

*Editorial***NURSING AND HEALTH CARE**

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Editor

I want to focus my editorial for this issue on the role I believe nurses should take in the development, implementation and refinement of health care systems at the local, state, national and international level. This was reaffirmed for me with the release of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation landmark report, “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health” on October 5, 2010. In that report nurses are cited as a catalyst for the transformation of health care system, ensuring that care is patient-centered, effective, safe and affordable. While this report provides a blueprint for improving health care in the United States, which calls for the remodeling of a health care system to ensure high-quality, patient-centered care through the leadership of nurses, the messages it carries are applicable to nursing and health care around the world.

The culmination of a rigorous and consequential two-year initiative, the report outlines four overarching messages directed toward policymakers, national, state and local government leaders, payers, and health care researchers, executives, and health care professionals. These messages, I believe transcend geographic boundaries and encompass all nurses- from those in the most populous to the most sparsely populated areas of every country, and furthermore, rural nurses everywhere share the historical experience of collaboration and cooperative practices needed to achieve high quality health care for their patients and communities. The four key messages include:

- Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training;
- Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression;
- Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health care professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States; and
- Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

The report acknowledges that to achieve significant improvements to local, state and national health policy, the largest segment of the health care workforce – nurses – need to be fully engaged with other health professions, and I believe that this nursing leadership and collaboration should, no must, be centric to health care programming around the world. I believe that now more than ever rural nurses must step forward and share their experiential knowledge of collaboration and cooperation with other health professionals that will provide other nurses with the “models that work” to move the health care systems of the world to be effective, efficient, affordable in providing high quality health care.

I have included the links to the full report and the overview of the report for more details. To view the report visit: [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12956](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12956) and to view Institute of Medicine overview visit: <http://tinyurl.com/2bpzer2>.