



From the Editor-in-Chief

Reports from healthcare providers tell us that *Hospital Quarterly* is an important planning tool. This is foremost in our minds when we assemble the best practices and information found in these pages. This issue, for example, provides managers with important data on health, aging and care in the home from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and The Berger Monitor. The implications for hospital resources and home care planning are profound. Analysts from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) also contribute their views in a column comparing national data on outcomes following acute myocardial infarction. Their analysis underscores the need for health systems to plan for increased accountability and continuous improvements to quality.

I draw your attention to the special feature from Australian Ross Wilson that introduces a discussion on patient safety. Having been deeply involved in analyzing and reporting on this topic in his country, Dr. Wilson has unique and important insights for Canadian managers who are planning for improved patient safety. For more on patient safety in Canada, I recommend the most recent issue of the Longwoods journal, *HealthcarePapers* (Vol. 2 No. 1), which provides an in-depth look at the topic with a lead paper by Ross Baker at the University of Toronto and Peter Norton at the University of Calgary who are experts on this topic. The journal also provides ten responses to the paper from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

We are very fortunate in this issue to have an interview with Roy Romanow as he begins his 18-month commission of examining and reporting on the Canadian healthcare system. His final report will undoubtedly have a major influence on the future of the system, and we will look forward to regular updates as this work progresses. It is also timely that in this issue we have a profile of Monique Bégin who had a major role to play in the development of our national health insurance program when she was federal Minister of Health in the 1980s.

Please take time for the paper on the Ontario Cardiac Care Network (CCN). The network's ten years as policy advisor to government and coordinator of cardiac services have led to an impressive record of achievements, and a strategy that could be a model for other program areas. CCN is a real demonstration of how evidence-based decision-making can work.

Following up on *Quarterly's* focus on nursing issues, we are pleased to have an analytical paper by Linda O'Brien-Pallas et al. that illustrates and examines the kinds of resource decisions that hospital leaders have made in the past and how they have impacted on their nursing staff. The paper contains valuable suggestions for policies that would help organizations retain excellent nursing services. Special credit goes to Blake Poland and his colleagues for a paper that identifies the influential role hospitals can play in their communities. The paper describes the links that might be established between hospitals and other organizations that can have a profound impact on the basic determinants of health. A paper from Sara Shankshear et al. at Toronto's West Park Healthcare Centre describes a new category of health worker – the Funding Support Assistant – who works with patients and their families to ensure they receive the funding and assistance to which they are entitled. As is our custom, we also provide a website review with an emphasis on waiting lists in Canada – a topic that will be further developed in future issues of *Hospital Quarterly*.

We enjoy your comments and suggestions.

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