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## Another Perspective on the Cardiac Malpractice Crisis in Maryland

Merrill Goozner has an [excellent blog on the medical industry](#). Here's his take on the cardiac stent "mill" in Baltimore, and how it has come to light and reached some measure of accountability.

He writes on his "Gooznews" blog:

... let us point out a few interesting aspects of this still evolving story.

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First, it was officials with access to patient billing records at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services who launched the investigation. Yet we read this morning in the Washington Post a story by Kaiser Health News about pushback from the American Civil Liberties Union and others against the creation of comprehensive electronic database containing records from the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which covers millions of federal workers. One of the purposes of such a database would be to conduct investigations like the one carried out by CMS.

Second, it was local reporters at the Baltimore Sun, after learning about letters sent from the hospital to patients advising them about their possibly unnecessary operations, who brought the story to light. Individual cases highlighted in today's New York Times story on the Senate report came from trial lawyers suing the hospital on behalf of those patients.

There's talk these days about cutting Medicare budgets by making seniors pick up more of the tab. Having "more skin in the game" will lead consumers to think twice before buying unnecessary medical services. There is also a lot of talk about limiting patients' right to sue in order to stop physicians from practicing defensive medicine.

Can individuals without legal rights whose every second opinion will require another payment out of pocket be able to stop rogue physicians from practicing money-driven medical practices like those at the Baltimore hospital? ...

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Not much of a chance that that will happen, Merrill.

[Here's our report](#) on the consumer groups pushing back on the deficit commission proposals to save money on medical care by wiping out patients' rights to get legal accountability when they are injured by poor medical care.

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