

Coverage Watch: Elisabeth Rosenthal, The New York Times

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Bioethics, Elisabeth Rosenthal

You may not have noticed her byline, but chances are you've read, and groaned over, Elisabeth Rosenthal's reporting on healthcare costs for the New York Times. In her "Paying Till It Hurts" series, Rosenthal reports on our national whack-a-mole game of controlling healthcare costs. Since 2013, her steady stream of memorable stories has explained how the two block, \$900 ambulance ride became routine and why an insured surgical patient can be blindsided by an extra \$117,000 cost, despite his best efforts to stay within his policy's restrictions.

Readers may come to her stories for their human interest, but will stay for Rosenthal's lucid unraveling of the complexities and absurdities of medical care pricing.

Rosenthal's reporting is a counterpoint to the familiar narrative that expenditures in the last six months needlessly drive up healthcare costs. She focuses instead on the mechanics of routine costs increases for patients of all ages as the other big healthcare cost story. Her work illustrates that small medical advances can yield big upticks in out-of-pocket expenses and how doctors and healthcare systems push back against insurer driven cost controls. In her continuing reporting, Rosenthal creates an ever richer picture of the obstacles to managing medical costs for individuals, insurers and government. The Times page devoted to her series includes Rosenthal's stories, graphics and a link to a related Facebook page.

Don't miss at least scanning the series page, and don't be surprised if you find yourself reading one story after the other.

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/health/paying-till-it-hurts.html>