

Health Policy Forums

Physician Leadership and Medical Group Performance: A National Study

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JSPH was particularly excited and proud of Dr. Louisa Baxter as she closed the most recent Health Policy Forum season with a very insightful presentation. Dr. Baxter is a Commonwealth Fund Harkness Fellow who has been an active and integral addition to JSPH this past academic year. Harkness Fellows are part of a highly selective group of health services researchers and clinicians from across the globe who come to the US for one year to conduct research and study health care policy and practice. Dr. Baxter is a 3rd generation National Health Service (NHS) employee from the UK with an impressive array of experiences and qualifications.

Dr. Baxter began her presentation by providing a historical overview of NHS in the UK. She outlined the key drivers that led to the impetus for this innovative system. The core principles to this day include the system's ability to meet the needs of everyone, provide care free of charge at the point

of delivery, and provide services that are based on need, not ability to pay. NHS employs over 1.7 million people; 50% of the workforce is clinically qualified. Approximately 140 patients are seen weekly per general practitioner and there are 40,000 general practitioners.

Dr. Baxter's research study is designed to explore the relationship between the culture of small medical practices (SMP) and practice structural characteristics regarding key elements of patient-centered medical home implementation in the US. Additionally the study explores the understanding of physicians in SMPs of the patient-centered medical home model. Dr. Baxter described her survey-based methodology and discussed the preliminary findings. Themes that emerged from her research revealed the following: tensions between local, state, and federal policy goals and the capability of group practitioners to implement; a huge variation in understanding

the implementation of the medical home model; and payment reform as a key factor in increasing buy-in for the patient-centered medical home model at the provider and payer level. A number of implications and pending questions exist for further analysis. For example, how can the patient-centered medical home respond to the increased demand for care, given the shortage of primary care providers?

The Forum participants had a rare opportunity to view a newly released video in which Dr. Baxter interviewed a number of national leaders, health policy experts, politicians, and front-line clinicians in a candid discussion of current practice, reform and policy concerns facing the US.

Health Policy Forum podcasts can be downloaded by visiting:
<http://jdc.jefferson.edu/hpforum/>