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Report sheds light on medical costs

Virginia Health Information report shows the average amount insurers are reimbursed for in 31 procedures.

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Commercial insurance companies in Virginia pay, on average, \$733 for a breast biopsy in a physician's office and \$2,903 for the same procedure at an ambulatory surgery center.

Medicare pays an average of \$306 for a breast biopsy in an ambulatory surgery center and as much as \$900 for a hospital outpatient procedure, according to a new report.

The Virginia Health Information's 2010 Health Care Transparency Report shows the average amounts that health insurers in Virginia pay for 31 procedures.

The report is designed for Virginians without insurance or enrolled in high-deductible health plans or those who want a better idea of what their co-payments might be for medical tests or surgery.

"It is more important now than ever before that consumers have access to information on the cost of health care," said Michael T. Lundberg, executive director of Virginia Health Information, which compiles reports on hospitals and other health providers in the state.

Roughly six in 10 insured Americans are covered by a preferred provider organization, or PPO, and may pay a co-pay that is a percentage of the cost of service, Lundberg said.

Insured workers are also facing higher deductibles. About 13 percent have high-deductible plans with a savings option.

Knowing health-care costs is helpful for budgeting and managing benefits, Lundberg said.

According to the report, insurers pay \$5,076 on average for a vaginal birth and \$8,312 on average for Cesarean delivery.

Commercial insurers pay \$44 on average for a chest X-ray in physician offices and \$184 on average in a hospital outpatient setting. Medicare pays \$39 to \$46.

advertisement



The advertisement is a rectangular box with a blue border. On the left side, there is a photograph of a man with short brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark blue jeans, standing in a workshop or garage with various tools and equipment visible in the background. On the right side, there is a white background with text and graphics. At the top right, the Wells Fargo logo is displayed in a red square. Below the logo, the text reads "You work hard — you deserve more" in a large, bold, black serif font. Underneath this, in a smaller black serif font, it says "Wells Fargo Business Card Rewards®". A red rectangular button with the white text "Learn More" is positioned below the text. At the bottom right, there is a small illustration of a horse-drawn carriage with the tagline "Together we'll go far" in a red, cursive font.

Commercial insurers pay an average of \$23,928 for a total hip replacement. Medicare pays between \$9,601 and \$10,822.

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Read the report

Find the Virginia Health Information report online at http://www.vhi.org/transparency_all.asp.

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