

## **Preauthorization and denial of specialty referrals are associated with lower patient satisfaction**

Gatekeeping by primary care physicians and prospective utilization review of specialty referrals are methods often employed in health care organizations to curtail costs in improve appropriateness of specialty care. The authors found that denial of a desired specialty referral had a dominant and negative effect on patient satisfaction. Patients who did not see a specialist when desired were more than twice as likely to want to disenroll from the health plan and three times as likely not to recommend their group to a friend. These results have significant implication for the VHA as it adopts some managed care strategies in an effort to deliver more cost-effective care. *Kerr EA, Hays RD, Mitchinson A, Lee M, Siu A. The influence of gatekeeping and utilization review to control access to specialists on patient satisfaction with care. Journal of General Internal Medicine. 1999; 14(5):287-296. Contact: Eve Kerr, MD, (734) 930-5100, e-mail at ekerr@umich.edu.*