



Ideas for Change: Beginning the Discussion March 20, 2008

MOST EFFICIENT AFFORDABLE CARE

America will not be satisfied unless and until the cost of health coverage and health care are affordable.

1. *Make available to consumers meaningful information on the quality, price, use, and comparative effectiveness of health care services.*

Transparency: *Information is the oxygen of public trust.* Everyone – providers, suppliers and insurers – should report information on quality, pricing, utilization and other aspects of care to increase transparency, educate consumers, and inform patient and purchaser decision-making, and drive care improvement. Meaningful information will be different for different audiences.

- Ensure that the types of information reported is determined through a consensus process that includes stakeholders. When possible, existing efforts should be used (i.e., National Quality Forum, Hospital Quality Alliance, AQA, etc.).
- Invest in the methods and measurement tools required to create comparable information for consumers that will help to avoid unintended consequences of policies that could mistakenly disadvantage providers, suppliers, insurers, and others.
- Require all hospitals, physicians, payers, pharmaceutical companies, device companies, and others to collect and report meaningful information related to the price and quality of their services.
- Ensure that the quality, pricing, and comparative effectiveness information is presented in a way that is easily accessible and understood by the public.

2. *Create a better alternative to today's liability system.*

We need to create a culture among doctors, nurses, hospitals, and other health care providers that encourages open communication with patients and their families when errors in care occur. At the same time, America needs a liability system that improves quality and patient safety, uses evidence-based standards, separates the serious cases from others, and produces prompt and fair compensation for injured patients.

- Require open communication among providers, patients and their families when an error occurs.
- Invest in effective quality improvement and patient safety interventions for all sites of care.

- Educate all health care professionals in the science and process of how to provide excellent care and avoid liability.
- Use administrative compensation systems and health courts to determine when an avoidable, preventable event has occurred.
- Provide prompt compensation to injured patients and families based on agreed-upon payment schedules when an error takes place.
- Adjust providers' liability insurance premiums based on occurrence of preventable errors.

3. *Analyze the comparative effectiveness, risks, and benefits of new technologies, medicines, practices, and procedures for individual conditions.*

Everyone involved in health care decisions – patients, doctors, employers, and insurers – needs more information about what treatments are most effective. Evaluating the risks and benefits of current, new, and transformative technologies, therapies, and treatments and making this information readily available can improve treatment decisions. While not intended to curb innovation, when then combined with information about the cost of innovations, it can be used to help increase the value of every dollar spent.

- Create centers whose responsibility is to assess the relative risk, benefit, and cost of alternative technologies, therapies, drugs, and devices. Centers could be structured in a number of different manners: as private-public partnerships, foundation supported entities, or government-sponsored organizations.
- Make comparative effectiveness information available on a public website in a way easily understood by clinicians, purchasers, and patients.

4. *Simplify the working of public and private insurance.*

Making health insurance more simple and efficient will increase public and provider trust, reduce administrative spending, and allow scarce resources to be spent on health care rather than paper work.

- Standardize and automate claims processing and other administrative processes.
- Make available standardized tools for consumers to easily compare and evaluate insurance benefit packages.
- Like Medicare supplemental coverage choices, simplify and standardize private insurance benefit packages.
- Coordinate and streamline regulations to reduce or eliminate red tape, such as unnecessary paper work, duplicative administrative steps, and compliance burdens.

5. *Expand educational capacity and emphasize early math and science learning to meet current and future health care workforce needs.*

America needs an adequate number and mix of workers as the health care workforce itself ages and to care for the growing chronically ill population and aging baby-boomers. Workforce needs may change dramatically with greater use of information technology, and will likely require a new evaluation of health care workforce needs.

- Facilitate the recruitment and retention of health care professionals.

- Expand faculty and student training slots for practitioners in short supply today and those projected to be in short supply in the future, including nurses, primary care providers, and certain other physician specialties.
- Invest in grade school, middle school, and high school math and science to yield higher achievement.

6. *Redefine roles for workers to meet future care needs.*

The work of today's physicians, tomorrow's physicians, and the entire health care workforce needs to be redesigned to meet our future health care needs and address the growing burden of chronic illness.

- Develop new roles, training approaches, and organizational structures to support chronic care management, prevention, enhanced consumer involvement, and the unique needs of an aging society.
- In developing and re-deploying workers into these new roles, expand the use of nurse and nurse practitioner expertise; identify new types of caregivers, skills, and training needed; and modify licensing and credentialing as well as reimbursement.
- Train the next generation. At an early age, increase children's performance in secondary level math and science, especially among minority children.

7. *Renovate the education of health care professionals and the broader health care workforce.*

Invest in a renovation of physician, caregiver, and other health care worker training, especially medical school education, to emphasize care competencies of today and the future.

- Develop interdisciplinary education and training approaches to build new competencies among physicians and other health care workers to support evolving health system needs, such as prevention, quality of care, chronic care management, a team-based approach, and use of health information technology.

8. *Focus on chronic care management (see "Chronic Care Management").*

9. *Invest in America's public health (see "Wellness").*

10. *Test payment redesign to reward quality providers who follow recommended "best practices" (see "Highest Quality Care").*

11. *Test payment redesign to give provider groups a single amount to manage the entire episode of a patient's care and better coordinate care (see "Highest Quality Care").*

12. *Adequately fund national performance improvement measurement (see "Highest Quality Care").*