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Foreword

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Foreword

The *Annals of Health Law* Editorial Board is proud to present our Summer Issue of 2011. In November 2010, the Beazley Institute for Health Law & Policy and the *Annals of Health Law* hosted the Fourth Annual Beazley Symposium on Access to Health Care. Adjusting the cost curve was the core focus of the Symposium. This Issue presents two articles from speakers at the Symposium, and two articles that supplement the core focus of the Symposium. The *Annals of Health Law* Editorial Board is proud to publish these articles in the final Issue of its 20th volume.

The Issue's first article offers a prime example of a health system strategy to align physicians and hospitals, as well as deliver high quality health care. In this article, Dr. Mark Shields, Senior Medical Director, Advocate Physician Partners (APP) and Vice President of Medical Management, Advocate Health Care describes the structure APP's clinical integration program and several of the innovations utilized to implement an Accountable Care Organization (ACO). His article discusses some of the challenges and solutions to successfully create an ACO and also describes APP's shared savings contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois.

The second article builds on the ACO discussion by considering how many of the cost saving strategies employed by ACOs impact medical malpractice liability for physicians. Christopher Smith discusses the conflict that physicians face in the absence of liability standards that take into account cost concerns and many of the changing payment mechanisms stemming from healthcare reform. His article concludes by examining whether ACOs will exacerbate the conflict between medical malpractice liability and cost-cutting.

The next article discusses another core component of healthcare reform – the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). Dr. Thomas McClean focuses his discussion on the use of physician extenders, such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners to reduce costs while delivering effective care in the PCMH setting. His article concludes that tort reform within the context of the PCMH is necessary to successfully utilize physician extenders to reduce cost.

This Issue concludes with an article that discusses the impact of health literacy on access and cost of health care. Brietta Clark examines the relationship between health literacy, which she defines as one's ability to obtain, understand and use health information to make appropriate health decisions, and reducing unnecessary expenditures. She argues that consideration of health literacy research in the development of

better patient communication and engagement is necessary to both improve access and quality, as well as reduce cost.

The *Annals* staff is thankful and honored for the opportunity to publish these exceptional articles and work closely with such a distinguished group of authors. We would like to thank the authors for their extraordinary professionalism and cooperation throughout the editorial process. We would also like to thank the entire *Annals of Health Law* staff for their diligent work. Also, I would like to particularly thank Drew McCormick, Marketing & Coordinating Editor, *Annals of Health Law*, for her exceptional work in selecting the articles for this Issue and for being an invaluable member of the *Annals*. Lastly, we would like to thank the Beazley Institute for Health Law & Policy for their continued assistance. Without their tremendous support, top notch issues like this would not be possible.

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