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The transformational role of nursing in healthcare reform

Transforming healthcare in the US will require more than just addressing insurance related issues. Health disparities, access to care and an aging population all contribute to healthcare cost and the poor outcomes experienced by Americans. The US healthcare system remains the most expensive in the world, yet health indices continue to lag behind almost every industrialized nation. In 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) called upon nursing to increase access, reduce cost and improve health outcomes. The IOM Future of Nursing (2010) report identified the nursing profession as having a critical role in transforming healthcare delivery. The report indicates that nursing is well poised to address system deficits with professional nurses practicing at the top of their licensure. That report referred to nursing exemplars and pointed out the critical role of advanced practice nursing in addressing the looming shortage of primary care providers and the importance of registered nurses practicing to the top of licensure in order to meet the complex healthcare needs of the chronically ill and vulnerable populations. Quality, cost and access have become critical indicators for third party payers. Value Based Care and Accountable Care Organization models are coming to the forefront of healthcare reimbursement. With a sound understanding of case management and care coordination, nursing practices that provide primary care, case management and care coordination are uniquely positioned to respond to complex needs of populations. Unlike other providers, nursing has been providing coordinated care for more than a century demonstrating cost effective and quality healthcare.

Biography

Cindy Sickora is currently working as the Vice Dean of Practice & Engagement at the UT Health School of Nursing. Formerly with Rutgers School of Nursing, she was the CEO of the State's only Nurse managed FQHC. She has spent her entire career working with vulnerable and underserved populations. Her areas of interest include health disparities, community engagement and population health.

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