

## AHA Board **Class of 2016**

### **Kris Doody wants to be an advocate for rural health care**

*The Class of 2016 profiles the women and men who joined the AHA board this year.*

BY PETE DAVIS

Kris Doody, CEO of Cary Medical Center – a 65-bed acute care hospital in Caribou, Maine – knows the vast challenges rural health care providers face, including remote geographic location, small size and reduced Medicare payments.

But she also knows that more than 50 million Americans live in rural areas and depend upon the hospital as an important, and often the only, source of care in their community. It's why she says wants to be a "voice for rural health."

Doody joined the AHA board on Jan. 1. As a rural health advocate, she's pressing Congress to extend several soon-to-expire Medicare reimbursement policies that support rural hospitals – policies like the low-volume adjustment and Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) programs. More than 500 hospitals receive the low-volume adjustment and more than 200 hospitals receive MDH payments, and without these payments it would make it much harder for some hospitals to continue providing essential care and services.

A registered nurse, Doody has served

as CEO of Cary Medical Center since 1999. Prior to being named CEO, she served as the hospital's chief operating officer and manager of surgical services.

During her tenure at Cary Medical Center, Doody has made patient-centered services a priority. For example, the hospital has established programs that train family members who are the caregivers of Alzheimer's patients, help individuals with serious heart disease transition to a plant-based diet, and provide diabetes patients with education so that they can manage their disease.

"As patients become more aware of their own ability to manage their health and we help provide them with the tools, the education and information they need, we will see a healthier community," she says.

The AHA board this year has a number of opportunities to develop strategies that can help hospital leaders navigate a changing health care environment, according to Doody.

For example, she cites a report released last month by the AHA Committee on Research, "Your Hospital's



Doody

Path to the Second Curve: Integration and Transformation." The report reviews the environmental pressures driving hospitals and care systems toward greater clinical integration, more financial risk and increased accountability. It also provides a framework for leading organizations toward a customized path or series of paths for health care transformation, and highlights successful integrated care delivery programs and different forms of integration that can accelerate organizational transformation.

"It's not going to be a one-sized fits all solution; it's probably going to be a number of different models," she says. "I think we're going to have to learn from each other and the best practices in order to implement what is going to work best to take care of the patients and communities we serve."

Doody has served two terms on AHA's Regional Policy Board 1 and is a former board chair of the Maine Hospital Association. She is excited to serve on the AHA board and work with and learn from colleagues across the country on how to move health care forward.

"We all have a passion for taking care of patients and their families in our communities, and we all bring unique and diverse skills to the table," she says.