

## **Peter R. Kongstvedt, M.D.**

Examples of recent topics:

### **The Financial Crisis and How It Could Enable True Health Reform**

The common wisdom is that the current financial crisis has thrown a serious block into achieving substantial reform of the health system in the U.S., and in the short term that is certainly the case. But it could also enable substantial health reform – reform of multiple sectors of the health system. Significant and growing problems with ever-rising costs, coupled with increasing numbers of un- or under-insured and rising problems with access to care create a very serious drag on the economy. True health reform could offer a way to not only make Americans healthier, but our economy healthier as well.

### **Rising Health Care Costs – Let's Find Out Who's Responsible and String Him Up!**

Shall we play a game? How about hangman! We can string up whoever's responsible for health care cost inflation in the U. S., which outpaces all other costs, and continues to rise faster than general inflation. It is easy and popular to blame one or two sectors, or to take a position that simply by controlling one aspect of the system, costs will be brought under control. Reality is far more complex and difficult to address and a better understanding of the various factors involved can lead to better and more informed decision making. And if we can figure this out, maybe we can avoid a grim ending.

### **Why Health Insurance is Different**

The current debate over "health reform" focuses almost solely on reforming health insurance and access to coverage. But is health insurance similar to other forms of insurance? Should health insurance be treated as insurance at all? The reality is that health insurance is indeed insurance, but of a far different nature than other forms of insurance. Understanding important differences, including those that make us uncomfortable or that do not support a particular policy orientation, is necessary for any useful debate.

### **Key Trends and Top Issues Facing the Health Insurance Industry**

In an industry as complex as health insurance and managed health care, what are the key trends and issues that must be addressed? These key trends and issues may vary depending on the audience. For example, key trends for those working in government or health policy will vary when compared to key trends for individuals leading and managing health insurance organizations.

### **Health Care Chaos - Complexly Adapting Systems Theory and Health Care Leadership and Planning**

The health care sector in the U. S. is highly dynamic making it next to impossible to make linear predictions. Complexly Adapting Systems Theory, often called Chaos Theory, addresses how change in difficult to predict systems such as the

weather or ecosystems may be considered. Leaders in health care can use this approach as they consider their organization's future.

### **Consumerism and Retail Orientation in Health Care**

Organizations operating in the health care sector all view consumers differently, whether health insurers, hospital executives, physicians, nurses and other clinical professionals, regulators, pharmaceutical companies, or any of the other many organizations operating in this sector. Consumer dynamics continue to change, but not always predictably so. How consumers can be segmented and understood in the health sector has some fundamental differences compared to the usual ways of segmenting and categorizing consumers.

### **Quality of Health Care - Differing and Equally Valuable Viewpoints**

Quality of health care is a vital topic, but one that is often viewed and discussed using complex and well-defined approaches. Individuals with differing responsibilities are likely to view quality differently. Gaining a better understanding of how the various sectors in health care view quality can enhance an organization's effectiveness at both addressing quality and its market position.

### **Business Process Models and Operational Metrics**

Business process models can be a time-consuming exercise of limited real value, or they can provide a significant boost to operational efficiency and quality. They can only do so if they are sufficiently granular and are associated with performance metrics that encompass entire processes.

### **Critical Success Factors for Successful Mergers and Acquisitions**

Mergers and acquisitions can provide a considerable boost to the value of an organization, or they can seriously erode the value that previously existed. For example, a successful merger or acquisition may not always benefit from attempting to combine "best of breed" features or functions from both organizations. Merging companies may also fail to achieve needed synergy by failing to address combination issues early or by operating for too long as non-integrated organizations.