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Information's Role in Health Reform: Leaders Chart a New Path

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Washington, DC, April 21, 2008 – The United States should act quickly and decisively to reform healthcare by putting people first, creating a reliable and predictable system that delivers quality care, and instituting a system that pays for value, says a unique panel of some of the nation's most respected healthcare leaders. Avalere Health recently convened the group at its first-ever summit on health information – “The Power of Information/New Directions in Health System Reform” – as a way to further policy discussions centered on creating meaningful and more immediate systemic health reform.

Avalere's Summit was unlike any other public forum in two aspects: its singular focus on the specific types of health information needed to advance reform rather than technology as a general component of an improved system, and the collective talent assembled to concentrate on these issues.

“Many in Congress and in the Administration believe we are on the threshold of major change that will be enabled through health information technology, but too often health IT is pushed as the magic bullet for curing our health system woes,” said Shannah Koss, vice president at Avalere Health and moderator of the Summit. “Although IT is part of the solution, understanding the information that needs to be leveraged and utilized is more important than the technology.”

Summit participants included:

Linda A. Bergthold, Ph.D., Former Senior Consultant, Watson Wyatt
Robert M. Califf, M.D., Vice Chancellor for Clinical Research, Director, Duke Translational Medicine Institute
Sophia Chang, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Better Chronic Disease Care, California HealthCare Foundation
Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Department of Health and Human Services
Alan Davidson, Google
Suzanne F. Delbanco, Ph.D., former Chief Executive Officer, The Leapfrog Group
Carol C. Diamond, M.D., M.P.H., Managing Director, Health Program, The Markle Foundation
John P. Glaser, Ph.D., Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Partners HealthCare
Donald W. Kemper, M.P.H., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Healthwise
Senator Bob Kerrey, President, The New School
John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., Senior Vice President and Director, The Health Care Group, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Mark McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Fellow, Director, Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform, Leonard D. Schaeffer Chair in Health Policy Studies and Economic Studies, The Brookings Institution
Mark E. Miller, Ph.D., Executive Director, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission
Jeremy Nobel, M.D., M.P.H., Lecturer, Harvard School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy and Management

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When tasked with prioritizing reform goals that would create the most important health system change and identifying the information critical to advancing these changes, the Summit participants recommended the following:

Put People First. Help individuals take more ownership of their health and make better healthcare decisions.

- Give patients and their caregivers information on treatment, providers, and comparative costs
- Give information to patients with multiple chronic illnesses that helps them understand and prioritize the most important parts of their treatment plan and how their illnesses connect

Enable Systematic Quality Care. Create a reliable, predictable, and measurable system for high-quality care.

- Turn raw data into information and actionable knowledge
- Measure what we know today more systematically and make today's quality data and resources more readily accessible, particularly for providers

Pay for Value. Link payment and incentives to the value of health services being delivered, including prevention.

- Make available consistent market-based data to allow community, regional, and national payers to compare information as they make purchasing decisions
- Quickly identify current and critical areas of consensus on value, then measure and disseminate findings

“Imagine a system that is consumer focused and empowers individuals with needed information to make good decisions; that consistently delivers high quality services through improved measurement and provider feedback; and is advanced by a payment system that recognizes and rewards cost-effective quality services,” said Sheera Rosenfeld, director at Avalere Health and co-author of the report. “The good news is that major strides can be achieved today if we do more with what we already know and leverage our local communities in partnership with the health system.”

In addition to establishing three specific goals and specifying how health information could be used to help achieve them, the Summit's proceedings offers a glimpse into how a reformed world would look at treating patients with both diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The panelists selected these conditions given the enormous amount of healthcare resources that go toward their treatment, and for the opportunities these chronic conditions present for better care coordination through the harnessing of information.

[The summary of the Summit proceedings is available for download.](#) The report findings were summarized by Avalere and reflect the collective views of the Summit participants. The Health Information Summit was funded by an unrestricted grant from IMS Health, a Norwalk, Connecticut-based health information company.

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Avalere Health is a leading advisory company focused on healthcare business strategy and public policy. It serves a diverse client base, which includes Fortune 500 healthcare technology companies, Federal government agencies, and major medical foundations. The company is organized into six practice areas – Medicare, Medicaid, Reimbursement, Long Term Care, Health Information Technology, and Education. Anchored by a comprehensive research engine and staffed by experts in business, medical product commercialization and health policy, Avalere provides strategic guidance, objective analytic research, and quality educational programs focused on the full range of health care issues facing our nation.

Founded in 2000, the firm was initially known as The Health Strategies Consultancy. The name was changed in 2005 to reflect the unique nature of the firm's products and services. Further information can be obtained at www.avalerehealth.net.

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