INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY
PHYSICIAN PERSPECTIVES ON HEALTH POLICY

Policy Implementation and the Affordable Care Act: Theoretical Implications of Private Actor Behavior within De Facto-Regulated Practice Environments

I am a PhD Candidate at SUNY Albany’s Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy and am conducting research on the ways that the Affordable Care Act is changing health care from the perspective of physicians. I would be grateful to have an opportunity to add your experiences into my project and welcome the opportunity to talk to you. All interviews are confidential and can be conducted in person or by phone.

For more information about this study or to schedule an interview, please contact me, Heather Bennett, at hbennett@albany.edu. I look forward to talking to you!

Overview:
The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) is the most significant health policy reform legislation passed in the United States within the last forty-five years. Policymakers identified increasing access for patients to health care services and “bending the cost curve” of federal obligations to pay for medical care as the two primary objectives of the reform measure. Strategies embraced by the ACA to achieve these goals are interdependent because expanding access relies, in part, on mastering efficiencies in the delivery of health care. Understanding how these changes in the health care system work, however, is less certain because the effectuation of ACA policy happens in the private setting of the physician examination room as physicians and patients meet together and make medical care decisions. This study examines what happens as ACA-generated policies trickle down to the clinical setting by engaging physicians in interviews and asking them what health policies look like at the ground-floor level. In what manner does the ACA change the way that physicians practice medicine? What are the implications of these changes for patients and the health care choices available to them? What do physicians think about the changes they are experiencing? What do policymakers need to know about the ACA that they can only learn from physicians?

This project differs from the majority of studies about the effect of health policy on medical care available to patients because it uses evidence obtained from physicians directly, rather than relying on analysis of generalized medical utilization and health outcomes. In this manner, the role of physicians as private policy implementers structures the framework for analysis. If broad changes in health care access and outcomes depend upon the actions of private physicians, understanding how physicians respond to policy directives is critical.