



22 January 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

We wanted to share with you the report from the conference "Economic Strategy for Health Care through Standards and Technologies" held on September 25, 2007, at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland. It is available on the web at:

http://www.ieeeusa.org/volunteers/committees/mtpc/documents/BioeconomicsConferenceReportFinalAug2008_001.pdf

The report and executive summary include six recommendations:

1. The current state of health care expenditure is neither sustainable nor commensurate with desired outcome metrics of lower cost and improved quality.
2. Current economic models and research strategies are not sufficient to provide for the development of new diagnostic, therapeutic or preventative approaches; the diagnostic testing required for reversing the increasing trend of health spending; and meeting expectations for quality of life.
3. A paradigm shift in health care delivery is only possible with implementation of biological and information technologies and appropriate standards.
4. The implementation of these technologies and standards require a long-term economic strategy that facilitates identification and implementation of the most promising and necessary technologies and their validation and standardization requirements.
5. Research and academic expenditures for ground-breaking, government-supported, and scientific studies need to be supported by long-term economic strategy.
6. A national process for developing a long-term economic strategy should be developed and involve all health care stakeholders. It should be led by a neutral entity that has the support of government and industry in a public/private partnership. An example of such a neutral entity could be the U.S. Office of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), because it is already part of the larger global effort.

The conference was designed to begin a dialogue toward developing a strategic plan to address the growing need for new technologies to help avert the impending economic crisis in health care in the United States and to improve the quality of health care delivery.

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Leaders from government, industry, and academia assembled to present their visions of the future of health care in the U.S., and their diverse strategies for getting there. It was clear to all that 21st century health care will be defined by new technologies and their supporting technical infrastructures. If there is one unifying concept that stands out in all of the presentations and discussion, it is the need for a paradigm shift - a sea change in how we do research, how we deliver healthcare, and how we build our economic models for the future.

IEEE-USA highly recommends this report to anyone who is concerned about the future of health care in the United States. Understanding this vision and the technology gaps that stand in the way of achieving it are the critical first steps toward making this paradigm shift a reality.

Best Regards,



Gordon Day
IEEE-USA President



Thomas C. Jepsen
Chair, IEEE-USA Medical Technology
Policy Committee

cc: Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
House Energy and Commerce Committee
House Education and Labor Committee