

How much for a mammogram? Depends on where you live

The prices for medical imaging services vary dramatically across the country, and even within the same city, a Castlight Health study shows. Mammogram prices, for instance, range from \$43 (in Sarasota-Bradenton, Florida) to \$1,898 (in New York City); and from \$50-\$1,045 within Dallas-Forth Worth. MRI and CT scans show similar disparities.

Such inconsistent pricing hinders the healthcare industry's ability to manage spending. More importantly, it may cause patients to delay or forgo important preventive screening services, potentially harming their health and increasing future medical spending.

For more information, visit <http://www.radiologybusiness.com/topics/healthcare-economics/study-shows-us-mammogram-prices-range-43-1898>

Whistleblower Doctor Warns about Hospitals Hiring Physicians

A third of America's doctors now work for hospitals or hospital-owned practices; and the number continues to grow. Yet according to orthopedic surgeon Michael Reilly, this practice is not good for patients and health care: a doctor with a financial interest in a hospital might increase his or her numbers of referrals, tests, and procedures without regard to the needs of the patient.

This system is also vulnerable to illegal kickbacks from the hospital to the doctors. Due to a complaint filed by Dr. Reilly, Broward Health, a nonprofit Florida health system, agreed to pay \$70 million to settle allegations of "improper financial relationships" with doctors. Reilly suspects that most hospital-physician employee contracts contain a referral component, which could also blunt "physician innovation, discovery, and ingenuity."

A national health system that pays for procedures instead of for keeping people healthy, along with continuing "physician acquisition sprees" by hospitals, means this practice is likely to continue.

For more information, visit <http://khn.org/news/whistleblower-doctor-warns-about-hospitals-hiring-physicians/>