



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **COMMONWEALTH FUND PRESIDENT KAREN DAVIS TO STEP DOWN AT END OF 2012**

#### ***Nationally Recognized Health Care Economist Has Led Foundation Since 1995; Re-Oriented Fund's Work To Focus on Moving U.S. Toward a High Performing Health System***

New York, NY, November 21, 2011—Karen Davis, who since 1995 has led The Commonwealth Fund in its drive to improve the performance of the nation's health care system, plans to step down as the Fund's president on December 31, 2012.

“Karen Davis is one of the outstanding thinkers and leaders on health care reform,” said James R. Tallon, Jr., chair of the Commonwealth Fund Board of Directors. “A distinguished health policy researcher, university department chair, and federal health agency executive, she positioned The Commonwealth Fund to make a major contribution to the recent health care reform debate and to the implementation of those reforms. The foundation is extremely fortunate to have had Karen at its helm at a time of great opportunity for improving the performance of our health system.”

In reflecting on Davis' achievements as Fund president, Tallon pointed to areas in which the foundation has made a difference during her tenure:

- Contributing independent analysis to inform development of the Affordable Care Act – a landmark law that will be instrumental in providing all Americans with better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, including strategies for coverage of the uninsured, provider payment reform, and models and tools for patient-centered, coordinated care.
- Developing or identifying, assessing, and spreading health delivery system innovations, including work on the patient-centered medical home, resident-centered nursing home care and culture change to improve quality of life of frail elders, interventions to reduce hospital readmissions, enhancement of health care information technology infrastructure, and patient safety.
- Creating comparative databases that help generate the will and capacity to improve performance, including international, national, state, and local scorecards on health system performance, and the [WhyNotTheBest.org](http://WhyNotTheBest.org). Web site that features comparative performance data on health care providers.

- Through the Minority Health Policy Fellowship at Harvard, preparing the next generation of minority physician leaders committed to ensuring access to care for vulnerable populations, and the elimination of disparities in quality of care and health outcomes by race and ethnicity.
- Promoting exchange of international innovations and experience through the Fund's Harkness Fellowship in Health Policy and International Health Policy and Innovation program. Featuring annual international surveys and ministerial-level symposia, these activities brought international performance comparisons to bear on the U.S. health reform debate.

Cristine Russell, Commonwealth Fund Board vice-chair, said "Karen Davis is committed to the importance of applying policy research to real-world problems. She has created an effective modern communications strategy to ensure that Fund-generated information and expertise is accessible to those in a position to effect change in the health care system, from participants in the foundation's annual Bipartisan Congressional Health Policy conferences to an electronic network of almost 40,000 leaders and experts in health policy and practice nationwide."

Under Davis' leadership, the Fund's endowment and organizational capacities have been significantly strengthened. The market value of the foundation's endowment increased from \$365 million to \$653 million from 1995 to 2011, while during this period, the Fund expended \$511 million to advance its mission of promoting a high performance health system. Tallon noted that the Fund has created a unique and highly productive model for a policy-oriented foundation, in which grant-making is enriched by professional staff, and the results of grants are assiduously harvested and communicated for maximum impact in the real world.

"It has been a great source of professional fulfillment to lead the Commonwealth Fund over this historic period in American health care," said Davis. "In every organization, however, there comes a time for new leadership with new ideas. I look forward to a final year at the Fund focused on helping advance health reform implementation and bringing to scale and spreading delivery and payment system innovations. In addition to assisting with the leadership transition at the Fund, I will be pursuing opportunities for contributing toward the work that is so important to ensuring that every American receives the best possible care and the opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives."

A native of Oklahoma, Davis earned her bachelor's degree (1965) and a doctoral degree in economics (1969) from Rice University in Houston. She was an assistant professor of economics at Rice University from 1968 to 1970, when she became a research associate at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. In 1974–1975, while on leave from Brookings, she was a visiting lecturer on economics at Harvard University. She returned to the Brookings Institution as a senior fellow, and in 1977, she was appointed deputy assistant secretary for planning and evaluation in the Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

(HHS). In 1980, she became the first woman to head a U.S. Public Health Service agency when she became the administrator of the Health Resources Administration. From 1981 to 1992, she was a professor at Johns Hopkins University. She served as chairman of the Department of Health Policy and Management at the School of Hygiene and Public Health from 1983 to 1992. In 1992, she became executive vice president of the Commonwealth Fund, and in 1995, she became its president.

Throughout her career, Davis has served on numerous health care boards and committees, including the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Health Advisory Panel and committees of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Academies of Sciences. She received the Baxter Health Services Research Award in 2000, the AcademyHealth Distinguished Investigator Award and the Picker Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Patient Centered Care in 2006, and the Institute of Medicine Adam Yarmolinsky Medal in 2007. She has been awarded honorary doctorates from Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland Baltimore and Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. She is on the board of directors of the Geisinger Health System, a member of the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, and is an AcademyHealth distinguished fellow. She was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2009 and an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in the United Kingdom in 2011.

The search for Davis's successor as president of the Fund will be conducted by the foundation's Board, with Director Samuel C. Fleming chairing the search committee. Any inquiries about the search should be directed to Ms. Marilyn Machlowitz at Machlowitz Consultants, Inc. [[mm@machlowitz.com](mailto:mm@machlowitz.com)], which will assist in the search.

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