



The Physicians Foundation Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

Introduction

Founded in 2003, The Physicians Foundation is dedicated to advancing the work of physicians and improving the quality of health care for all Americans. Under the leadership of its Board of Directors—physicians and medical society directors from across the country—and through activities including research, grant making, and leadership education, the Foundation shapes national discourse on the evolving challenges facing physicians and patients and serves as a leading voice for physicians across America.

The voice of physicians has never been more vital. According to the Foundation’s biennial survey of physicians and patients, American health care has undergone greater and more rapid change in the past two years than at any time in recent memory. The Affordable Care Act, an aging population, and evolving technologies and treatments continue to transform the environment and delivery of health care. Patients still seek physicians they trust; physicians continue to prize the mission of healing that drew them to medicine in the first place. Yet the patient-physician relationship at the heart of medicine is eroding. As we see the landscape of physician practice shift from the small and solo setting to institutional and corporate employment, there has evolved an economic focus on volume over value which, with the imposition of regulatory and administrative burdens, has demoralized physicians and impacted their ability to effectively care for their patients. As the nation faces growing health issues caused by an aging population and more complex and chronic diseases where attentive and patient centered care is essential, the voice of physicians and patients needs to be heard. As an *Atlantic Monthly* article put it: “Few of us have a clear idea of how truly disillusioned many doctors are with a system that has shifted profoundly over the past four decades,” revealing “a crisis rooted not just in rising costs but in the very meaning and structure of care.” At the same time, physicians realize their role is crucial in addressing that crisis. Physicians can, and must, lead the way to better health care.

The Physicians Foundation believes it is uniquely poised to play a distinctive role in ensuring physician leadership in shaping American health care, coming forward in the national conversation as the voice for practicing physicians and, in turn, their patients.

Background

The Physicians Foundation draws on more than a decade of leadership and the respected intellectual capital of its grant-funded research. Since 2005, the Foundation has awarded more than 40 million dollars in grants to universities, hospital systems, and medical foundations, developing tools to help physicians deliver optimal care to patients. Since 2008, its biennial surveys of physicians and patients have become key policy documents, and for more than a

decade its white papers and policy studies have informed Congress, the President, and health-care decision makers.

The Physicians Foundation also draws strength from its ties to state and county medical societies across the country, whose legal settlement on behalf of physicians created and funded the Foundation. While its founding legal settlement bars the organization from lobbying, the Foundation has great potential to inform the national policy debate as a united profession of physicians, voicing the views of physicians and patients across the nation.

Planning Process

This strategic plan was developed through the efforts of the Foundation's Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, with assistance from professional consultants. The process included extensive interviews and several discussions with the Strategic Planning Committee and the full board, analyzing the Foundation's external environment and its own distinctive history and purpose, including potential areas of focus that could strengthen its activities and increase its impact. At its fall strategic planning retreat in 2014, the board reviewed the Foundation's mission and its distinctive role, and developed an initial set of strategies for moving this mission forward in the next five years. In December the Executive Committee and Strategic Planning Committee developed an initial draft plan. That draft was refined and approved by the Board of Directors in January 2015.

The plan builds on the Foundation's strong tradition of leadership. It also challenges the Foundation to think boldly about the future and position itself on the forefront of change in American health care. By implementing this plan, the Foundation and the physicians it empowers will shape the health-care delivery model and the business model for medicine, moving America toward a more humane and effective environment for both physicians and patients.

Implementation

This strategic plan lays out a powerful set of goals for The Physicians Foundation, along with high-level strategies for moving the Foundation forward over the next five years. Some parts of the plan build on existing efforts while others represent new directions.

Success will require an ongoing commitment to measuring progress on the plan over time. Each board meeting will include a progress report and a relatively brief discussion of one or more areas of the plan. At one meeting each year, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors will dedicate a greater amount of time for an in-depth review of the whole plan. The goal of the reviews will be to continuously strengthen and recalibrate the strategic plan, ensuring that it remains fresh an



The Physicians Foundation

Strategic Plan 2015-2020

“Ensuring Physician Leadership in Shaping American Health Care”



The Physicians Foundation Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 Executive Summary

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Physicians Foundation is to empower physicians to lead in the delivery of high quality, cost-efficient health care.

Core Values

The Physicians Foundation believes that –

- The professionalism of medicine and the integrity of the patient-physician relationship are essential elements of high-quality health care.
- The perspective of practicing physicians is critical to the ongoing discourse on how to improve health care delivery in our country.
- The central tenet of the medical profession is the primacy of physicians' duty to their patients

Distinctive Role

The distinctive role of The Physicians Foundation is to ensure physician leadership in shaping American health care.

Strategic Goals

- A. Fully harness the Foundation's potential for furthering physician leadership and physician-led innovation throughout the country.
- B. Embrace a focused, intentional approach to funding research projects and studies that are timely, actionable, and have measurable outcomes.
- C. Significantly increase the visibility of the Foundation and its ability to influence policy.
- D. Build greater organizational capacity for mission success.

Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 Strategic Goals and Strategies

Strategic Goal A: Fully harness the Foundation’s potential for furthering physician leadership and physician-led innovation throughout the country.

As U.S. health-care policy continues to evolve and new care models emerge, these changes clearly threaten physicians’ professional autonomy and their ability to consistently act in the best interests of patients. Physicians find these trends deeply troubling, affecting all aspects of their professional lives. Patients are confused by the situation, not knowing who is responsible for the change, yet recognizing that the quality of care is eroding.

This situation presents both a challenge and an opportunity for The Physicians Foundation. From its inception, the Foundation has been dedicated to improving the context within which physicians work and to empowering physicians to be leaders in their own right. This role is in the Foundation’s “DNA.” With that in mind, Goal A suggests a broad and powerful trajectory, building on the Foundation’s past and current leadership activities, to further develop physician leadership and physician-led innovation in health care.

Proposed Strategies:

- **Develop a clear picture of meaningful physician leadership in contemporary health care and identify and foster successful and innovative physician-led health care models.** This could be accomplished by systematically identifying successful physician-led models of care in the ACO environment, traditional large group models of physicians, hospital centric models, and small independent practices. Build a database of these successful models and best practices.
- **Implement a national colloquia series.** Convene a series of strategically designed and well-publicized national colloquia focused on physician-led models of care.
 - Disseminate colloquia outcomes in reports, journal articles, traditional and social media, and through Physicians Foundation sponsored speakers.
 - Use colloquia to identify areas for further research and grant support.
 - Use colloquia to strategically position the Foundation to take its rightful place on the national stage.
 - Use the colloquia to reinforce the importance of the professionalism inherent in private practice.
- **Leverage and strengthen the state and county medical societies’ leadership development efforts.** Continue to find new ways to build individual physician leadership capabilities while also building a broad-based community of physician leaders. Equip physicians with the data and tools necessary to operate in a political environment, whether they are informing government or regulatory entities of the facts or working within organizations to negotiate employment circumstances and compete for organizational leadership. To ensure greatest impact, find ways to spread that knowledge throughout the country using the state and county medical society infrastructure.

Strategic Goal B: Embrace a focused, intentional approach to funding research projects and studies that are timely, actionable, and have measurable outcomes.

The Physicians Foundation has a strong history of providing research grants that inform the health-care debate and help shape the future of the medical profession and patient care. Its current program provides a solid platform to build upon. At the same time, the Foundation could have greater impact and better leverage its resources if its grants program was more focused and intentional, and communicated its research results more strategically. To that end, this strategic direction requires that the Foundation commission only plan-driven research with actionable and measurable outcomes, and through that research become the leading voice for physicians on how changing health-care policies and the evolving profession of medicine affect them and their patients.

Proposed Strategies:

- **Develop a comprehensive research agenda.** Create and continuously evolve a comprehensive Physicians Foundation research agenda – a cohort of intentional and timely research projects that together will inform action and advance the circumstances of physicians and their patients. Implement this research agenda in order to provide a coordinated, unassailable body of evidence to be used to inform multiple Physicians Foundation vehicles and programs. Seek and commission only research and demonstration projects that are strategically aligned with the Foundation’s core values and strategic plan, and are designed to provide data that will move the mission forward.
- **Strengthen the grants program.** Build a stronger grants program, reviewing and improving its overall approach and processes to ensure high quality and compelling research with actionable outcomes. Make good use of the 2014 survey of grantees and applicants to build on past successes and shape the best approach for the next phase of the program.
- **Create “Signature Surveys.”** Further develop and brand as “Signature Surveys” the Foundation’s two ongoing surveys – the “Survey of America’s Physicians” and the “Survey of America’s Patients.” As planned, orchestrate them every other year. “Ramp up” the distribution and communication efforts surrounding them.

Strategic Goal C: Significantly increase the visibility of the Foundation and its ability to influence national healthcare policy.

Over the past 10 years, The Physicians Foundation has funded an impressive array of research, launched new programs, and served as a consistent and staunch supporter of physicians making their way in a rapidly changing health-care environment. The Foundation has also worked diligently to communicate its position to decision-makers around the country. However, in order to accomplish the aspirations in this strategic plan it must develop a far more comprehensive and strategic approach to communication. It must do this with the goal of increasing the overall visibility, awareness, and reputation of The Physicians Foundation while also strengthening its capacity to influence health-care policy. It must improve its ability to inform decision-making at every level – public and private, state and national, governmental and grass roots. What’s more, the Foundation board members, and their cohort, will need to move forward in “lockstep” – something that will require strong internal communication as they implement this ambitious plan.

Proposed Strategies:

- **Build greater capacity for effective internal and external communication.** Conduct a board-level review of the Foundation’s current communications efforts, with a three-part goal of ensuring a strong internal communications system, increased visibility of the organization and its work, and enhanced capacity to influence policy. Significantly increase the Foundation’s capacity to communicate research outcomes, survey results, and other Foundation work.
- **Increase Foundation Recognition.** Develop and orchestrate a multi-faceted strategy that will move The Physicians Foundation from its current state of comparatively limited recognition to that of a nationally prominent, highly credible entity with a critical role to play, on behalf of physicians, in this uncertain health-care environment.
 - **Aggressively communicate a compelling rationale for the physician’s centrality** in all successful health-care models, the importance of the patient-physician relationship, and the need for the physician’s voice in shaping the future of health care.
 - **Create newsworthy, purposeful communications built around Foundation-funded research and innovation.** Continue to find effective ways to use social media and other technologically based mechanisms to alert physicians nationwide about the Foundation’s innovative activities. Consider an “innovation blog” to interact with young physicians and make Foundation funded studies and research results available to the entire physician population as well as to policy makers and the public.
- **Build a strategic approach to education and policy influence, working with like-minded organizations where appropriate.** Building upon the above communication efforts, establish an education-based strategic approach for informing policy-makers who will influence policy at the local, state, and national levels. Achieve greater influence by leveraging the strong infrastructure of currently affiliated state and county medical societies, by initiating greater linkage to engage all practicing physicians and all 50 states, and by finding new ways to enable physicians to reach the multiple audiences and decision-makers nationwide who influence the health-care agenda. Use research and survey results to inform these efforts.

Strategic Goal D: Build greater organizational capacity for mission success.

The Foundation's organizational staff and governance structures have served it well during its first 10 years. Its commitment to an extremely small staff, and to working primarily through the committee process with consultant support, has produced many outstanding programs and products. That said, the environment within which the Foundation works is quite different than it was a decade ago. Health care is changing at a faster pace, and the competition for solutions – many of which would not be to the advantage of U.S. physicians – is far greater. It may be time for The Physicians Foundation to increase and strengthen its staff infrastructure and review and reshape some of its working groups such as committees and task forces in order to move forward with greater speed and effectiveness.

Proposed Strategies:

- **Ensure the best possible committee and task force structures that will enable timely, high quality products and effective decision-making to support the strategic plan.**
 - Review and evaluate the current committee structure and processes. Make structural adjustments and redesign the processes that slow it down.
 - Ensure a strong role for the medical societies as leaders and capacity builders, and feature national thinkers and innovators.
 - Continue to honor the current balance of state executives and physicians on the board.
 - Consider creating a National Colloquia Task Force to develop the first national colloquium on big picture health-care challenges and physician-led solutions and innovations.
- **Build a “dashboard.”** Create a “dashboard” of the Foundation’s key drivers, metrics and programs and use it to purposefully manage progress toward strategic goals. Update the dashboard quarterly and use it to hold suppliers, consultants and others to a greater level of accountability.