



2005 Annual Report

COMMISSION ON A HIGH PERFORMANCE HEALTH SYSTEM



The Commonwealth Fund's Commission on a High Performance Health System is identifying policies and practices in health care delivery and financing that would lead to improved system performance. Pictured here are Commission member Glenn Hackbarth; Senior Policy Director Anne Gauthier; Chairman James J. Mongan, M.D.; and Executive Director Stephen Schoenbaum, M.D.

Photo: John Troha/Redux Plus

Officially launched by The Commonwealth Fund on June 1, 2005, the Commission on a High Performance Health System was formed in response to mounting evidence that the fragmented U.S. health care system, fraught with waste and inefficiency, is in need of fundamental transformation.

While U.S. health spending is well over twice the per capita average among industrialized nations, these expenditures have not translated into better health for Americans overall. More than a third of the population reports problems accessing health care services, many related to cost. Medical errors account for tens of thousands of deaths annually, while only half of adults received recommended medical care. Disparities in health and health care based on insurance status, income, race, and ethnicity are pervasive. High administrative overhead and inefficiencies in the delivery of services inflate costs and compromise the quality of care.

Led by distinguished experts representing a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives, the new Commission is working on solutions to these and other problems. The Commission hopes to achieve expanded access, higher quality, and greater efficiency, while paying particular attention to those Americans who are most vulnerable because of income, insurance status, race/ethnicity, health, or age.

The group's first tasks are to 1) define the dimensions of performance in which the U.S. health system should excel, and



James J. Mongan, M.D.
Commission Chairman



Stephen C. Schoenbaum, M.D.
Commission Executive Director

2) develop a clear framework of attributes that would lead to high performance. Completion of the first task will lay the groundwork for an annual “scorecard” that measures health system performance in each dimension and will help in setting short-, medium-, and long-term goals for improvement. The second step will enable the Commission to consider the policies and practices that are most critical to achieving its goals, as well as to determine how best to move these onto public and private agendas.

The Commission will also yield important benefits to The Commonwealth Fund as an institution, informing the future direction and emphasis of the foundation’s grantmaking programs. In turn, the Commission will derive benefits from new projects developed by those programs. Particularly germane to the Commission’s work will be the activities and research undertaken by the programs on Quality Improvement and Efficiency, Medicare’s Future, and Future of Health Insurance, as well as the recently launched State Innovations Program and Patient-Centered Primary Care Initiative. In addition, the Commission will provide valuable input in choosing the topics covered at the Fund’s annual Bipartisan Congressional Retreat.

The Commission meets three times each year. At its first meeting in New York in July 2005, members began considering activities to pursue, including development of a framework for high performance and a health system scorecard. At the November meeting, held in Washington, D.C., the commissioners continued this work and began discussions on key policy issues to consider as well as possible performance measures for the annual scorecard. Future meetings are likely to include visits to institutions or organizations aimed at improving insurance coverage, access to care, quality of care, and cost performance.



Anne Gauthier
Commission Senior Policy Director



Cathy Schoen
Commission Research Director

The Commission's chairman is James J. Mongan, M.D., president and CEO of Partners HealthCare System, Inc. Support is provided by executive director Steve Schoenbaum, M.D., who is also the Fund's Executive Vice President for Programs; senior policy director Anne Gauthier, who is based at AcademyHealth in Washington, D.C.; and research director Cathy Schoen, the Fund's Senior Vice President for Research and Evaluation. The Commission Management Team also includes the Fund's president, Karen Davis, and its executive vice president and chief operating officer, John E. Craig, Jr. The Washington-based Alliance for Health Reform, an organization co-chaired by Senators Jay Rockefeller and Bill Frist, has received grants from the Fund to manage the logistics of the Commission meetings and to cosponsor policy briefings, roundtables, and the Bipartisan Congressional Retreat.

Members of the Commission on a High Performance Health System

James J. Mongan, M.D. (Chair)
President and Chief Executive Officer
Partners HealthCare System, Inc.

Maureen Bisognano
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Christine K. Cassel, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Board of Internal Medicine and ABIM Foundation

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Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director
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Director of Health
San Antonio Metropolitan Health District

Glenn M. Hackbarth, J.D.
Consultant

George C. Halvorson
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc.

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Medicare Rights Center

Cleve L. Killingsworth
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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

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