

Dear Colleague,

Welcome to *Hiatt's Insights*. My name is Dr. Mark Hiatt. When I decided to join HealthHelp as chief medical officer a year ago, some colleagues commented that I was crossing over to the “dark side” in going from clinical to administrative medicine. My response: “Actually, I’m going to the light.”

As a diagnostic radiologist for many years, I spent much of my time in small, dark rooms reading images on computer screens. A new world—one with windows—greeted me on the administrative side of medicine. I am eager to share with you insights from these two worlds in this new newsletter, *Hiatt's Insights*.

Each newsletter will address a timely topic, encapsulating the knowledge and vision of HealthHelp thought leaders and providing guidance to our payer clients and other industry leaders. I will draw from my diagnostic radiology experience and business background. These combined experiences give me a unique understanding of, and interest in, the transformative role of technology in medicine and the evolving economic context of health care. I hope you will find this newsletter informative and thought provoking.

Low-dose CT for Lung Cancer

With that in mind, the first topic of *Hiatt's Insights* relates to the U.S. National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) recent findings regarding low-dose CT screening for lung cancer.

The NCI released early results from its National Lung Screening Trial, stating that such screenings would reduce lung cancer deaths by more than 20 percent. To put these findings in context, consider that the highly popular mammographic screening for breast cancer results in a lower mortality reduction (at about 15 percent). CT screening for lung cancer could thus easily become the new craze, impacting low-risk patients and payers alike.

About the Author



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Dr. Hiatt brings to his position at HealthHelp a wealth of experience in both radiology and business. Prior to joining HealthHelp, Dr. Hiatt was a radiology departmental leader and served on the board at Trinity Mother Frances Hospitals and Clinics in Tyler, Texas.

Dr. Hiatt completed a fellowship in cardiovascular imaging at Stanford University after a residency in diagnostic radiology at the University of Virginia. He has a master’s in Health Evaluation Sciences, with an emphasis in informatics and resource management, from University of Virginia. Dr. Hiatt earned his medical degree and MBA from Wake Forest University.

If this is the case, low-risk patients, for whom the yield of screening remains consequently low, would be exposed to unnecessary radiation and a higher co-pay. The NCI also notes: "In addition, the screening process itself can generate suspicious findings that turn out not to be cancer in the vast majority of cases, producing significant anxiety and expense." Because of this, these low-risk patients could also face surgical and medical complications from additional testing to determine that they do not have lung cancer. "These problems must, of course, be weighed against the advantage of a significant reduction in lung cancer mortality," the NCI adds.

The NCI plans to publish its complete findings, with more detailed results, in the coming months. I and others at HealthHelp are eagerly anticipating these results and will incorporate the findings into the guidance we provide in this area, helping payers to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of low-dose CT screening for lung cancer on a case-by-case basis.

This is just one example of how HealthHelp stays at the forefront and guides its clients. In future *Hiatt's Insights*, I plan to discuss equally relevant topics, such as how patients benefit from specialty benefit management and how payers achieve sustained savings by reining in redundancy and waste in radiology, radiation oncology, and cardiology.

Best regards to you as we seek together the best care for our patients,

Mark Hiatt, MD, MBA, MS

About HealthHelp

HealthHelp, a leader in specialty benefit management, generates significant savings and return on investment for health care payers by enhancing physician knowledge, improving quality of care, and reducing unnecessary radiation exposure. Each of its programs addresses a different aspect of diagnostic imaging, cardiology, and radiation oncology. The clients of Houston-based HealthHelp administer local, statewide, and national health care plans across the country. For more information about HealthHelp's programs, visit www.healthhelp.com.

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