

Medicaid Reform Evaluation: A case study on the challenges of doing public policy research.

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To be included on the panel on Medicaid Reform

Conducting evaluations of new or changing government programs and initiatives can be challenging. Some of the challenges include: the reality that new programs may be designed or finalized concurrently with the evaluation activities; the fact that data systems necessary to the evaluation may still be in development; the need on the part of policymakers and program designers for early and definitive findings, when in reality conclusions on a programs effectiveness may only be available over the longer term; and ensuring impartiality in the evaluation design and communication of findings.

The University Of Florida (UF) has been contracted by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), to conduct a five-year study of the state's "Medicaid Reform Initiative." The evaluation is comprised of 4 separate, but at times overlapping projects:

- An organizational analyses which will describe the development of Medicaid Reform in Florida by focusing on the organizations that are integral to the restructuring process such as health plans, AHCA, and ACS.
- A fiscal analysis which will focus on the cost and financial implications of reform;
- An analysis of the low-income pool program; and
- An analysis of patient experiences and outcomes.

Understandably, Medicaid Reform is one of the more visible public program changes in the state of Florida. Many stakeholders are concerned about the implications of reform on cost, access, and quality of care for Medicaid beneficiaries. Using the Medicaid Reform Evaluation as a framework, this presentation will discuss the challenges and opportunities of conducting such policy-related research.