

September 2007

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What's New??

IHP Observations Series: The KP-Institute for Health Policy has launched a new, bi-weekly series of short health policy commentaries, entitled *Observations*, on the IHP website (www.kpihp.org). These brief articles, written by IHP policy analysts, provide a vehicle for commentary on current issues of interest in health policy, including notices and summaries of important journal articles, conferences, roundtables, and upcoming events. Recent *Observations*, which are archived on the site, include commentaries about the gap between public perceptions and the realities of the AIDS epidemic; efforts to develop multi-sectoral, cross-issue collaboration to improve equity in health and other areas; and the key outcomes of an IHP Roundtable meeting on the importance of "systemness" in health care delivery. *Observations* appears on the home page of the IHP website.

New IHP In Focus brief: IHP's new series of short (4-page) health policy primers, entitled *In Focus*, has published its second edition, [The Power of Partnerships Lessons from Outreach for the Part D Low-Income Subsidy Program](#). Written by Kate Meyers, Senior Policy Consultant at KP-IHP, Maureen Hanrahan of KP Community Benefit, and Jay Greenberg of the National Council on Aging, the paper explores some challenges of and useful approaches to identifying and enrolling eligible beneficiaries in the Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) program. It provides background on the LIS Program and its enrollment challenges, examines the outreach approach used in a partnership between Kaiser Permanente and the National Council on Aging, and considers lessons of this approach and the implications for policy.

The *In Focus* series is intended to provide a high-level overview of important health policy issues, including background information, context, critical learnings, and policy implications for policymakers and the media. The next issue, scheduled for publication in November 2007, will examine the value of "systemness" in health care delivery organizations.

IHP Events

Oct 4: Medicaid Invitational Roundtable: KP-IHP, KP Community Benefit, and the Center for Health Care Strategies are partnering to conduct a one-day invitational roundtable meeting, "Improving Care for Medicaid Consumers with Multiple Chronic Conditions: Opportunities and Policy Issues." This Washington, DC, event will bring together a select group of leaders from state and federal government, health policy research organizations, health care delivery, and academia. They will focus on public policy solutions to support system-wide improvements in care for Medicaid beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions. A report on the meeting will be posted on the IHP website.

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Systemness Roundtable: A select group of senior health care delivery, policy, and research leaders participated in an August 7 IHP Roundtable entitled "[Improving Health Care 'Systemness': A Look at the Evidence and Policy Implications.](#)" Jointly sponsored by IHP, The Commonwealth Fund and its Commission on a High Performance Health System, and the Council of Accountable Physician Practices, the meeting included examinations of various models of organized health care delivery systems, an overview of the research findings on organized physician groups, and discussion of the barriers to, and opportunities for, extending systemness in American health care. A background paper, "Organizing Medicine: Linking Physician Group Organizational Attributes to Quality and Efficiency of Care," by IHP Senior Consultant Laura Tollen, provided a common focus for discussion. Highlights of the meeting have been summarized in an Aug. 20 "Observations" commentary by meeting organizer Laura Tollen on the [IHP website](#). The full background paper has been submitted for journal publication and should be available in 2008.

Social Equity Funders' Meeting: As an outgrowth of earlier work focused on racial and ethnic health disparities, KP-IHP, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and The California Endowment convened a diverse group of funders in July to consider how collaboration across their different areas of interest - health, education, poverty, and community development - could accelerate progress toward common goals of social equity. Observations by organizer Kate Meyers about the issues raised at the meeting are available on the [IHP website](#), and a more formal meeting summary will be available on the website soon.

KP-IHP Luncheons/Conversations: In a continuing series of KP Luncheons/Conversations with noted guest speakers, IHP sponsored a lively exchange of views among KP stakeholders and world-renowned physician-researcher **David Bates, MD**, on the use of informatics to improve care and safety. Bates is Chief of the Division of General Medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, and a Professor at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health, where he is co-director of the Program in Clinical Effectiveness. An interview with Dr. Bates focusing on the importance of decision support tools and personal health records will be posted on the IHP website.

IHP also partnered with KP Northern California Division of Research in July to sponsor a presentation by **Anne Beal MD, MPH**, Assistant Vice President, Quality of Care for Underserved Populations at The Commonwealth Fund. Dr. Beal shared her perspective on the connections between health disparities and health care quality, and exchanged views with meeting participants on how health care systems and researchers can contribute to the reduction of health disparities.

IHP On the Road and In the Journals

IOM's Evidence-Based Medicine Roundtable Reports: The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Roundtable on Evidence-Based Medicine brings together a variety of health care sectors to consider how the development and use of evidence in medical care delivery can be improved. In support of KP President and CEO George Halvorson's participation on the Roundtable, IHP senior consultants Laura Tollen and Kate Meyers and KP Senior Vice President Bob Crane collaborated with others to produce a sectoral report on the potential role of health care delivery organizations in meeting the Roundtable's goals. Their report was presented in July at an IOM workshop on improving value in health care, and a finalized version will be compiled with the reports from the other sectors to provide a comprehensive approach to moving ahead. Draft versions of all the sectoral reports are available at the [IOM's website](#).

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Enthoven, Crosson, and Shortell in Health Affairs: The Sept/Oct. issue of *Health Affairs* features an important article by three close friends and colleagues of IHP: Alain C. Enthoven, PhD, professor emeritus at Stanford University and a fellow to IHP; Jay Crosson, MD, Executive Director of The Permanente Federation; and Stephen Shortell, PhD, Professor of Public Health and Dean of the School of Public Health, UC Berkeley. In "[Redefining Health Care: Medical Homes or Archipelagos to Navigate?](#)", they argue persuasively for integrated delivery systems as the preferred alternative to the freestanding practice units advocated in a recent book by Michael Porter and Elizabeth Teisberg.

Recent IHP staff presentations: IHP Director of Policy Analysis Murray Ross has been speaking on various health policy issues to important stakeholder groups over the summer. His presentations have included the following:

- "*Transparency in Health Care: Seeing Better or Just Seeing More?*" was the subject of a talk delivered to an insurance industry conference in June. Murray focused his comments on the importance of not only developing better and more useful information, but also of aligning provider and patient incentives to use information.
- "*Lessons from an American integrated delivery system: What translates to a European setting?*" This was the subject of a panel session led by Murray at the International Health Economics Association Meeting in Copenhagen in July. Participants included a number of European health policy experts who have studied KP and our unique model of integration.
- "*Medicare Reimbursement and Pay for Performance*" was the subject when Murray addressed the California Healthcare Financial Management Association in September. The talk cautioned that, despite the urgent need to improve quality in Medicare, Pay-4-Performance is in its infancy, and its impact is diminished by more fundamental problems with Medicare's payment systems.

HSR Article Forthcoming: Health Services Research journal will publish an edited transcript of an expert panel discussion on "Health Information Technology and Return on Investment: Fact or Fantasy?" The panel, chaired by Murray Ross at last year's AcademyHealth conference, featured discussion by Doug Conrad, Ashish Jha, Jason Lee, and KP's Louise Liang.

Inside IHP

IHP/CHR Fellow Announced: In partnership with [UC Berkeley's Center for Health Research](#), KP-IHP has named Sun Ha Lee as the 2007-2008 IHP/CHR Fellow. The \$30,000 IHP/CHR Fellowship was made possible through a grant from IHP. A graduate of Swarthmore College (BA) and Villanova University (MA), Sun Ha is currently a master's student in the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy, working with Professor John Ellwood. Her research project will help identify factors hindering and helping electronic health information exchange.

Welcome, Nicka! In June 2007, Nicka Sewell joined IHP to assume the role of Project and Communications Coordinator. Nicka comes from The Permanente Medical Group where she was an Analyst in the Regional Credentialing Department. Prior to that, she held various positions at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Redwood City. In her role at IHP, Nicka will help publicize and coordinate programs, maintain the IHP website, manage event logistics, handle financial transactions, and serve as a liaison to Kaiser Permanente's National Corporate Meeting Services, accounting, and internal communications departments.