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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Center for **PUBLICPOLICY**

DO COPAYMENTS AFFECT EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT USE OF MEDICAID ENROLLEES?

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8
12:00 PM**

University Center Tejas Room (Rm. 238)



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Abstract: This paper disentangles the effects of state Medicaid copayment changes for nonemergent emergency department (ED) visits on ED utilization of Medicaid enrollees. I find there is substantial variation across states in ED copayments for nonemergent ED use, as well as significant variation in the rates of Medicaid enrollees reporting ED visits. This paper applies differences-in-differences estimation to analyze the differences in utilization between treatment states (those with a copayment change) and control states, and the differences before the policy change and after. The results suggest that Medicaid enrollees in states that increased their copayments over the study period report a statistically significant decreased likelihood of nonemergent ED visits. This is the first national-level analysis of the effects of ED copayment changes on Medicaid enrollees. The results have policy implications for states considering copayment changes under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, the legislation that makes the copayment changing process significantly easier for states.

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