

The intelligent pediatric cardiologist's guide to resource allocation between high technology and primary care.

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Progress in Pediatric Cardiology

Volume 4, Issue 2, May 1995, Pages 57-64

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Joshua M. Wiener

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/1058-9813\(95\)00109-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/1058-9813(95)00109-3)

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Abstract

Health care costs are increasing at an unsustainable rate, largely due to changes in technology that raise rather than lower costs. As a result, policymakers are examining options and methods for changing the mix of high technology and primary care. This paper reviews four methods of allocating resources between these two types of care and finds flaws with each. The first method, the status quo, allocates resources largely based on the patient's insurance status, an approach that is highly inequitable. A second approach, used in Canada and Europe, is to substantially shift the balance of care toward primary care, largely through constraining the availability of high-technology resources. The third method, cost-effectiveness analysis, fails to address the fact that most persons find "saving a life" more worthy than providing a small benefit to a large number of people. The final method, allocation by community values, cannot adequately

overcome the deep differences in values that exist in society.



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Keywords

Health care costs; Health resources allocation; High technology health care; Primary health care

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