

## Transforming Health Care Delivery: The Role of Nurses in Health Plans

Webinar Summary

May 29, 2012

### Participants:

**Susan Reinhard**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Senior Vice President & Director, AARP Public Policy Institute; Chief Strategist, Center to Champion Nursing in America

**Susan Kosman**, RN, BSN, MS, Chief Nursing Officer Aetna Inc.

**Diane Hogan**, DNP, RN, MA, Director of Clinical Innovations at Humana Cares

### Background

This webinar focuses on the role health plans play in the health care system and how health plans play a major role in supporting nurse leadership. The Institute of Medicine's report recommends that nurses assume more leadership roles and that all Americans have access to high-quality, patient-centered care in a health care system where nurses contribute as essential partners in achieving success. Nurse leaders Susan Kosman, chief nursing officer for Aetna and Diane Hogan, director of clinical innovations at Humana Cares, presented what the Health Plans Work Group has been doing to promote the IOM recommendations, and described both the role of nurses in health plans and value of nurses in a changing health care delivery system.

### Webinar Goals

- ❖ Understand the mission of health plans and the unique role they play in the health care system.
- ❖ Learn the roles that nurses play in health plans and types of lead programs and services delivered within them
- ❖ Realize the links among nurses, health plans, the future of health care delivery and the IOM's recommendations


Across the country, there is a movement to advance the field of nursing so that all Americans have access to high quality, patient-centered care in a health care system where nurses contribute as essential partners in achieving success. This national level [Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action](#) is a result of the Institute of Medicine's landmark 2010 report on the [Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health](#).

The *Campaign for Action's* field-based teams, the [Action Coalitions](#) (ACs), are leading this movement and are equipping themselves with knowledge gained from technical assistance provided by the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA), a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Such technical assistance comes in the form of webinars, face to face interactions, and other facilitated engagements with public policy leaders, content experts, consultants, and Action Coalition peers across the country.

## Webinar Overview

Health Plans play an important role in the Campaign for Action. Many state Action Coalitions have health plans as partners and some Action Coalitions have co-leads who represent health plans. As **Susan Reinhard** of AARP noted, nurses fill a variety of roles in health plans that contribute to the campaign's vision of quality, patient-centered care. Nurses are central to the mission of health care plans and they assume a variety of roles within health plans.

In response to the IOM's Future of Nursing report, **Susan Kosman** of Aetna said a diverse group of nurse leaders across various health plans and members from America's Health Insurance Plans (also known as AHIP) have been meeting for the past year to focus on:



*The IOM report underscores the need for nurses with more skills in transitional care, chronic care management, systems knowledge and technology due to our aging population and more chronic health conditions.*

- ✓ Discussing the Future of Nursing report and the implications on health plans;
- ✓ Sharing the IOM's report within our respective organization;
- ✓ Brainstorming ideas/actions that health plans can take to support/advance the IOM's recommendations;
- ✓ Collaborating where possible on actions that support the IOM's recommendations; and
- ✓ Developing this webinar that describes the various roles that nurses play in health plans, the linkage to the IOM's recommendations, and the future of health care.

Members of the Health Plans Work Team in support of the Campaign for Action are **Susan Kosman**, RN, BSN, MS, Aetna, Inc., **Shelley Balfour**, RN, BSN, MBA, Aetna, Inc., **Diane Hogan**, DNP, RN, MA, Humana Cares, **Susan M. Pisano**, America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), **Cynthia G. Wark**, America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), **Mary Aikins**, RN, BA, CCM, Horizon Healthcare Innovations - Patient Centered Medical Home, **Tom Michels**, RN, HealthPartners Medical Group, and **Jared T. Skok**, MPA, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation

**Kosman** said It is important to understand the role that health plans play today because many people continue to believe their only and central role is to pay claims. While paying claims is critically important to their mission, today's webinar is intended to provide you with a broader perspective on the breadth and depth of what health plans do and why nurses play such a fundamental role in health plans.

For decades, the focus of health plans has been on wellness, prevention, and chronic care management. With new models of care such as the patient centered medical home already in place and aided by today's technology, they also focus on identifying members that need

intervention, engaging members in programs/services that address their optimal health needs, address how changing the member's health behavior can lead to better quality outcomes and using data to develop new and innovative programs.

These are all efforts that cry out for the skills obtained through the professional training that is the focus of **nursing education.**, Nurses are employed at all levels in health plans, and in every operating unit, influencing the development, direction and implementation of our patient centered programs in a profound way, **Kosman** said.

Beyond claims payment, **Kosman** said that health plans:

- ✓ Provide a comprehensive array of health care related products/services and solutions focused on addressing issues of cost, quality and access;
- ✓ Serve diverse populations offering a full continuum of health care services and programs;
- ✓ Promote evidence-based practice and innovative models of care, guided by data, research and technology;
- ✓ Identify and engage members for the right program, level and type of interventions, emphasizing informed health care consumerism and self-care management;
- ✓ Forge direct relationships with all health care delivery stakeholders; and
- ✓ Transcend the care continuum in that they are uniquely positioned to have a relationship with all the stakeholders in health care.

Nurses are highly trusted and are at the front line on the issues of access, cost and health care quality. In their diverse roles, nurses have a wide scope of influence, credibility and power to impact health care as leaders, mentors and change agents. This makes them uniquely positioned to help transform health care delivery.

Nurses play a significant role in designing, delivering and evaluating high quality care. They demonstrate effective leadership in advancing healthcare innovations and health policy.

**Kosman** said it is important for health care consumers, thought leaders and industry stakeholders to better understand the collective skills and expertise of nurses and the importance of the variety of roles they play in health plans and the overall health care delivery system.

“Without a doubt our current state of health care is complex and confusing,” says **Diane Hogan** of Humana. By design, the work nurses do at health plans, whether they are direct member-facing care management roles, administrative, quality or business roles significantly influences and informs healthcare delivery, directly addressing issues of access, quality, and cost.

Nurses are in key positions to lead and participate in interprofessional collaboration as mentioned throughout the IOM's Future of Nursing report. Interprofessional collaboration is essential in education, training and practice to ensure better outcomes. Studies have demonstrated how effective coordination and communication among health professionals can enhance the quality and safety of patient care.

The IOM report also recommends that we expand opportunities to lead and diffuse collaborative improvement efforts and prepare and enable nurses to lead change and advance health. Nurses bring an important voice and point of view to management and policy discussions. "We need to prepare more nurses to help lead improvements in health care quality, safety, access and value," says **Hogan**.

Nurses serve as a critical component to health care in our country and bring a unique perspective to the administration of health plans and the variety of programs offered. Many of the programs are developed and led by nurses because they really understand the issues and opportunities that face us in health care today, says **Hogan**.

Nurses know why the current model doesn't work and have some of the greatest insights into what must change to fundamentally improve quality, patient safety, and affordability of health care. Through their roles, they are able to translate this into collaborative efforts that result in nurse led programs that address access, quality, patient safety and affordability

Nurses consistently top the Gallup polls as one of the most trusted professions. In this credibility lies a powerful capability to influence, innovate and promote change. Nurses in their varied roles are well positioned to generate and analyze patient, provider, practice and population level data that substantiate the clinical and fiscal efficacy of new and innovative models of care. Nurses apply data to inform the target audience they are working with, whether that's at the patient level, practice, community or state and federal level.

Nursing process and practice epitomize key constructs that leverage organizational change and innovation, says **Hogan**. Nursing attributes and skills are diverse and readily transferable to many settings and models of care. The core constructs of our nursing process – assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation – demand skillful communication techniques, artful decision making and problem solving, planned action and structured analysis of outcomes and opportunities for process improvements, such as innovation and further change.

In our nursing practice we demonstrate:

- Expert knowledge and the skill to effectively communicate providing relevant insight to key stakeholders, conducting research and translating this working knowledge to action, identifying opportunities to engage with consumers in meaningful and impactful way;
- Strategic critical thinking and problem solving skills – as we probe and conduct gap analyses to determine the root cause of problems and ways to eliminate barriers which impact consumers ability to achieve their optimal health;

- Advocacy for the most vulnerable members in our work across critical stress points in the care delivery system;
- Collaboration with multiple stakeholders to address and meet consumer needs across the care continuum;
- Perseverance and resourcefulness in removing obstacles in helping consumers navigate the complexities of the care delivery system;
- Skill in establishing and maintaining effective relationships with stakeholders, build on trust and respect which leads to quality outcomes/results; and
- Competency in leading change at the individual, group and organizational levels, evidenced by nurse-led innovative programs and models of care.

Nurses are skilled at translating theory and evidence based standards into practice, applying information into actionable strategies and operationalized models of care. In their work in establishing therapeutic relationships and networks of collaboration, nurses are equipped to foster advocacy and informed health care consumerism.

Many programs have been developed and led by nurses because they really understand the issues and opportunities that face us in health care today. They know why the current model doesn't work and have some of the greatest insights into what must change to fundamentally improve quality, patient safety, and affordability of health care.

**Kosman** said the changing landscape of health care delivery will require individual consumers to take a more active role in understanding their health status and taking charge of their health care. Nurses play a significant role in developing innovative programs to meet the changing needs of health care consumers. Some examples include increased use of technology to help members monitor and manage their health conditions like texting and group chat sessions.

Nurses are highly trusted and are at the frontline on the issues of access, cost and health care quality. In their diverse roles, nurses have a wide scope of influence, credibility and power to impact health care as leaders, mentors and change agents which make them uniquely positioned to help transform health care delivery.

Some examples highlight how health plans and nurses work with their members as partners along the care continuum:

- ✓ Holistic, comprehensive care. The primary care medical home is responsible for providing all of the patient's care and arranging care as appropriate with other professionals across the continuum of care.
- ✓ Enhanced access to care. The primary care medical home provides expanded access to care through open scheduling, after hours care or optional communication methods (e.g., email) with other providers.

- ✓ Coordinated care. The primary care medical home coordinates and integrates care across the continuum of care and the patient’s community.
- ✓ Quality, safety and accountability underpin the primary care medical home and are embedded in all business processes.

Next Steps

- On June 11, there will be part-two webinar on the role of nurses in health plans. Several case studies of nurse leaders in health plans will be presented.
- On September 24, there will be a webinar featuring nurse leaders who are leading change and advancing health after participation in one of the Sigma Theta Tau Leadership Academies.
- Archived webinars [www.championnursing.org/events](http://www.championnursing.org/events)
- Request Toolkit : “Nurse Leaders in the Boardroom: The skills you need to be successful on a Board” at <http://championnursing.org/nurse-leaders-resource>

The IOM’s recommendations address more and advanced education of registered nurses; nurses leading innovations in health care and being appointed to decision making bodies; all nurses practicing to the full extent of their education and training; a more diverse nursing workforce and faculty; nurses and other clinicians inter-professional learning and practicing together; and several others.

**Resources:**

Visit the Extranet at <http://ifnreport.projectspace.com> for more information on Action Coalitions. Problems logging into the extranet, contact Barbara Akinwole at [bakinwole@aarp.org](mailto:bakinwole@aarp.org)

Also visit CCNA at <http://championnursing.org> and <http://thefutureofnursing.org>

Follow CCNA on twitter at <http://twitter.com/#!/championnursing> and the Future of Nursing at [www.twitter.com/futureofnursing](http://www.twitter.com/futureofnursing)

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For more information from the Center to Champion Nursing in America about this webinar, technical assistance, or other questions about the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*, please contact Michael Pheulpin at [MPheulpin@aarp.org](mailto:MPheulpin@aarp.org) or 202.434.3882.

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