Rutgers School of Public Health

Course Title: Issues in Private and Public Health Insurance, Spring 2020
Course Number: HSAP 0663
Course Pre- and Co-requisite(s): PHCO 0615: Health Care Economics
Course Location: Room 2A
Course Date & Time: Tuesday, 3-5pm
Course Instructor: Alan C. Monheit, Ph.D., Professor of Health Economics, Rutgers School of Public Health (monheiac@sph.rutgers.edu); 732-235-4766
Office Hours: By appointment only
Course Assistant: None
Course Website: Canvas.rutgers.edu


Supplemental readings: Supplemental readings are an essential part of the course and are included to provide further development and policy-relevant applications of concepts introduced in class and in the texts. Readings designated with an * are recommended but not required for MPH students but required for doctoral students. As much as possible, readings will be posted on the Canvas system for the course. If this is not possible, some readings will be distributed in class, via e-mail, or through links to electronic journals or other web sites.

Course Description: Private and public health insurance in the US provide nearly 80% of all expenditures for personal health care services. Given their dominant role in health care financing, these sources of health insurance have had a profound impact on the US population's access to and use of health care, on system-wide health care costs, and on the prices paid for specific health care services on behalf of different population groups. At the same time, the benefit and payment provisions associated with health insurance can affect the efficiency with which health care is used, while the uneven distribution of health insurance across different population groups raises important issues regarding the equity with which health care resources are distributed. Concerns about such efficiency and equity effects have contributed to an ongoing debate about whether market-based or regulatory approaches are best suited to address problems of access to affordable health insurance, and have played a major role in the development and enactment of health reform under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010.

Under the ACA, many of the dominant features of the U.S. private and public health insurance systems will remain intact as will their implications for equity and efficiency. Although private health insurance will continue to be obtained primarily through the workplace, access to individual coverage and small-group health insurance will be expanded through federal or state-
managed health insurance marketplaces or exchanges. These alternatives to employer-sponsored insurance (ESI) may create incentives for some employers to discontinue offering coverage and for employees to seek alternative coverage outside of employment. For those retaining ESI, requirements for such coverage can affect decisions regarding employment activity, including ongoing participation in the labor force, hours of work, choice of jobs, voluntary job change, retirement, and tradeoffs between pecuniary and non-pecuniary sources of compensation. While enrollment in public health insurance through Medicaid will be expanded to those with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty line for those states participating in the expansions, categorical eligibility criteria related to income, age, and/or health status will remain in force for those residing in non-participating states. Eligibility requirements for public coverage can similarly affect labor force and employment decisions, including decisions to continue working or to adjust work-related activities so that individuals meet statutory earnings requirements. In addition, private and public coverage may exhibit certain linkages. For example, expansions of income thresholds for public coverage or extensions of public coverage to both children and their parents may “crowd out” private insurance as some newly eligible working families substitute their existing work-related coverage for less expensive public insurance. Some individuals also may hold both forms of coverage to pay for health care services, such as persons with Medicare supplemental private insurance.

We will explore a number of issues related to the role of private and public health insurance in the health care sector. In doing so, our focus will be on the institutional features of these insurance systems, the theory underlying the population’s demand for private and public health insurance, and potential behavioral responses by persons with such coverage. We will also examine empirical evidence regarding such behavior as well as evidence on the impact of policy interventions seeking to address market shortcomings. Our goal will be to engage in a critical evaluation of the private and public insurance systems with the intent of identifying changes that might improve the efficiency and equity with which these markets pool risks. In doing so, we will seek to integrate critical health insurance provisions of the ACA into our discussion, demonstrating how the performance of private and public systems of coverage have served as the basis for the ACA’s reform of past health insurance practices and provisions.

The required text and supplementary readings for this course will provide institutional background and describe analytical models that have been applied to characterize individual and market behaviors regarding private and public health insurance. These sources will also present research findings assessing the impact of alternative policy interventions to address market failure in private health insurance markets and to expand access to public coverage. In evaluating such research, we will pay particular attention to the design of empirical strategies to identify causal effects. As we shall see, identifying causal relationships between policy interventions and desired outcomes remains an important challenge to assessing the success of various policy interventions.
Selected Concentration Competencies Addressed: The competencies addressed in this course for the MPH and Ph.D. in Health Systems and Policy include:

- A. Use economic theories, concepts and methodologies in the analysis and evaluation of current health care issues and problems;
- B. Critically evaluate both proposed and implemented health policy interventions and the empirical research seeking to assess the impact of policy interventions in the health care sector;
- C. Assess and delineate public health policies and practices recognizing legal and ethical implications for individuals and populations;
- D. Apply economic theories and demographic methods to the analyses of basic issues and trends in the population’s health, health care use, spending, and delivery, health insurance status, and with regard to specific health policy interventions;
- E. Critically evaluate both proposed and implemented health policy interventions and the empirical research seeking to assess the impact of policy interventions in the health care sector.

Please visit the Concentration webpages on the School of Public Health’s website at sph.rutgers.edu for additional competencies addressed by this course for other degrees and concentrations.

Course Objectives: By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Understand the characteristics and institutional features of the major private and public insurance programs in the US;
- B. Understand the theoretical basis governing individual decisions to participate in private and public health insurance;
- C. Understand the conceptual basis for interventions in private insurance markets;
- D. Identify the key policy issues related to each of these systems that have prompted health care reform;
- E. Be able to critically evaluate empirical research seeking to assess the impact of policy interventions in private insurance markets and public insurance programs;
- F. Understand the conceptual basis for public policy interventions in health care markets and for recently enacted health reform.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Readings: Assignments from the text will be supplemented with readings from a variety of health policy and health economics journals and other types of reports. Readings will be made available through the SPH Moodle system (you will need an SPH e-mail address to access this). In certain cases, readings will be distributed in class and/or sent via e-mail as PDF files. Readings will be distinguished as required or optional (*). Class participation is strongly encouraged and will count toward the final grade.
Policy evaluations (60 percent of grade): During the semester, students will be assigned three short policy evaluations (20 points each). Students will be asked to respond to a specific policy statement or issue, and to discuss its advisability and implications for health insurance policy. The policy evaluations will be assigned after specific sections of the course are completed, and students will have two weeks to respond with their evaluations. Evaluations should not exceed ten double-spaced pages.

Essay exam (35 percent of grade): There will be a final essay exam. Students will be asked to apply concepts developed in class to questions regarding policy issues in provision of private and public insurance. A study guide will be provided.

Class participation: (5 percent of grade): Students will also be evaluated based on the contributions they make to class discussions. Students may at times be asked to lead discussions of specific readings on specific topics in the course syllabus.

- On-line 30 assignments: In order to ensure that we have at least three course hours, students will be required to access the Kaiser Health News (KHN) Morning Briefing (available at https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/). I also will include certain readings as on-line 30 assignments. These will be added to the syllabus after certain topics or sections have been completed.

Grading Policy:

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Course Schedule

I. Background: Underlying issues; Sources of health insurance and health care financing in the US; The structure of private and public health insurance systems. (Weeks 1 & 2)
Setting the stage: How should we think about health insurance?


A. General institutional background

Morrisey text: Chapters 2 and 12.


B. The nature of the health expenditure distribution and implications for health insurance.


On-line 30 assignments:
• KHN Morning Briefing (available at https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/).

Competencies for section I: A, C, D & E.
Assessed by Policy Evaluation #1.

II. Health Insurance: Theory, Incentives, and Market Failure (Weeks 2 & 3)

A. Review of theory of demand for health insurance

Morrisey text: Chapter 4.

B. Departures from received theory


C. Moral hazard & adverse selection


i. Moral hazard versus risk spreading

Morrisey text: Chapters 8 & 9.


ii. Is moral hazard inefficient?


iii. The problem of asymmetric information: adverse selection

Morrissey text: Chapter 5.

iv. Addressing the problem of adverse selection through transfers and premium adjustments

David M. Cutler and Richard J. Zeckhauser 2000 *op. cit.*: section on 'Equilibrium with Adverse Selection.

Morrissey text: Chapters 6 & 7.

On-line 30 assignments:
- KHN Morning Briefing (available at https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/).

Competencies for section I: A, C, D & E.
Assessed by Policy Evaluation #1.

III. Measurement Issues (Weeks 4 & 5)

A. Measurement of health insurance status: the insured and uninsured populations


B. Identifying causal relationships


C. Applications:

i. State Coverage Expansions for Young Adults

Alan C. Monheit, Joel C. Cantor, Derek DeLia, and Dina Belloff. “How Have State Policies to Expand Dependent Coverage Affected the Health Insurance Status of Young Adults?” Health Services Research 46(1), Part II (February 2011): 251-267.

ii. Testing for adverse selection:


iii. Does Health Insurance Improve Health?


On-line 30 assignments:
• KHN Morning Briefing (available at https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/).

Competencies for section I: A, B, C, D & E.
Assessed by Policy Evaluation #1.

POLICY EVALUATION #1 DISTRIBUTED – DUE IN TWO WEEKS.

IV. Some Aspects of private health insurance in the United States (Weeks 6 - 8)

A. Institutional and historical background


Morrisey text: Chapter 1.


i. Employer-Sponsored Insurance

Morrisey text: Chapters 14 & 16.


ii. Aspects of the demand for employment-based health insurance

Morrisey text: Chapter 13.
An aside: The complexity of household health insurance decisions:


Demand for employment-based coverage: an example:


ii. Is health insurance affordable?


*Helen Levy and Thoras DeLeire. 2009. “What Do People Buy When They Don’t Buy Health Insurance and What Does that Say about Why They are Uninsured?” Inquiry. Spring.


iii. The Tax subsidy for Employment-Based Coverage

Morrisey text: Chapter 15.


iv. Do all workers value health insurance? Worker sorting by health insurance preferences

Morrisey Chapter 15.


B. Is the market for individually purchased coverage a viable alternative to employer-sponsored health insurance?

Morrisey text: Chapte: 19.


On-line 30 assignments:
- KHN Morning Briefing (available at [https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/](https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/)).

Competencies for section I: A, C, D & E.
Assessed by Policy Evaluation #2.

V. Initiatives to Address Insurance Market Failure and Access to Coverage (Weeks 9 & 10)

A. Changing Incentives:

Morrisey text: Chapters 10 & 11.


B. Consumer-driven health insurance plans

Morrisey, Chapter 17.


C. Reforming health insurance markets through regulation

Morrisey text: Chapter 20.

i. Health Insurance Mandates


*The Constitutionality of the PPACA’s Health Insurance mandate: Amicus Curiae Brief on behalf of Economic Scholars in Support of Individual Mandate. United States Supreme Court.


ii. State Health Insurance Market Reform

Setting the Stage: Characteristics of the Small Group Insurance Market:

Morrisey text: Chapter 18.

Findings:


iii. Alternatives to market reform – ‘Carving out’ responsibility for high risks through reinsurance and high risk pools


On-line 30 assignments:
• KHN Morning Briefing (available at https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/)

Competencies for section I: A, B, C, D & E.
Assessed by Policy Evaluation #2.

POLICY EVALUATION #2 DISTRIBUTED – DUE IN TWO WEEKS.

VI. Public health insurance: when private markets fail (Weeks 11-13)

A. Basic features of social insurance and means-tested insurance programs:


B. Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program

i. Medicaid: Program descriptions and summary of accomplishments:

Morrisey, Chapter 25.


ii. Policy issues:

a. Does Public Health Insurance Programs Crowd Out” Private Health Insurance?

b. Enrolling eligible population not enrolled.


iii. SCHIP – The State Children’s Health Insurance Program


C. Medicare: Health insurance for the elderly and disabled
i. Intent and structure of program

Morrisey, Chapter 23.

ii. Accomplishments


iii. Medicare Advantage (formerly Medicare part C)


iv. The Medicare Prescription Drug Program (Medicare part D)


**v. Reforming Medicare**


**VII. The Market for Long-Term Care Insurance (Week 13)**


**POLICY EVALUATION #3 TO BE DISTRIBUTED – DUE IN TWO WEEKS.**

**VIII. Reform of the U.S. Health Care System: How “Radical” is Reform under the ACA? (Week 14)**

*a. Massachusetts as a Model for U.S. Health Reform*

Center for American Progress. Myth vs. Fact: Health Care Reform in Massachusetts. April, 2011.


*b. National Health Reform: The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.*

Morrisey text: Chapter 3.


c. Some assessments:


d. An ACA Alternative: Should the US adopt a single-payer health insurance system?


On-line 30 assignments:
• KHN Morning Briefing (available at https://khn.org/latest-morning-briefing/).

Competencies for section I: A, B, C, D & E. Assessed by Final Exam.

Course Schedule: Listed above
Rutgers
School of Public Health

**Learning Management System:** Canvas will be used extensively throughout the semester for course syllabus, assignments, announcements, communication and/or other course-related activities. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with Canvas and check it regularly. If you have difficulties accessing Canvas, please inform the instructor and Canvas Support (help@canvas.rutgers.edu). Canvas is accessible at canvas.rutgers.edu.

**School of Public Health Honor Code:** The School of Public Health Honor Code is found in the School Catalog (sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog.html). Each student bears a fundamental responsibility for maintaining academic integrity and intellectual honesty in his or her graduate work. For example, all students are expected to observe the generally accepted principles of scholarly work, to submit their own rather than another's work, to refrain from falsifying data, and to refrain from receiving and/or giving aid on examinations or other assigned work requiring independent effort. In submitting written material, the writer takes full responsibility for the work as a whole and implies that, except as properly noted by use of quotation marks, footnotes, etc., both the ideas and the works used are his or her own. In addition to maintaining personal academic integrity, each student is expected to contribute to the academic integrity of the School community by not facilitating inappropriate use of her/his own work by others and by reporting acts of academic dishonesty by others to an appropriate school authority. It should be clearly understood that plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can lead to sanctions up to and including separation from the Rutgers School of Public Health.

**Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student must apply for Services by first completing a Registration Form with the Rutgers Office of Disability Services (ODS) at ods.rutgers.edu. The student will also be required to participate in an ODS intake interview and provide documentation. If reasonable accommodations are granted, ODS will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations which should be shared with your instructors as early in your courses as possible.

**Commitment to Safe Learning Environment:** The Rutgers School of Public Health is committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the School as a whole. Free expression in an academic community is essential to the mission of providing the highest caliber of education possible. The School encourages civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement. Provocative ideas respectfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. The School encourages all students to disclose any situations where you may feel unsafe, discriminated against, or harassed. Harassment or discrimination of any kind will be not tolerated and violations may lead to disciplinary actions.

**Reporting Discrimination or Harassment:** If you experience any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. You may report such incidents to the RBHS Title IX Office or to the School of Public Health's Office of Student Affairs. Rutgers University has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. If you experience any other form of discrimination or harassment, including racial, ethnic, religious, political, or academic, please report any such incidents to the School's Office of Student Affairs. The School strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of discrimination or harassment to the School. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the School and potentially the University. For example, if you tell a faculty or staff member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty or staff member must share that information with the RBHS Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more
information about your options at Rutgers, please visit Rutgers Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance.

Graduate Student Computer Policy: Students are required to possess a personal laptop, no older than approximately two years, that must meet minimum requirements which may be found online at: sph.rutgers.edu/student-life/computer-support.html

Policy Concerning Use of Recording Devices and Other Electronic Communications Systems: When personally owned communication/recording devices are used by students to record lectures and/or classroom lessons, such use must be authorized by the faculty member or instructor who must give either oral or written permission prior to the start of the semester and identify restrictions, if any, on the use of mobile communications or recording devices.

Policy Concerning Use of Turnitin: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via learning management system, i.e. Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students who do not agree should contact the course instructor immediately.

Withdrawal/Refund Schedule: Students who stop attending their course(s) without submitting a completed Add/Drop Course form will receive a failing grade. Furthermore, students dropping to zero credits for the semester are considered withdrawn and must submit a completed Leave of Absence form from the School of Public Health's Office of Student Affairs. The School of Public Health refunds tuition only. Administrative and technology fees are non-refundable. You may find the Withdrawal/Refund Schedule on the School of Public Health website at: sph.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-calendar.html