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Summary

EFFECTS OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE GAINS FOR UNINSURED INDIVIDUALS ON COLORECTAL CANCER OUTCOMES IN THE US

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Colorectal

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A microsimulation model estimates that providing health insurance to uninsured individuals at age 45 could prevent up to 5% of colorectal cancer cases and 16% of deaths, though total costs would increase by 5% due to expanded screening.

KEY POINTS

- In an uninsured population, the model predicted 59 colorectal cancer cases and 23 deaths per 1,000 individuals, with total costs of $5.6 million
- Gaining insurance at age 45 would prevent 3 cases and 4 deaths per 1,000 individuals, with cancer treatment costs decreasing 3.9% but screening costs increasing 36.7%
- The benefit diminishes with later insurance acquisition: coverage starting at age 60 would prevent only 2 cases and 1 death per 1,000 compared to remaining uninsured until Medicare eligibility at 65
- Prevention occurs through increased screening, earlier diagnosis, and improved survival, but increased utilization raises overall healthcare costs
- This modeling study is relevant to policymakers evaluating the health and economic impacts of insurance coverage expansion for colorectal cancer outcomes

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