



WASHINGTON IDEAS FORUM

OCTOBER 4-6, 2011 | WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE HEALTHCARE CONUNDRUM WORKING SUMMIT OVERVIEW

Prepared By: Sarah Yager, *The Atlantic*

THE CONVERSATION

Expert thinkers and practitioners in the health care field met at the Washington Ideas Forum to discuss how to reconcile a tight national budget with the growing pool of people requiring health services. Participants suggested several ways to cut costs without denying care to patients, such as tackling system waste, eliminating practice variations, performing more-comprehensive medical research (with diverse sample pools and realistic trial environments) to make more-effectual treatments, and introducing an integrated care model with the use of medical homes. The group agreed that reform discussions should focus on innovations and incentives to broaden coverage, instead of identifying patients from whom to withhold care.

“Rather than approaching [health care reform] with what feels like a stick—*what are we going to rationalize*—let’s approach it via a carrot,” said Elizabeth Nabel, President, Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

One fix they suggested was matching doctor compensation to patient outcomes. The fee-for-service model of the health care system fosters inefficiency, many participants said. Introducing a payment structure that rewards physicians for quality care, rather than services performed, would encourage more accountability for results.

Atul Grover, Chief Advocacy Officer, Association of American Medical Colleges, said “Society is sending a message to clinicians saying, ‘We don’t value your time with patients unless you actually stick a knife in them.’”

The transition into a new payment structure could be facilitated by the next generation of caregivers. Increasingly, doctors—many living in two-professional households—desire flexible lifestyles, making them open to a system that values efficient care over hours spent in the hospital.

The conversation also touched on how to use medical technology to improve health care. Technological advances are allowing doctors to be more informed about their patients, and patients to be more informed about their own health. But in the current system, new products also drive up prices for consumers, and financial barriers prevent many innovators from entering the market.





WASHINGTON IDEAS FORUM

OCTOBER 4-6, 2011 | WASHINGTON, D.C.

Several participants suggested increasing investment in medical research—the front end of R&D—to accelerate production of new drugs and technologies. They stressed the importance of financial incentives for innovation, since, while initially costly, the creation of better treatments targeted more-effectively at patients could save money in the long term.

Participants also championed public health measures and preventative care.

“One of the best ways to keep people out of the emergency rooms and the hospitals is if they’re healthy in the first place,” said Paula Lantz, Chair, Department of Health Policy, George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services. “We’re here to talk about health care, and that’s important, but health and health care aren’t the same thing. Primary care is very important, but let’s push it back even further to primary prevention.”

The group agreed that, in addition to increasing the supply of primary care physicians and specialists, we should channel resources toward nurses, social workers, community care centers, and public health initiatives, to construct an expansive, coordinated health system that gets involved with people before they get sick.

5 BIG IDEAS

1. We should drop the term “rationing,” and instead focus on how to increase the supply of affordable, accessible care.
2. Payment for medical services should be tied to effectiveness.
3. Investment in research and development can lead to cost savings by turning out products that make patients healthier.
4. Focusing on preventative care will drive down costs to the health care system by reducing the number of patients needing treatment.
5. The health system needs to provide continuous, integrated care to patients, to prevent unnecessary treatments and re-hospitalizations. We should establish community networks of professionals at all levels of care.



WASHINGTON IDEAS FORUM

OCTOBER 4-6, 2011 | WASHINGTON, D.C.

ATTENDEE LIST

Moderator: Corby Kummer *Senior Editor* **The Atlantic**
Host: Georgine Anton *Senior Vice President* **Atlantic Media Company**
Carolyn Barley Britton, M.D., M.S. *Former President* **National Medical Association**
Susan Blumenthal *Former United States Assistant Surgeon General*
Tom Brodmerkel *Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer* **Matrix Medical Network**
O. Marion Burton, M.D. *President* **American Academy of Pediatrics**
Charles Connor *President and Chief Executive Officer* **American Lung Association**
Jonathan L. Diesenhaus *Partner* **Hogan Lovells US LLP**
Warren Greenberg, Ph.D. *Professor, Health Economics* **The George Washington University**
Phyllis Greenberger *President and Chief Executive Officer* **Society for Women's Health Research**
Atul Grover M.D., Ph.D. *Chief Advocacy Officer* **Association of American Medical Colleges**
Harry Johns *President and Chief Executive Officer* **Alzheimer's Association**
Nancy Johnson **United States House of Representatives (R-Connecticut, 1983 - 2007)**
Paula Lantz, Ph.D. *Chair, Department of Health Policy, School of Public Health and Health Services* **The George Washington University**
Lawrence A. McAndrews *Past President and Chief Executive Officer* **National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions**
Ranit Mishori, M.D., M.S. *Director, Global Health Initiatives, Department of Family Medicine* **Georgetown University School of Medicine**
Elizabeth Nabel, M.D. *President* **Brigham and Women's Hospital**
John Noseworthy, M.D. *President and Chief Executive Officer* **Mayo Clinic**
John Rother *President and Chief Executive Officer* **National Coalition on Health Care**
Ben Sawyer *Co-Founder* **Digitalmill**
Vicki Seyfort-Margolis, Ph.D. *Director, Office of Science and Innovation* **United States Food and Drug Administration**
Gregory Sorensen, M.D. *Chief Executive Officer* **Siemens Healthcare USA and Canada**
Laurie Sprung, Ph.D. *Executive Director* **The Advisory Board Company**
Barry Strauch, M.D. *Chairman Emeritus, Department of Medicine* **Inova Fairfax Hospital**
Elizabeth Thompson *President* **Susan G. Komen for the Cure**
Reed Tuckson, M.D. *Executive Vice President and Chief of Medical Affairs* **UnitedHealth Group Incorporated**