



PRACTICE REVENUE OPTIMIZATION
BILLING AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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Did You Know?

A deep-freezing technique known as cryoablation is a viable alternative to traditional surgery in many early-stage breast cancers, researchers have discovered.

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Ensuring Transparency In Healthcare Performance

A new discussion paper addresses the topic of consumers deserving valid and transparent measures of quality in health care, but a lack of standards and auditing for these measures can misinform them rather than guide their health care choices. The discussion paper titled "Fostering Transparency in Outcomes, Quality, Safety, and Costs" was published as part of *Vital Directions for Health Care*, a publication commissioned by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, a consortium of nonprofit institutions that advises the federal government on health issues affecting Americans. The publication is a collection of articles that aims to prioritize key issues for health care leaders and policymakers.

The paper is written by Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Armstrong Institute and Johns Hopkins Medicine's senior vice president for patient safety and quality; J. Matthew Austin, Ph.D., an assistant professor at the Armstrong Institute; and other experts in the field. The paper argues for better and consistent measurement and reporting standards to ensure that performance measures inform rather than confuse consumers and appropriately classify the quality of care provided by the nation's health care providers. In their paper, Pronovost and Austin address additional key challenges to produce reliable and valid performance measures. Challenges include the multistep process of measuring and reporting health care quality (every additional step to the process invites opportunities for errors), no single entity is entrusted with ensuring the validity of the entire process, and lack of funding.

"For over two decades, health care stakeholders have agreed that transparency in our industry is essential," Pronovost says. "However, now is the time to improve and make systems more robust to ensure measurements are accurate."

Medulloblastoma Patients Should Receive Chemotherapy & Radiation Post-Surgery

In a new study, a Yale Cancer Center team revealed that the addition of chemotherapy to postoperative treatment for adults with medulloblastoma improves survival. The benefit of chemotherapy, in addition to craniospinal radiation, was seen in adult patients with medulloblastoma (MB), including those with localized disease who received high-dose radiation treatment following surgery.

The study used the National Cancer database to identify 751 patients diagnosed with MB over the age of 18 who underwent surgical resection for MB and post-surgical radiation. Of the 751 patients, 520 received chemotherapy and radiation therapy and 231 received only radiation therapy. Estimated overall survival at five years was 14.5% higher for patients who received chemotherapy and radiation compared to patients who received radiation alone (86.1% vs. 71.6%).

"Our analysis is the first to clearly demonstrate the improved survival that chemotherapy adds post-surgery for adult patients with medulloblastoma," said Benjamin H. Kann, MD, first author on the study and a Resident in the Department of Therapeutic Radiology at Yale School of Medicine. "We can now confidently support the addition of chemotherapy to radiation therapy for our patients who can tolerate both treatments."