and discuss public programs such as Medicare and Medicaid that have a 40 year history.

Approaches to Handle the Challenges of Teaching Medicare & Medicaid to Undergraduates

Main Approaches

- Well-planned Lecture Series
- Recommended Reading Materials
- Teaching by Research Examples
- Quizzes and Exam Questions
- Other Course Requirements
- Other Motivations

Lecture Schedule from HCMG 101

- January 11: Course Description and Overview
- January 13/18: National Health Expenditures and Demand for Medical Care
- January 20: Insurance Principles
- January 27: Employment Based Health Insurance
- February 1: Managed Care
- February 3: Medicare
- February 8: Medicaid

#1 Well-planned Lecture Series

#2 Recommended Reading Materials
Explaining why Drug Coverage Matters?

Seniors without drug insurance were more likely to forego needed medicines

Explaining Specific Implications of the New Rx Benefit and "Doughnut Hole"
Beneficiary’s Out-of-Pocket Costs will vary based on their Total Rx Expenditure and Time of the Year

Mean Estimated Out-of-Pocket Prescription Spending from 2006-2008 for the “High Spender” Sample

#4 Quizzes and Exam Questions

Cost-sharing Structure of Standard Part D Plans under the New Medicare Rx Benefit

Sample Question

- Calculate the annual total out-of-pocket costs (including premiums) for each of the following Medicare beneficiaries if they were to sign up for the new Medicare Part D plan.

- Assume that each beneficiary will continue to consume the same drugs regardless of their prescription insurance coverage and has moderate to high income.

- Ms. Pluto is 75 years old and has diabetes, but does not have prescription drug coverage. She has been paying exactly $1000 for her outpatient prescription drugs every year.

- Mr. Donald is 66 years old and in good health. He does not have prescription drug coverage and has been annually paying $500 out-of-pocket for his prescription drugs.

- Mr. Lion King recently retired from his job at the age of 68. Unfortunately his employer does not offer retiree drug coverage and he has to now pay completely out-of-pocket for his annual drug expenses of $5000.
• Assuming each beneficiary understands the new law completely and there is no uncertainty or risk, which of these beneficiaries would sign up for the new voluntary Medicare drug benefit?

• Under the new benefit, which of these beneficiaries would face the “doughnut hole”?

• Under the new benefit, which of these beneficiaries would receive catastrophic coverage?

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### #5 Other Course Requirements

**Letter to the Editor**

• One page policy analysis in the form of a Letter to the Editor.

• This one page policy analysis will be a reaction/opinion/analysis of a newspaper article selected during the semester.

• If someone gets a relevant letter to the editor published, they will receive extra credit as follows: 5 points for The Philadelphia Inquirer, 10 points for The New York Times.

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### #6 Other Motivations

**Medicare Drug Discount Card**

If you are confused as a Health Care Systems Student think about the Medicare Beneficiary!

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**Beneficiaries’ Understanding of the New Medicare Rx Benefit**

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Plan Effectiveness Survey Conducted Mar 30 - Apr 5, 2005