



NEWS RELEASE

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THE COMMONWEALTH FUND ANNOUNCES A NEW AGENDA TO PROMOTE A HIGH PERFORMING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN A POST-HEALTH REFORM ENVIRONMENT

Tracking Affordable Care Act Implementation, Better Care for the Sickest Patients, Improving Quality and Access for Vulnerable People, and Breakthrough Innovations in Health Care to Be Among the Fund's Primary Focus Areas

New York, NY, September 12, 2013—The Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation working toward a high performance health system, will hone its focus to address emerging issues in the post-health reform landscape. Tracking the results of the Affordable Care Act, improving how health care is delivered to the sickest patients, ensuring access and improving quality of care for low-income, minority, and immigrant populations, and supporting breakthroughs in health care are among the areas where the Fund will focus its grantmaking and research resources.

The Fund will also expand its policy analysis efforts to focus more explicitly on controlling health care costs, improving Medicare, and tracking the nation's health system performance. The new direction comes eight months after David Blumenthal, M.D. joined The Commonwealth Fund as the seventh president of the 95-year-old philanthropy.

“As The Commonwealth Fund approaches a century of work in enhancing the common good, our new agenda will continue to help move the nation toward a better, more affordable, and more equitable health care system for all,” said Blumenthal. “Our refocused programs will look for ways to engage consumers and health care providers in improving care, and also draw in other stakeholders with the ability to effect change, including policymakers, employers, entrepreneurs, software developers, insurers, health system leaders, and many more.”

The Fund's work going forward will be organized into four main program areas:

- **Health Care Coverage and Access:** Work in this area will continue to inform the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and to expand and improve health insurance and

access to care, with a focus on coverage gaps that will not be addressed by the health reform law.

- **Health Care Delivery System Reform:** This area will emphasize promoting the broader delivery system changes necessary to improve patient outcomes and control costs. The initial focus will be on improving care for patients with high health care costs and needs and vulnerable populations using four approaches to improving health system performance: payment reform, primary care, coordinated care systems, and Medicare.
- **International Health Policy & Practice Innovations:** The Fund will continue the work of its International Program in Health Policy and Innovation, which promotes the establishment of benchmarks through international comparisons, and oversees the longstanding Harkness Fellowships in Health Care Policy and Practice, its international exchange program. Going forward, the program will focus on enhancing efforts to learn from successful interventions abroad.
- **Breakthrough Health Care Innovations:** The Fund will develop a new infrastructure to identify, evaluate, and shape new ideas that can potentially disrupt the current health care system in positive ways. Information technology (IT)-enabled consumer engagement and IT-enabled clinical processes; frugal innovations, or innovations at work in developing countries; and next-generation health care provider incentives are among the topics that will be explored.

The Fund will continue to produce its scorecards tracking the performance of the health system in achieving the goals of improving quality, access, and health outcomes, maintain its online policy Data Centers, and inform and engage federal and state policymakers. The Mongan Commonwealth Fund Fellowship Program in Minority Health Policy will also continue.

“The Commonwealth Fund has a long history of working to ensure that health care is accessible to the most vulnerable among us,” said Commonwealth Fund Board Chair and United Hospital Fund of New York President James R. Tallon, Jr. “This new agenda draws on that history as we prepare to create a truly high performance health system to help all Americans realize a healthier and more secure future.”

Dr. Blumenthal laid out his views of the Fund’s new agenda in a blog post also released today. The post, and additional details and resources can be found at:

<http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Publications/Other/2013/Sep/New-Agenda.aspx>.

The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation supporting independent research on health policy reform and a high performance health system.