

## FIXING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: Educating a 21st century workforce.

Successful health care reform depends on aligning medical education with society's goals. We need to be sure that we have enough physicians and providers. And we need to educate them with the skills needed to change our health care system.

Health care education intersects with reform in fundamental ways. Here are just three examples:

First, a goal of reform is to fix the payment system to reward health. We can support this shift now by educating future physicians and providers in ways that ensure they are ready to actively partner with their patients to focus on prevention, wellness and healthy lifestyle choices.

Second, the current system can feel fragmented to patients as they move between different providers and specialists. Teaching all students side-by-side

now – physicians, physician assistants, nurses, dentists and others – will facilitate the natural formation of health care teams in the future. These patient-centered teams will support coordinated patient care while lowering costs.

And third, health care reform includes a push to capture the benefits of secure, portable electronic health records and other forms of information technology. By educating new providers to use these tools in innovative ways now, we have a real opportunity to improve patient care, reduce medical errors and help providers be more efficient.

If we start now, we can educate a 21st century workforce to achieve and support society's vision of health care reform. With a commitment to education and its funding, that vision is within reach.



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“We need to educate future physicians and providers with the skills needed to change our health care system.”

*Fourth in a series.*

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