

Medical students: Find your place in fast-moving health systems

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The health care system is changing fast, and future physicians need to understand their role and ethical obligations in helping ensure patients' health and well-being is maximized, while the costs are minimized, in an environment that provides a patient-centered experience.

An education module offered via the AMA Ed Hub™ helps medical students—and residents and physicians who may not have received training during their medical school years—identify the objectives, structures, processes and outcomes of the country's health systems and how they can be improved.

The AMA Ed Hub is an online platform that consolidates all the high-quality CME, maintenance of certification, and educational content you need—in one place—with activities relevant to you, automated credit tracking and reporting for some states and specialty boards.

The free online CME module, "Health Care Delivery Systems," is enduring material and designated by the AMA for a maximum of 0.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*.

It is one of six modules released as part of the Health Systems Science Learning Series. Another seven modules will be released as part of the series in early 2020.

Learn more about AMA CME accreditation.

Pay models and care delivery

Physician payment was previously dominated by the fee-for-service model in which doctors were paid based on the number of services provided, regardless of outcomes and costs.

Today, value-based payment models are becoming more common. These models financially reward physicians for providing high quality care at lower costs. This way of paying physicians can support the Triple Aim, which includes improving the patient experience of care, improving the health of populations and reducing the per capita cost of health care.

These are two common ways of setting up practices to support these goals.

Accountable care organizations (ACOs). These entities provide a medical home for patients and manage the entire continuum of care. They also manage overall costs and quality of care for a patient population. ACOs can take the form of physicians and hospitals in group practice arrangements, networks of individual physician practices, hospitals employing physicians and partnerships or joint ventures between physicians and hospitals.

Integrated coordinated health care systems. These systems coordinate comprehensive care by providing primary care physicians, specialists, hospitals, pharmacies, laboratories and other services.

Closing system gaps

These new health care systems can collect information on the care delivered and the patient populations served. This enables practices to perform data analysis to uncover trends that can lead to providing patients with higher quality care and to closing gaps in the health care system.

Physicians can use data to connect processes to outcomes, minimizing delays about what should be done and ensuring it happens consistently.

Analyzing big data can link diagnoses and uncover trends, such as how many women should have mammograms and how many haven't in the past two years.

Data in electronic health records can help prevent medical errors and improve care.

And population health analytics lets physicians look at a panel of patients to improve care; for example, to determine the most common health problems within a certain radius of the practice.

More help to study health systems science

The AMA also recently released the *Health Systems Science Review* book, published by Elsevier. The AMA is working with the National Board of Medical Examiners to develop a standardized exam, which is expected to be available later in 2020.

The review book complement's the AMA's 2016 *Health Systems Science* textbook, which outlines a formal method to teach students how to deliver care that meets patients' needs in modern health systems. More than 4,000 copies have been sold worldwide, and it is being used in over 30 medical and health professions schools. Both books are available for purchase at the AMA Store.