

Ideally, the healthcare system should be like our solar system: a variety of complex entities integrated in such a way that life not only is sustained but flourishes.

— Carleton T. Rider,
Mayo Clinic,
AMGF Board Chair

The American Medical Group Foundation

Giving Americans the care they need, want, and deserve

Members of the American Medical Group Association (AMGA) are world leaders in quality improvement and have embraced the need to transform the healthcare system. Through innovation and leadership, these medical practices are rising to the challenge put forth by the Institute of Medicine to redesign patient care delivery systems, thus providing patients the care they need, want, and deserve. To support their efforts, the **American Medical Group Foundation (AMGF)** was formed as the philanthropic arm of the AMGA to develop grant programs, quality awards, and research and education programs aimed at helping improve clinical quality, patient safety, service, and operational efficiency, and to provide support for initiatives that exemplify the continuing quest for quality care.

The current systems cannot do the job. Trying harder will not work. Changing systems of care will.

— Institute of Medicine (IOM), *Crossing the Quality Chasm*

The American Medical Group Foundation

Our Goal: Redesigning Health Care Systems to Close the Quality Chasm

The American Medical Group Foundation (AMGF) is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) charitable organization. Its mission is to promote a transformation in the way healthcare systems are organized in order to provide care that is patient-centered and physician-directed. Through research, education, and influence, the Foundation will help forge a system of care that is consistently safe, responsive, timely, and affordable for the patients we serve.

AMGF believes the promise of a better healthcare system can best be fulfilled through organized systems of care. In these systems, teams of professionals and specialists are dedicated to respecting patient preferences, coordinating care across functional and cultural barriers, improving continuity of care, and being accountable for their results. In addition, information technology supports healthcare delivery.

What We Value:

- The needs of patients are our first priority
- Patients and physicians share in decision making
- Care is based on evidence and individual patient needs
- Care is coordinated across settings
- Performance and outcomes improvement are part of how care is delivered
- Compensation strategies support high quality of care

The needs of patients are our first priority

“Patient-centered” has become an essential catchphrase in discussions of healthcare quality reform. As healthcare professionals delve deeper into what being patient-centered would mean in the system-wide quality transformation taking place within their own organizations, many are realizing that central to this transformation is reforming the physician-patient relationship, and transforming systems of care to more effectively engage patients in their own care. The Institute of Medicine’s 2001 report, “Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century,” called for healthcare systems that:

- Respect patients’ values, preferences, and expressed needs
- Coordinate and integrate care across boundaries of the system
- Provide the information, communication, and education that people need and want
- Guarantee physical comfort, emotional support, and the involvement of family and friends



Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.

— Goethe

Accomplishing the AMGF Mission through...

- *Disseminating lessons and best practices from high performing practices*
- *Investigating new models of care delivery and systems integration*
- *Gathering evidence on the impact of organized systems of care on cost and quality*
- *Removing barriers to the development and growth of coordinated systems of care*
- *Encouraging policymakers and purchasers to reward quality and efficiency*

Through innovation and leadership, medical practices throughout the U.S. are redesigning patient care delivery systems to provide patients the care they need, want, and deserve. To support their efforts, The American Medical Group Foundation has developed grant programs, quality awards, and research and education programs aimed at helping improve clinical quality, patient safety, service, and operational efficiency, and providing support for projects that exemplify the continuing quest for quality care.

The Acclaim Award

The AMGF annually sponsors the Acclaim Award, AMGA's most prestigious quality award, which honors physician-directed organizations that bring the American healthcare system closer to the delivery model in which patients experience care that is safer, more reliable, more responsive, more integrated, and more readily available. This competitive award recognizes those organizations that can measurably demonstrate progress toward achieving the six aims of the 21st Century Health System defined by the Institute of Medicine, and provides educational grants to these organizations to further their improvement initiatives.

Best Practice Collaboratives

Collaboratives are effective vehicles for sharing common challenges, issues and successes and a proven way of accelerating collective learning and reducing the cost of discovery. Based on case studies of innovative and successful chronic care programs, these shared learning collaboratives provide opportunities in the form of educational grants, meetings, conference calls, networking opportunities, and dedicated listserv platforms.

Collaborative members have access to case studies from successful organizations and access to expert faculty. Most importantly, they develop a trusted group of peers with whom to share experiences.

Topics include best practices in Patient Co-management, Diabetes, Hypertension, Congestive Heart Failure, and Transforming Systems of Care.

Research and Demonstration Projects

The AMGF supports research and projects to develop best practices in clinical care and operations and to disseminate these practices for the betterment of care delivery in the U.S.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) selected AMGA and several partners for a demonstration project aimed at testing approaches for transforming how doctors and medical facilities provide care for Medicare patients with chronic disorders. Doctors will use home health monitoring technology to help Medicare patients with severe chronic illness live healthier, happier, longer lives. The intervention will reduce Medicare spending by preventing hospitalizations.

In addition, the AMGF provides support for initiatives that advance its mission. The Foundation helps with necessary research and demonstration projects for AMGA initiatives that further the continuing quest for quality care, including the Council of Accountable Physician Practices.

Council of Accountable Physician Practices

The Council of Accountable Physician Practices (CAPP), an AMGA affiliate, seeks to foster the development and recognition of accountable physician practices as a model for transforming the American healthcare system. CAPP's goals are as follows:

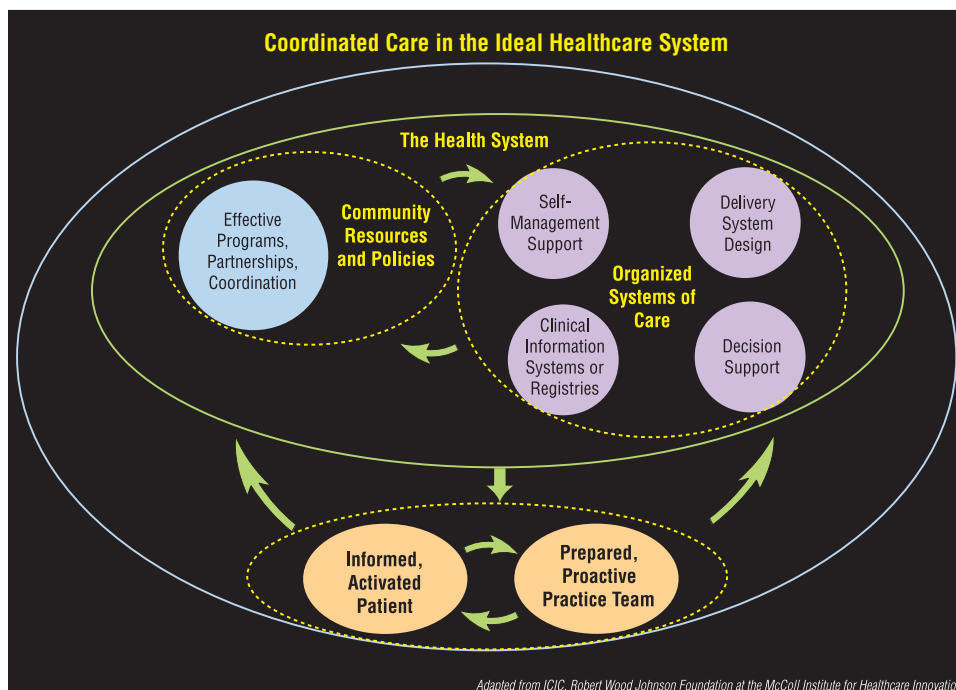
- Influencing the understanding and definition of health care value through research, education, and demonstrations
- Promoting the medical group model of delivery to employers, payers, and patients by demonstrating superior care
- Providing evidence of medical group accountability for quality and efficiency
- Promoting the development of accountable physician practices among providers committed to quality improvement and cost efficiency

With the programs and initiatives detailed in this publication, the American Medical Group Foundation will further its mission to change the way health care is organized so that every patient will receive health care that is consistently safe, effective, timely, efficient, and responsive to their needs.

The work of the American Medical Group Foundation is fully supported by contributions from the medical group community, industry partners, and other stakeholders in quality health care. For more information on how you can help AMGF achieve its mission to give Americans the care they need, want, and deserve, contact Julie Sanderson-Austin, R.N., at (703) 838-0033, ext. 356 or <jsanderson-austin@amga.org>.

“Organized systems are essential to ensure quality improvement and reduce errors in health care.”

*– Christine K Cassel, M.D.,
President and CEO, ABIM*



The American Medical Group Foundation has one purpose: To change the way health care is organized so that every patient will receive health care that is consistently safe, effective, timely, efficient, and responsive to their needs.

Patients and physicians share in decision making

Not too many decades ago, physicians held a preeminent status over the health care environment. They held all knowledge, power, and authority. Health care was predominantly delivered by thousands of highly personalized, independent solo practices, each tending to the needs of hundreds of individual patients, one patient at a time. This paternalistic culture is challenged by organizations where cooperation rather than autonomy is king, teamwork is revered, and patients are expected to take an active role in their healthcare decisions. Patients depend on cooperation among professionals and between themselves and their physicians, and the chronically ill must depend on it most of all.

Care is based on evidence and individual patient needs

Health care transformation calls for understanding what the whole patient needs, not just treating the presenting symptom. This means using evidence-based guidelines to provide the best care across the continuum of care and the eradication of variation in treatment based on geography, entrenched practice patterns, or where a specialist did his or her residency. It requires understanding the patient's values, preferences, and lifestyle, as well as including the patient's family, friends, and/or support system when making decisions about treatment.

Care is coordinated across settings

We believe the promise of a better healthcare system can best be fulfilled through organized systems of care. Coordinated care must be systematic and transparent so that all practitioners have access to the most up-to-date information when treating a patient and so patients do not fall through the cracks of a disaggregated delivery system. Coordination will be enhanced by refining operational models of care delivery and by integrating technology into the process.

Performance and outcomes improvement are part of how care is delivered

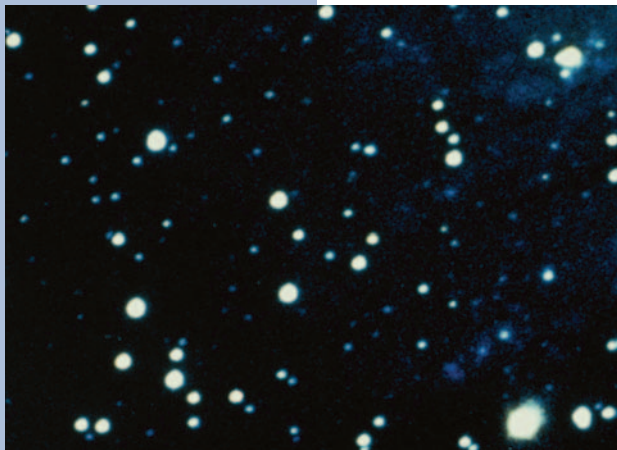
In order to constantly improve, healthcare organizations need to address the challenge of becoming learning organizations that are aware of their behavior and continually striving to improve performance. In organizational terms, this means having data to track what has happened and what needs to happen, and to assess performance and use that information to improve.

Compensation strategies support high quality of care

Our reimbursement system remains remarkably indifferent to differences in the way care is provided and the resultant patient outcomes. A reimbursement system that incorporates a substantial component reflecting achievement of quality results would encourage the delivery of the highest quality of care to our patients. Although much work is required to define and test such a system, reimbursement reform is essential to the advancement of quality care.

Ideals are like stars. You will not succeed in touching them with your hands, but, like the seafaring man, you choose them as your guides, and, following them, you will reach your destiny.

— Carl Schurz



For more information on the American Medical Group Association and AMGF:

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