

The Great Equalizer: Health Care Access and Infant Mortality in Thailand

Jonathan Gruber, Nathaniel Hendren, and Robert M. Townsend

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Thailand's 2001 healthcare reform, "30 Baht". The program increased funding available to hospitals to care for the poor and reduced copays to 30 Baht (~\$0.75). Our estimates suggest the supply-side funding of the program increased healthcare utilization, especially amongst the poor. Moreover, we find significant impacts on infant mortality: prior to 30 Baht poorer provinces had significantly higher infant mortality rates than richer provinces. After 30 Baht this correlation evaporates to zero. The results suggest that increased access to healthcare among the poor can significantly reduce their infant mortality rates. Keywords: Health Insurance, Infant Mortality