

Global Health Economics Summit

July 25-26, 2016 Berlin, Germany



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THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT OF 2010 AND THE EMERGING MODELS OF HEALTHCARE DELIVERY: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF HEALTH ECONOMIST IN ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE DELIVERY MODELS IN THE UNITED STATES

The landscape of healthcare delivery in the United States is changing at a rapid pace with the introduction of The Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). The new insurance exchange marketplace is expected to provide over 25 million uninsured with a low-cost coverage. ACA's extension of eligibility for Medicaid to adults with incomes less than 138% of the federal poverty level has enabled states to cover an additional 13 million people through Medicaid expansion. The sizable expansion of the potential patient base has called for new and innovative approaches to healthcare delivery – approaches that are focused on cost reduction coupled with increased access to high-quality care. A cost-efficient care delivery approach requires building a solid provider workforce to specifically meet the ambulatory and primary care needs of the population and to avoid preventable hospitalizations and expensive emergency visits. Improved communications - through health information technology - across a wider spectrum of provider types and between patients and providers, effective implementation of a multitude of delivery models, such as the patient-centred medical home model, nurse-managed health centre model, and team-based approach to care coordination are some of the key initiatives under consideration as possible candidates for future mode of cost-efficient delivery. The new models, however, are sustainable if and only if they pass the economic cost-benefit tests as per the guidelines prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Health economists, with training and experience in evaluating the economic impacts of these initiatives, can play a critically important role in helping policymakers with appropriate policy prescriptions that have economy-wide implications.

Biography

Sudip Chattopadhyay is the professor and past chairman of the Economics Department at San Francisco State University (SFSU). He obtained his Ph. D. in Economics in 1997 from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has been on the SFSU Economics faculty since 1999. His works have been extensively cited and some of them have been reprinted in special volumes for their enduring quality. Currently, he is serving as an ORISE Fellow at the federal office of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to establish a research agenda focusing on healthcare workforce.

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