



Editorial

The pursuit of better care is a defining feature in each of Canada's provincial healthcare systems. All provinces are grappling with questions of how to improve the existing system? Who should be accountable for what? And, how much should it cost? With initiatives such as the establishment of the Canadian Quality Council, and the imminent release of a landmark report on patient safety in Canada, the focus on "better care" will intensify.

For the past seven years, *Hospital Quarterly* has provided evidence-based, best practices to equip administrators and policy makers with tools to provide better care. Reader support has been outstanding. Now, we are pleased to augment the journal with an expanding range of offerings including the peer-reviewed papers in the *Longwoods Review* and a specific focus on healthcare IT through the inclusion of the journal, *ElectronicHealthcare*. As a result, the name, *Hospital Quarterly*, is no longer an accurate reflection of our content or focus. With this issue, we are proud to introduce the renamed *Healthcare Quarterly*.

As you will quickly see, in this first issue, we address a diverse range of topics that are reflective of many of the current preoccupations in the healthcare system. We begin with an article by Bonney and Baker who review the state-of-the-art in patient safety initiatives by federal and provincial governments. This article re-enforces the need for policy directives from governments to ensure patient safety issues are adequately addressed. More will be forthcoming on patient safety in this journal and also *HealthcarePapers* in the next few months.

Next, we offer three thoughtful best-practices pieces drawn from hand's-on experience. The first piece profiles a successful campaign to go smoke-free by the Mental Health Centre in Penetanguishene. When the Centre's management originally announced that tobacco products would be banned on its grounds after May 6, 2003, many patients and staff reacted in disbelief. In this paper, the authors discuss the operational, health and safety, clinical and ethical issues surrounding the decision. The next piece explores issues related to home care vs. long-term care. As Cree and colleagues discuss in their paper, home care has been touted as a cost-effective alternative to long-term care, however, not enough is yet known about quality of care and patient outcomes. Finally, Beardwood and Alleyne describe the advantages and disadvantages to healthcare facilities of

outsourcing services to the private sector – they discuss that such strategies require careful management to ensure that service delivery is improved without additional costs.

In this issue we continue the photo essay series with a look at innovation in care. We asked hospitals to submit new and novel innovations and were delighted with the response. Along the line of innovation, the FutureThink piece offers a glimpse into the not-so-distant future of hospitals and where technologies may lead us.

ElectronicHealthcare explores trends that are now prevalent in the private sector and how they might work in healthcare. Kevin Leonard describes critical success factors that are essential to ensuring that new technologies are adopted and integrated into an organization's operations. This discussion is very timely as organizations in the health industry are being encouraged to take on new technologies as ways to improve patient safety and improve cost-effectiveness.

In the *Longwoods Review*, Deber takes exception to Canada's 30th place ranking by the World Health Organization and particularly its measure of "overall health-system performance" claiming it is neither reliable nor valid for making comparisons between different countries. She argues that the primary reason for Canada's relatively low standing rests on the complex relationships between the measures of health and education used in the study. Also in this edition, Lalaria and colleagues profile an assessment of stakeholder opinions about professional pharmacy services in a large urban hospital.

The regular columns in this issue provide considerable food for thought. CIHR Research features a discussion of the dilemma posed by direct-to-consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals. ICES Reports offers strategies to minimize drug-drug interactions in hospitalized patients. Green Healthcare demonstrates how British Columbia is leading the country in environmentally friendly healthcare. We conclude in the Quarterly Index with data on Canadian's expectations for palliative care. It's an issue rich with ideas.

As always, we look forward to your letters and emails. Let us know what you think. Happy reading!

Peggy Leatt, PhD