Dear Readers:

Since enactment of the Affordable Care Act six years ago, some of the most broadly visible changes to our health care system have included: significant expansion of health insurance coverage for more Americans, stronger insurance coverage protections for consumers, and greater adoption and use of electronic health record (EHR) systems by providers with the goal to improve health care safety and quality for patients.

Much progress has been made under health reform but the “To Do” list remains. It is estimated that 29 million people in the U.S. are still uninsured, without the protections of health coverage. Nineteen states have not expanded Medicaid eligibility. Prescription drug costs continue to rise. And on the horizon is what could arguably be considered the heaviest “lift” of all under health reform — building more integrated systems of care and shifting the entire health care payment system away from volume-based to value-based care.

As we head toward this year’s presidential election, one cannot help but wonder how a new Administration will affect health reform efforts to date, as well as those in the queue to take place over the coming years.

What we do know, however, is that our health care system is a complex and dynamic organism and a great deal of work continues with goals to provide greater health care access to more people, improve quality and lower costs. So in this issue of Community Health Forum we are also moving forward to examine why the health center model (along with its mission) lends itself to building a stronger integrated system of care and why health centers must prepare for a monumental shift in how care is to be organized, delivered, and paid for in a not so distant future.

To your good health,

Claudia Green Gibson
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