



Institute for Alternative Futures
FORESIGHT SEMINARS ON HEALTH & INNOVATION

The Next Wave of Healthcare Reform

Meeting Report

Foresight Seminar Meeting, June 6, 2003
Room B-339, Rayburn House Office Building

The Foresight Seminar panel included:

- **Glenna Crooks, Ph.D.**, President of Strategic Health Policy International, Inc., and the author of *Covenants: Inspiring the Soul of Healing and Creating Covenants: Healing Health Care in the New Millennium*.
- **William R. Rowley, M.D.**, Senior futurist at the Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) and its for-profit subsidiary, Alternative Futures Associates (AFA).
- **Gail L. Warden**, President and chief executive officer of Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, Michigan.

Provocative Insights

We need to bring responsibilities into line with rights and call healers, patients and entire communities into a covenant relationship. —Glenna Crooks.

The things we care about have to be designed into the system. The vision and values for the next wave of healthcare reform will come from many places. —Bill Rowley

The foundation for healthcare reform can be found in the Belmont Vision and the two Institute of Medicine reports: *Fostering Rapid Advances in Health Care* and *Crossing the Quality Chasm*. —Gail Warden

Designing Values into the System

Growing dissatisfaction over the rising cost and deteriorating quality of healthcare makes change inevitable. **Reform can either come through a crisis or through a renewed covenant with agreements over values or vision**, according to the June 5 Foresight Seminar panelists.

In the last decade, America experimented with a business model for healthcare based on contracts that assumed the parties would fail and relationships would end. Continuing on this path will lead to crisis. The alternative path to healthcare reform is covenants that acknowledge that everyone involved in the healthcare system from patients to physicians and payers have mutual responsibilities for healing. Choosing this path will lead to experimentation and learning as all parties fulfill their obligations to health and well being.

Warden outlined three visions for healthcare reform. The Belmont Vision, created in 1992 by key thought leaders in health care, proposed that a more caring system be created that operates in an environment where quality, cost and service meets social needs. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) proposed fostering rapid advances in health care through five demonstration projects in chronic care, primary care, information and communications technology, health insurance coverage, and liability and tort reform. The third vision, also proposed by IOM in its “Crossing the Quality Chasm” report, addresses the need for a patient-centered healthcare system that stresses safety, decreasing waste, care based on continuous healing relationships, and cooperation among clinicians.

Future Policy Options

This next wave of healthcare reform will draw people from all levels and roles into a covenant relationship. **The “top down” momentum will favor healthcare policies that reflect mutual responsibilities rather than rights and entitlements, ideological compromise, and widespread implementation of demonstrated reforms.** Institutions that have vision and creativity to make profound changes in the face of the status quo will provide critical “bottom up” momentum. They will need to be actively supported and encouraged to take these risks.

When physicians and other health professionals are driven by their aspirations to insist on practices that support healing, they will contribute an “inside out” momentum for reform. The power of covenants will transform healthcare from the “outside in” as informed and assertive patients, as well as assertive payers, insist that healthcare be effective and affordable.

This shared responsibility for healthcare reform can start at any level, in any of these directions. At the community level, citizens and professionals can work together to build a better system. At the national level, the American public can join in a dialogue about the vision and values they want to shape public policy.

The American healthcare system is still the best in the world, and the nation should build on its strengths. It is time to “shift the balance,” Crooks says, to a healthcare system in which the nation, community, physicians and patients agree to covenants for health, and the peace and prosperity that such a commitment might achieve.

Action Items

Public policy makers who want to avoid the path to crisis and pursue the path that a healthcare system founded in covenants can deliver should consider taking these steps:

- Fight for good policy that promotes the responsibilities and obligations of covenants; reject legislation that is mired in the principles of contracts and entitlements.
- Build a national consensus on what vision and values Americans desire for their healthcare system and see that these are designed into the system.
- Make the future happen by supporting the demonstration projects called for in IOM’s Rapid Advances report.
- Identify and support “bottom up” reforms that institutions and individual dreamers are proving will work.

Additional Resources

[Fostering Rapid Advances in Health Care: Learning from System Demonstrations](#)

This report from the Board on Health Care Services (HCS), Division of Health Care Services (HCS), Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends five focused demonstrations for improvements in healthcare.

[Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century](#)

The IOM's report formulates new rules to redesign and improve care.

[Healthy People in a Healthy World: The Belmont Vision for Health Care in America](#)

A 1992 vision for healthcare facilitated by the Institute for Alternative Futures with national leaders.

[Covenants: Inspiring the Soul of Healing and Creating Covenants: Healing Health Care in the New Millennium](#)

Proposes covenants as a way through the impasse of policy and politics to improve healthcare.