Patient Routing for Cost Effective Care: Lessons from Emergency Medicine and Cardiac Surgery

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Fealy Auditorium, Room 112, Carl H. Lindner Hall
Carl H. Lindner College of Business, University of Cincinnati

All health care is delivered through multi-stage processes in which various resources provide services across the broad stages of prevention, diagnosis, treatment and maintenance. Patient routing, which involves matching patients with resources at each step in the delivery process, is therefore a critical determinant of both the cost and quality of care. Unfortunately, the American health care system does a very poor job of solving the patient routing problem. Even when patient, payer, and provider incentives are aligned, patients frequently wind up receiving services from ineffective and/or inefficient resources. In addition to degrading the cost effectiveness of current care, this failure to align patients with appropriate resources undermines competitive pressures to improve delivery systems for the future. In this talk, I will frame the patient routing problem, discuss major research challenges it poses, and report on research that addresses patient routing in specific environments. In particular, I will describe new approaches to patient routing in the emergency department and show that information on patient complexity gathered at triage can be used to speed flow and improve safety for patients. I will also present ongoing research on cardiac surgery that seeks to quantify alternate care options and develop information that will help patients make more informed choices.

Reception Follows, 1st Floor Lobby, Carl H. Lindner Hall

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Wallace J. Hopp’s research focuses on the design, control and management of operations systems, with emphasis on manufacturing and supply chain systems, innovation processes, and health care systems. He has won a number of awards for his research, including the 1990 Scaife Award (with Mark Spearman, for the paper with the “greatest potential for assisting an advance of manufacturing practice”), the 1998 IIE Joint Publishers Book-of-the-Year Award (for the book Factory Physics), the 2005 IIE Technical Innovation Award, the 2006 SME Education Award, the 2011 Ross School of Business Senior Research Award, and the INFORMS Pierskalla Award for Best Paper in Health Care Management Science (for the paper “Patient Streaming as a Mechanism for Improving Responsiveness in Emergency Departments”). Hopp is an elected member of the National Academy of Engineering, and a Fellow of IIE, INFORMS, MSOM, POMS, and SME. He has served as President of the Production and Operations Management Society (POMS) and as Editor-in-Chief of the journal Management Science, and is currently a Senior Editor of Production and Operations Management. He is an active industry consultant, whose clients have included Abbott Laboratories, Bell & Howell, Black & Decker, Boeing, Case, Cisco, Dell, Ford, Eli Lilly, Eaton, Emerson Electric, General Electric, General Motors, John Deere, IBM, Intel, Motorola, Owens Corning, Schlumberger, S&C Electric, Texas Instruments, Whirlpool, Zenith, and others.