



Health Committee Newsletter: August 2013

Australian Actuarial Conference

Following is a series of papers presented at the Australia Actuarial Conference – May 2013

New Therapies for Advanced Cancers: Can Our Society Afford Them? Is it Ethical to Deny Patients Access to Them?

In this paper, is an outline of the actuarial methodology used by health economists to determine the cost effectiveness of health technologies and an examination of the decision making process for listing of new therapies on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). The paper uses examples from Australia and overseas to highlight the affordability and ethical issues surrounding expensive new therapies for advanced cancers. In addition, the paper explains the role actuaries can play in the health policy debate in the context of our leadership role in the public debate on responses to Australia's ageing population.

<http://www.actuaries.asn.au/Library/Events/SUM/2013/Sum2013PaperAnthony%20Lowe.pdf>

Incurred Claims Assessment: A Private Health Insurance Study

In this paper, the author analyses the relationship between incurred claims and outstanding claims estimates, and discusses:

- The magnitude of the differences which can arise between these two approaches to determining incurred claims.
- How revising the estimate of incurred claims results in revising the timing of earnings.
- How revising the reported timing of earnings can affect the Financial Condition Report

<http://www.actuaries.asn.au/Library/Events/SUM/2013/Sum2013PaperDavidMcSweeney.pdf>

Contemporary Issues in Private Health Insurance

A discussion on a wide range of issues in the private health sector including

- Rise of products with excesses
- Broader health cover

<http://www.actuaries.asn.au/Library/Events/SUM/2013/Sum2013PaperAnthony%20Lowe.>

Papers of Interest

Towers Watson's Global Medical Trends Survey

This survey tracks medical costs, what is driving them and the cost management techniques employers are using to manage them. This year, survey results show that:

- The average medical trend is 9.8% for 2011 and projected to be at a similar level for 2012.
- Although traditional cost management approaches still dominate, wellness interventions are growing, with insurers increasing their wellness capabilities through in-house or partner resources.
- The prevalence of employer-sponsored health benefits continues to grow rapidly across more countries and more health insurers.

<http://www.towerswatson.com/en/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2012/07/2012-Global-Medical-Trends>

Health insurance in the media

Why Medical Bills Are Killing US

A Time magazine special report into why U.S. medical bills are so expensive

<http://healthland.time.com/why-medical-bills-are-killing-us/>

New Zealand Health Statistics of Concern

A publication recently released by Medicines New Zealand entitled “Did You Know?” highlights some of the difficulties New Zealand faces with health issues and pharmaceutical funding.

<http://business.scoop.co.nz/2013/06/26/new-zealand-health-statistics-of-concern/>

Why Low Income Patients May Prefer Hospital Care to the Doctors office

A study on why patients with low socioeconomic status use hospital care more than GP services.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/263031.php>

Health Insurance numbers down 0.5 percent

Media release on the industry statistics

<http://www.healthfunds.org.nz/pdf/2013MarchHealthInsuranceStatistics.pdf>

US Medicare pricing

An opinion piece on the doctors that controls Medicare

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/july_august_2013/features/special_deal045641.php?page=all