

International Program in Health Policy and Practice

The Fund's International Program in Health Policy and Practice is building an international network of policy-oriented health care researchers. The program also seeks to establish high-level policy forums for international exchange, capable of fostering creative thinking about problems common to the United States and other industrialized countries.

2000 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

For the past three years, the Fund has hosted an annual International Symposium on Health Care Policy on a topic of pressing concern. This year's symposium, held in Washington, D.C., in October 2000, brought together leading policy thinkers to consider the theme "Quality and Innovation: Issues, Strategies, and Implications for Policy." Participants included health ministers from Australia,

Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, the United Kingdom's minister of state for health, other experts from the five countries, members of the international program steering committee, and leading U.S. policymakers and researchers.

Hosted by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, the program began with a reception and dinner at Blair House and a keynote address delivered by the Canadian health minister, The Honorable Allan Rock, setting out a vision of the 21st century health care system. In a plenary address, "In Search of Innovation," Uwe Reinhardt, James Madison Professor of Political Economy at Princeton University and chair of the program's international coordinating committee, shared the results of an international review that assessed a broad spectrum of quality initiatives undertaken by industrialized countries around the world. Donald Berwick, M.D., of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston, offered a thoughtful challenge to participants in his address, "Physician Leadership: Who Should Take on the Mantle of Quality?"

Findings were released from the Fund's 2000 International Health Policy Survey, which elicited the views of physicians in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the

United States about the quality of patient care in their countries. Doctors in all five nations reported concerns about their ability to deliver high-quality care to their patients, their hospitals' systems for addressing medical errors, and nursing shortages in hospitals. Indeed, nursing shortages emerged as a key issue for U.S. doctors, and was the only resource widely viewed as being in short supply. Physicians in the four other countries reported waiting lists for specialist care and lack of adequate facilities. Asked how quality might be improved, doctors in all five countries endorsed electronic prescription and medical records systems, while a large majority of primary care physicians recommended allowing more time with patients.

In a roundtable discussion, The Honorable Michael Wooldridge (Australia), The Honorable Annette King (New Zealand), and The Right Honorable John Denham (United Kingdom) joined Secretary Shalala and Minister Rock in a candid exchange of views on the key policy challenges and options their countries face in ensuring quality of care. Scholars then introduced concrete examples through case studies illustrating each country's approach to medical errors and patient safety, pharmaceutical purchasing, making health care systems more patient-driven, primary care innovation, and information technology.

The symposium is directed by Robin Osborn, assistant vice president and director of the Fund's International Program in Health Policy, and cosponsored by *Health Affairs*, in collaboration with founding editor John Iglehart. The proceedings will be published in 2001 in a special international issue of *Health Affairs*.

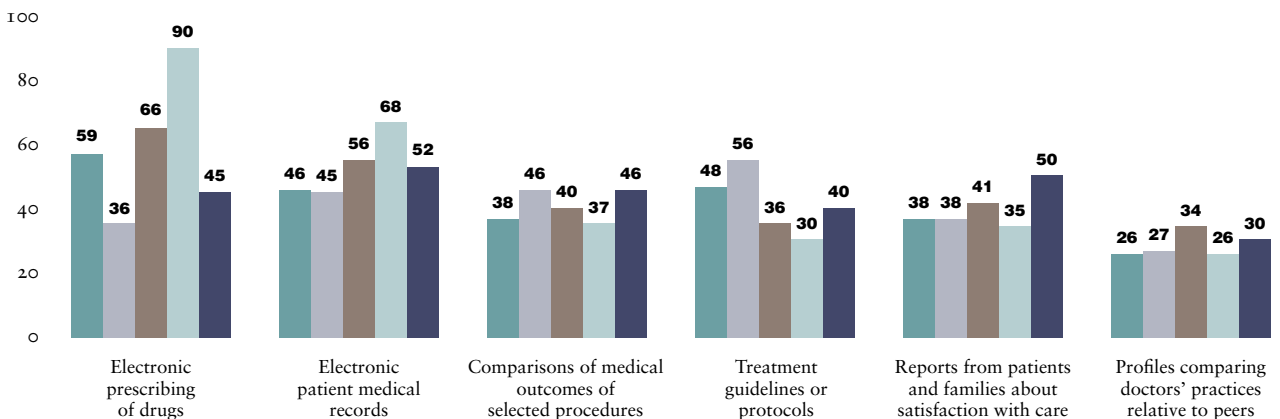
U.S.–U.K. MEETING ON HEALTH CARE QUALITY

In June, the Fund and the London-based Nuffield Trust cosponsored a meeting, "Improving Quality of Health Care in the United States and United Kingdom: Strategies for Change and Action," for senior policymakers and quality experts at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, England. Looking closely at efforts to improve the quality of care for coronary heart disease and cancer in the United States and the United Kingdom, participants from the two countries sought to develop a clear picture of what interventions work, and why. John Eisenberg, M.D., director of the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and Liam Donaldson, M.D., chief medical officer of the U.K. Department of Health, worked with their respective teams of experts at the meeting to shape an agenda for future U.S.–U.K. collaboration in three key areas: medical errors, information technology, and national reporting on quality.

When surveyed by the Fund, substantial portions of generalist physicians in five industrialized countries said that certain types of quality information and electronic prescription and medical record systems would be “very useful.”

- Australia
- Canada
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom
- United States

Percent of generalist physicians saying a system or type of information would be “very useful”



Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2000 International Health Policy Survey of Physicians.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY INDICATORS

The Commonwealth Fund’s International Working Group on Quality Indicators met in New York during July 2000 to begin work on a set of minimum quality indicators for use in cross-national comparisons of health systems. Recognizing that most national indicators commonly available today, such as life expectancy and infant mortality, are greatly influenced by factors outside a country’s health system, the working group seeks to recommend measures that will provide greater insight into how a country’s health sector performs relative to those of other nations, and how policies and delivery system organization affect

quality. Five industrialized countries are represented on the working group — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States — as are the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Health Organization.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Recognizing that concerns about ensuring quality of care are driving the policy agendas of all industrialized countries, and that lessons can be learned from other countries’ approaches and innovations, the Fund sponsored a session at the June 2000 meeting of the Academy

for Health Services Research and Health Policy. The session brought an international perspective to the broader U.S. health services research community.

Through its President's Discretionary Fund, the Fund supported work by Andrew Bindman, M.D., at the University of California, San Francisco, to assess the impact of U.K. primary care quality initiatives and to compare U.S. and U.K. experiences in referrals to specialists. A grant to Stanford University researchers Mark McClellan, M.D., and Daniel Kessler is cofunding a cross-national research study of policies, economic incentives, and regulation affecting the adoption of technology for heart disease — and therefore health care quality and outcomes — in 17 industrialized countries. A joint project by Joan Teno, M.D., at Brown University, and Julia Addington-Hall, at the University of London, is comparing two nationwide surveys of bereaved family members to gain a closer understanding of the quality of care provided to dying patients in the two health care systems. Building on the success of the first Australia–New Zealand Health Services Research Conference, held in August 1999 and cosponsored by The Commonwealth Fund, a planning grant was made to Charles Cangialose at Victoria University in Wellington to support a second conference, to be held in Wellington in December 2001.

HARKNESS FELLOWS IN HEALTH CARE POLICY

Aimed at developing and encouraging promising junior health care policy researchers and practitioners in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, these fellowships provide a unique opportunity to spend 4–12 months in the United States, conduct a policy-oriented research study, gain firsthand exposure to managed care and other innovative models of health care delivery, enhance methodological skills, and work with leading health policy experts in this country. Gerard F. Anderson of Johns Hopkins University serves as senior fellowships adviser. Selection committees in each country interview candidates and recommend fellows.

The first class of Harkness Fellows in Health Care Policy (1998–99) continue to generate articles based on their fellowship work. For example, a study by Australian fellow Raymond Moynihan and colleagues showed that newspaper and television reports often exaggerate the benefits, ignore the risks, and fail to disclose the true costs of new medications. Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Moynihan's findings received wide coverage in the media, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and *Boston Globe*.

Now returned to their home countries, the 1998–99 fellows are assuming influential posts in health care policy. For example, New Zealand fellow Ronald J. Paterson was named commissioner of health and disability, and

United Kingdom fellow Carmel Hughes was one of five recipients of the U.K.'s prestigious National Health Service Primary Care Career Scientist Award.

The second class of fellows (1999–00) completed a successful and productive year, ending with a final reporting seminar in Los Angeles in June 2000. Fellows' presentations covered a range of issues, including the impact of maternal health on child health and health services utilization, health status and use of services among American Indians and Alaska Natives, the use of evidence in making decisions about health care technology, state approaches to handling consumer complaints about their health care plans, and the organizational dynamics of academic health center mergers.

During the course of the year, fellows had the opportunity to meet with leading U.S. and international policy experts. A September orientation in New York City included an introduction to the Fund's work, informal meetings with program staff and grantees, and site visits to New York–Cornell Medical Center's Healthy Steps site, the United Hospital Fund, and Harlem Hospital, a critical safety net provider for the city's vulnerable populations. In October, fellows attended the Fund's International Symposium on Health Care Policy. A Washington policy briefing was held in February to give the fellows exposure to the political process and current health and social policy issues. Joining the fellows at the briefing were two U.S. journalists from the Kaiser Media Fellowships in Health.

The 2000–01 Harkness Fellows in Health Care Policy arrived in the United States beginning in July to undertake research projects under the guidance of a distinguished roster of U.S. and home country mentors. Their topics are highly synergistic with the Fund's national program areas, and most include comparisons between the United States and the United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand. A publishable paper is the end-product expected for each fellowship.

2001 IAN AXFORD FELLOWS

A further dimension of the international program is the Fund's administration of the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy. Established by the New Zealand government in conjunction with the private sector, the program provides opportunities for outstanding U.S. professionals working in a broad range of public policy areas—including health care, education, welfare reform, criminal justice, employment, race relations, the environment, science and technology, and tax policy—to take policy sabbaticals in New Zealand. Complementary to the Harkness Fellowships in Health Care Policy, the program strengthens a growing network of international exchange on health and social policy issues. The Ian Axford Fellowships selection committee, chaired by Robert D. Reischauer, president of the Urban Institute, met in May to select the 2001 Ian Axford fellows.

2000–01 HARKNESS FELLOWS
IN HEALTH CARE POLICY

SIMON J. DENNY, M.B.CH.B., DIP. PAEDS. (New Zealand)
Research Fellow
Centre for Youth Health, Papatoetoe
Project: Survey of At-Risk Adolescents
U.S. Mentors: Robert Blum, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.,
and Michael D. Resnick, Ph.D., Division of
General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health,
University of Minnesota

DAVID F. DOOLAN, M.B.B.S., M.B.A.,
GRAD.CERT.P.H., FRACMA (Australia)
Director of Medical Services
Wyong Hospital and Long Jetty Healthcare Centre
Medical Planner
Central Coast Area Health Service
Project: The Role and Impact of Clinical
Information Systems in Improving the Quality and
Cost-Effectiveness of Health Care Services
U.S. Mentors: David Bates, M.D., M.Sc., Brigham
and Women's Hospital, and Brent James, M.D.,
M.Stat., Intermountain Healthcare Institute for
Health Care Delivery Research

LINDA GASK, M.B.CH.B., PH.D. M.Sc., FRCPSYCH
(United Kingdom)
Reader in Psychiatry
Department of Psychiatry and National Primary
Care Research and Development Centre
University of Manchester
Project: Treatment of Mental Health Problems in
Primary Care: A Comparison of U.S. and U.K.
Strategies and Outcomes
U.S. Mentors: Edward H. Wagner, M.D., M.P.H.,
and Michael R. Von Korff, Sc.D., Center for Health
Studies, Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound

SUSAN MYLES, M.Sc. (United Kingdom)
Medical Research Council Training Fellow
in Health Services Research
Primary Care Research Group
University of Edinburgh
Project: The Integration of Health and Social Care:
A U.K.–U.S. Comparison of Incentive Structures
U.S. Mentor: Gerard F. Anderson, Ph.D., Center for
Hospital Finance and Management, Johns Hopkins
University School of Hygiene and Public Health

E. JAMES PEARSE, M.Sc. (Australia)
Director
Structural and Funding Policy Unit
New South Wales Health Department
Project: The Impact of Capitation Payment
Models on People with Chronic, Complex, and
Recurring Conditions
U.S. Mentor: Gerard F. Anderson, Ph.D., Center for
Hospital Finance and Management, Johns Hopkins
University School of Hygiene and Public Health

FRANCO SASSI, PH.D. (United Kingdom)
Lecturer in Health Policy
London School of Economics and Political Science
Project: Variations in the Use of Preventive Services
in Managed Care and Fee-for-Service and Their
Impact on Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities
in Health
U.S. Mentor: Harold S. Luft, Ph.D., Institute for
Health Policy Studies, University of California,
San Francisco

COLIN F. TUKUITONGA, M.P.H., FAFPHM (RACP),
FRNZCGP (New Zealand)
Senior Lecturer and Director
Pacific Health Research Centre
University of Auckland
Project: Primary Care Strategies to Reduce
Disparities in Health Outcomes for Minorities:
A Comparison of New Zealand and the United States
U.S. Mentor: Andrew S. Bindman, M.D.,
Primary Health Care Research Center, University
of California, San Francisco

KIERAN WALSH, PH.D. (United Kingdom)

Senior Research Fellow

Health Services Management Centre

University of Birmingham

Project: Study of the Impact of External Review, Inspection, and Regulation on Quality Improvement in Health Care Organizations

U.S. Mentor: Stephen M. Shortell, Ph.D., School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley

D. TIMOTHY WILSON, B.M.B.S., M.PHIL., FRCGP
(United Kingdom)

General Practitioner and Director

St Paul Royal College of General Practitioners
Quality Unit

Royal College of General Practitioners

Project: Diffusion and Sustainability of Quality Improvement Following a Collaborative Breakthrough Series® Project

U.S. Mentors: Donald M. Berwick, M.D., Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Inc., and Paul D. Cleary, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School

ANAKE A. M. GOODALL, M.B.A. (New Zealand
Harkness Fellow)

Settlement Implementation Manager

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Christchurch

Project: Mid-Career Master's in Public Administration

Placement: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

2001 IAN AXFORD (NEW ZEALAND)
FELLOWS IN PUBLIC POLICY

DANIEL SAREWITZ, PH.D.

Managing Director/Research Scholar

Center for Science Policy and Outcomes

Columbia University

Project: The Development of Outcomes-Based Science Policy in New Zealand: Lessons for the United States

DONALD J. SCHMID, J.D.

Assistant United States Attorney

United States Attorneys' Office

United States Department of Justice

Project: New Zealand Family Conferencing: A Model for United States Criminal Justice



In New York City today, parks and gardens are reaching out to their neighborhoods in new and vibrant ways—often with help from the Fund. A recent survey of visitors to the Queens Botanical Garden, for example, highlighted the value of activities like early-morning tai chi to residents of

nearby immigrant communities. Garden director Susan LaCerte (left) is using the results of the Fund-supported survey to make the garden's programs even more accessible to local residents.

