



## Editorial

**F**or many years, there has been wide debate on the need for a Canadian journal of refereed research papers on health management and policy. Academics and practitioners alike have discussed the many advantages of peer-reviewed work – critical peer feedback to improve the quality of publications, the opportunity to discuss theories and research methodologies from a wide range of disciplines, and the guarantee of a first-rate forum for papers that are multi-disciplinary and written in partnership by practitioners and academics. The downside of peer-review, of course, is that the process can cause extensive delays in the publication of critical or ground-breaking papers because of the reiterative nature of the peer-review process.

In Canada, there are a number of additional complications. First, the community of authors interested in peer-reviewed publications is relatively small, and most health services researchers and practitioners know each other and each other's work. The opportunity for "blind" peer review is difficult and the question of objectivity may be raised. Second, from a practical point of view, the financial viability of a journal focusing primarily on Canadian research is unproven.

Despite this uncertainty, Longwoods Publishing has accepted the challenge. In this issue of *Hospital Quarterly*, we are pleased to launch the first – in what we anticipate will be a regular series – refereed research papers on health management and policy. One of the main goals of *Hospital Quarterly* is to recognize, nurture and champion excellence in the Canadian healthcare system. The goal of the journal is to communicate change and innovation broadly, and explore topics that have the potential to improve the effectiveness of the health system. Starting with this current issue, a selection of papers will now be reviewed by at least two international scholars for publication under the banner *Longwoods Review*. We are interested in reviewing manuscripts that examine: health outcomes, population health, health system errors/adverse events, continuum of care, primary care, drug costs, health human resources, and access/wait times.

The first paper by Reid et al. reports on an important event in the history of medicine in Canada and the participation of physicians in a collective job action. The paper was subject to the peer-review process and as a final test, has been commented upon by two practitioners in terms of the practical lessons to be taken away from this experience.

I also want to draw your attention to the other excellent articles in this issue. Bernstein and Fundner provide a provocative perspective on the respect (or lack of it) among hospital workers. Using the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, the authors suggest 10 guidelines for creating respectful relationships. In a related piece, Villeneuve calls for our health system to be more representative of the populations it serves. Sheppard and her colleagues provide an assessment of the benefits of longer hospital stays for elderly patients in Saskatchewan. Vancso and her colleagues outline an evaluation of an experimental program to educate rural health professionals. From the Capital Health Region in Alberta, Weatherill and her colleagues report on the experiences of providing telephone links for primary health care. And, we have Part II in the discussion of issues in hospital governance by Hundert and Crawford at the Hay Group.

If this were not enough, to further satisfy your quest for knowledge, we have included two outstanding pieces from the recent special issue of *Healthcare Papers*, "After Kirby and Romanow: Where To From Here?" The first piece is an editorial by Guest Editor Duncan Sinclair. In his usual forthright way, Sinclair urges policy-makers and other decision-makers to take action. It is absolutely essential, now that the public's expectations have been heightened, that the Canadian people are not let down. The second piece is a special commentary entitled "Where Do We Go from Here?" by Senator Michael Kirby, Chair, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. He adds insightful reactions to both the report of his committee and that of the Romanow Commission, and makes recommendations for priority actions.

*Peggy Leatt, PhD*

---

For more information on submitting a paper for peer review or on becoming a reviewer, see the *Hospital Quarterly* website: <[www.longwoods.com/hq](http://www.longwoods.com/hq)> or contact Managing Editor Dianne Foster-Kent at [dkent@longwoods.com](mailto:dkent@longwoods.com). You can also send your comments and letters to Dianne.