IOM Announces Perspectives

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I am pleased to introduce Perspectives, a new category of written products from the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Perspectives comprise two forms—commentaries and discussion papers—both of which offer observations and opinions of leading experts on developments in health and health care. These pieces are intended to expand knowledge about health, as well as to inform national discourse on pressing biomedical and health matters.

Discussion papers have the flavor of a traditional journal article in both length and approach. In contrast, commentaries are shorter, op-ed style pieces focused on a singular subject. In either format, these publications provide outside experts the opportunity to reflect on current challenges in the health system and to foster insightful discussion, and they are a new means of furthering the IOM’s mission of asking and answering the nation’s most pressing health questions.

Often, the seed of an article will be a question raised or discussed in the course of IOM activities, whether from Roundtables, Forums, or other interest groups. Reflective of the broad scope of the IOM’s work, Perspectives will cover topics spanning the fields of biomedical science, technology, health systems and health care services, health policy, public health, environment, and global health. They will be individually authored, and neither edited nor endorsed by either the IOM or the National Academies.

Several IOM programs and activities have discussion papers and commentaries in progress. Recently published discussion papers include “Patient-Clinician Communication: Basic Principles and Expectations,” “The Common Rule and Continuous Improvement in Health Care: A Learning Health System Perspective,” “Attributes of a Health Literate Organization,” and “Deadly Sins and Living Virtues of Public Health.” Also posted on our site are several new commentaries, authored by George Halvorson, Kaiser Permanente Chairman and CEO; Sheri McCoy, Johnson & Johnson Executive Committee Vice Chair; Leonard Schaeffer, University of Southern California Judge Robert Maclay Widney Chair and Professor, with Dana Goldman, University of Southern California Professor and Norman Topping Chair in Medicine and Public Policy; and Donna Shalala, University of Miami President and former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. These contributions are part of the IOM Roundtable on Value & Science-Driven Health Care’s biweekly Learning Health System Commentary Series to profile efforts being made toward a health care system that continually learns and improves.

In the spirit of our mandate to serve as “advisor to the nation to improve health,” this new venture to share ideas and insights presents an exciting opportunity to use the IOM’s unique resource of the nation’s leading experts in health and health policy to sharpen national dialogue on today’s health challenges. We encourage your use of these materials and look forward to your comments and suggestions along the way.

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