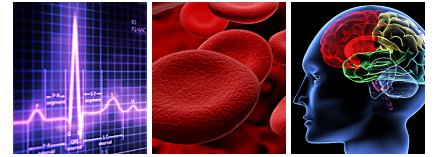




# Newsmakers In Medicine

## Inside the Stanford DOM



### Better Care, Better Health, Lower Cost

What was true once isn't anymore. American health care is not the best in the world. The US spends almost double that of any westernized nation. Yet most of the population experiences less than optimum quality and poor access to health care services. During a recent visit to Stanford, Don Berwick, MD, President and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), and a leading authority on health care quality, described what he and like minded individuals are doing to change a system, which too often benefits its stakeholders, rather than the people it serves.

*“The sickest 10% of the population accounts for 64% of US health care expenses.”*

#### A Political Nightmare

“We’re trying to understand the configuration for an integrated system that cares for people with real reliability, high efficiency, and great dignity and responsiveness,” says Berwick. Within the current system, stakeholders, hospitals, physician offices, clinics, laboratories, medical offices, and other health care providers share a vested interest in maintaining autonomy, revenue sources, and defending the status quo.

Instead of the current fragmented system, Berwick proposes a population based redesign concept IHI defines as the Triple Aim: a simultaneous pursuit of better care, better health, at lower per capita cost. He admits that implementing the Triple Aim requires major change, reorganization, and sacrifice. Even presidential leadership, says Berwick, is needed to put the wheels in motion. “Socially this is extremely difficult to engineer. The latent majority coalition of self-interest around a better health care system isn’t mobilized. So we’re not likely to see people taking to the streets for a better system.”

#### Lean Manufacturing and Health Care

Delivering good health care involves humanism and the art of healing. But on a technical level, it’s a series of inter-

dependent interactions—an intricate assembly of people, processes, and money. It’s a mistake, Berwick believes, to think that health care has nothing in common with, or shouldn’t adopt production principles from, other complex systems.

“We would be far better off to manage an operating room, the emergency department, or the care of a chronically ill patient with the same precision, care, and reliability that Toyota uses to manage complex flows. People fear it would make us into widgets but not at all; it would free us to care for patients as we need to do.”



Donald Berwick, MD, MPP, FRCP

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement is an independent, not-for-profit organization helping to lead the improvement of health care throughout the world. Efforts are underway to help hospital governing systems and trustees better understand their role. IHI is involved in patient safety and has a virtual school for students in the health professions.

All these efforts reflect Berwick’s overall vision and commitment to health care as a human right, for each and every individual. For more information, visit: [www.ihl.org](http://www.ihl.org) and [www.ihl.org/IHIOpenSchool](http://www.ihl.org/IHIOpenSchool). Dr. Berwick was a guest speaker at the DOM 2009 Symposium: Physician Accountability.

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