

Health Care Initiative - Mission Statement

The McCombs School of Business is committed to developing programs of scholarship that will have a societal impact. One of these programs will be to take leadership in facilitating a University-wide scholarly initiative in health services delivery.

The purpose of this initiative is to develop a program of scholarship designed to help society address the challenges of health services delivery. This program will be interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary; will focus on innovation and information; and will include basic, applied and policy research leading to positive change in the health care system that will apply locally, nationally, and globally.

1. This will be a campus-wide health care initiative with the McCombs School of Business (MSB) taking a leadership role in developing and implementing the program.
2. The focus of the initiative will be on topics at the intersection of **health services delivery, innovation, and information.**
3. The program will be primarily a research effort, as opposed to a program to train health care managers - although teaching and service programs will be part of the scholarly effort.
4. The initiative will recognize the pressing need for the development of new kinds of health services organizations as well as the need to improve existing health services organizations.
5. The initiative will recognize the interdependence between health service delivery systems, health service finance systems, and the health services themselves – i.e. new drugs, preventive care, chronic care, and geriatric care.

Health Services Delivery

The health care system in the United States will not be able to provide access to high quality care at a reasonable cost until the system for delivering health care is improved. Included in the study of the health services delivery system might be consideration of the following topics.

- a. Organizing for more efficient/effective acute care
- b. Relationship between compensation systems and effective/ineffective health care systems
- c. Reorganizing relationships among clinical professionals
- d. Use of pharmaceuticals to reduce health care costs
- e. Role of retail medicine
- f. Delivery systems for specific categories of users (geriatric, rehabilitation, etc.)
- g. Etc.

Innovation

Innovation is the dynamic social process of developing and implementing new ideas. “Organizations undertake the innovation journey each time they invent, develop, and implement new products, programs, services, or administrative arrangements. (Van de Ven, 1999, The Innovation Journey, p 3). Innovation is closely tied to the notion of entrepreneurship. Widespread agreement exists that the problems faced by the health care industry will require innovative solutions. However, it has proven to be extremely difficult to develop innovative approaches to health care and health care delivery. Even when new approaches are developed, it is difficult to get them adopted. Included in the study of innovation might be consideration of the following topics.

- a. The nature of innovation in health care
- b. How to create an innovation in health care delivery
- c. How to create an environment for innovation in health care
- d. How to implement innovation in health care
- e. Etc.

Information

The modern world is being reshaped by advances in the understanding of information and by the development of new technologies for using information. Information technologies have reshaped the way we purchase things, the way we finance things and the way we manufacture things. Despite the fact that many health care thinkers have called for an enlarged role for information technology (IT) in the health delivery system, IT has not yet reshaped the way we deliver health care. Included in the study of information is consideration of the following topics.

- a. Role of information in ambiguous and uncertain situations
- b. Management of information in health care systems
- c. Use of information and IT to manage health care organizations
- d. Use of information and IT in creating new kinds of health care organizations
- e. Etc.

Health Services Delivery, Innovation and Information

Innovation in health services delivery will come in part from new systems elements. It will come in part from new ways to structure the relationships among elements. Innovation will also come from new ways to use information to make elements function better and to manage elements and relationships among them. This can, perhaps, best be seen by looking at possible research questions that might be explored as part of the health services delivery initiative.

- a. How can we maintain the intellectual capacities that are driven by specialization while recognizing the interdependencies among specializations and the holistic nature of people’s health?

- b. How can we deal with the relationships among acute care, chronic care, preventive care, rehabilitation care, and recovery care?
- c. How can we improve patient hand-off processes by innovating better ways to perform hand-offs and improving the flow of information during patient hand-off processes?
- d. How do we develop ways to integrate personal health care information systems and community health care information systems in ways that enhance both personal and community health?
- e. How can we deal with the interfaces between the aspects of medical care that are engineering-like, such as orthopedic surgery, and the aspects of medical care that are exactly the opposite, such as mental health and psychiatry? (For example, the issue of dealing with battlefield injuries in an orthopedic sense and dealing with the results of being in battle from a mental health sense are clearly related but they are also qualitatively different problems.)

McCombs School of Business and Health Services Delivery

The McCombs School of Business (MSB) is in a position take leadership in facilitating the development of a common space for scholars on The University of Texas at Austin campus to work together on the issue of health services delivery. MSB has a history of being concerned about innovation, entrepreneurship and information management. It is now time to bring these abilities and skills to bear on issues of major social importance. Health care is one such issue on which MSB can make a significant impact.

MSB faculty have been widely recognized for their work in many related areas including information technology, entrepreneurship, supply chain management, finance, risk management, accounting, e-commerce, organizational behavior, strategic management, marketing of services, data mining, and operations management. Faculty at MSB presently collaborates with researchers from the Law School, LBJ School, Nursing school, Physics, Engineering, Computer Sciences and many others. MSB faculty also collaborates with outstanding health care research institutions including Duke University School of Medicine, the Robert Woods Johnson School of Medicine the Department of Veterans Affairs and Health Science Centers in the University of Texas System.

The business community is concerned about the state of health care in the nation. Health care is an important industry that employs some of our best minds and it now makes up about 17% of the US GDP. On a comparative basis, Americans spend more money and receive less value than people in other developed nations. It is critical to business that we learn to deliver better health care in a more economical fashion and this will likely require the design of a qualitatively different health care delivery system, and innovation and information will be critical components of this redesign effort. The University of Texas at Austin should play a major role in this effort and the McCombs School is in a good position to facilitate this effort.