

Do U.S. Doctors Ration Healthcare?

by Dr. Delia Chiamonte, [Baltimore Health Examiner](#)



Do U.S. doctors ration healthcare? We do it everyday, while pretending that we don't.

Americans don't believe in rationing healthcare, right? We want everyone to have everything. That is how we like to think of ourselves – but it isn't reality.

The convoluted insurance and regulatory systems under which U.S. physicians function has hidden rationing woven in and around almost every healthcare encounter. When your doctor gives you only 10 minutes of his time because he is trying to meet his employer-designed quotas – that is healthcare rationing. When I tell my hospice nurses that we have to discharge a patient from hospice because he no longer meets Medicare's criteria (and I don't want to be accused of Medicare fraud) – that is rationing. And when your medicines are changed from non-formulary drugs to ones that are on formulary, for financial reasons of course -- that is rationing.

We can debate the wisdom of healthcare rationing another time, but the first step to fixing our disordered healthcare system is waking up to what is really going on.

When has your healthcare been rationed?

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