

**THE DARTMOUTH INSTITUTE
FOR HEALTH POLICY & CLINICAL PRACTICE**



Where Knowledge Informs Change™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Annmarie Christensen
(603) 653-0897

annmarie.christensen@dartmouth.edu

Alyssa Snow
(202) 261-2880

alyssa.snow@msslgroup.com

**Moving Beyond Medicare: Dartmouth Atlas Researchers to
Analyze Variations in Pediatric Care, Under-65 Population**

Foundation Grants \$500,000 to Support Pediatric Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care

Lebanon, N.H. (January 27, 2012) – The Dartmouth Atlas Project is once again branching out beyond Medicare. Dartmouth researchers today announced plans to develop their first regional study on variations in pediatric health care, funded by a two-year grant from the New England-based Charles H. Hood Foundation, and collaboration with Blue Health Intelligence® to study geographic variation in a commercially insured adult population.

Researchers with the Atlas Project will investigate geographic variation in pediatric health care across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont using data from commercial insurers and Medicaid. Based upon this research, they plan to develop the *Dartmouth Atlas of Children's Health Care in Northern New England*, which will report rates of utilization and spending for primary care, inpatient care, emergency room care, advanced imaging, surgical care and medication use across regions and hospitals.

Previous [Dartmouth research](#) of health care variation in adults has shown that most differences cannot be explained by patient needs or preferences, but by variation in how physicians and hospitals practice medicine. This new project on variation in the care of infants and children will build upon this research to see if pediatric care differs from what is known about adult care.

“At a time when public reporting of variation in the care of Medicare beneficiaries have motivated reform in clinical practice and health care policy across the country, there remain unrealized opportunities for understanding and improving health care for children,” said David C. Goodman, M.D., M.S., co-principal investigator of the Dartmouth Atlas Project and director of the Center for Health Policy Research at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice.

This project will be just one of the Atlas Project's forthcoming analyses in 2012 to study the under-65 population. Through a new partnership with Blue Health Intelligence, Dartmouth researchers plan to release a study of geographic variation in joint arthroplasty and knee arthroscopy in the commercially insured population over time. Blue Health Intelligence (BHI®) is a trade name of Health Intelligence Company, LLC, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association accessing medical and pharmacy claims data from more than 110 million lives nationwide, reflecting medical utilization in every ZIP code.

The Atlas Project has previously studied commercially insured populations in [Michigan](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [Texas](#) and [Virginia](#), and plans to examine the new data alongside its previous analyses of the Medicare population to continue to gain insight on how the findings compare.

The Dartmouth Atlas Project is located at the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice and principally funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For more information, visit www.dartmouthatlas.org.

###

About the Dartmouth Atlas Project

For more than 20 years, the [Dartmouth Atlas Project](#) has documented glaring variations in how medical resources are distributed and used in the United States. The project uses Medicare data to provide information and analysis about national, regional, and local markets, as well as hospitals and their affiliated physicians. This research has helped policymakers, the media, health care analysts and others improve their understanding of our health care system and forms the foundation for many of the ongoing efforts to improve health and health systems across America.