

## Ahead of the demographic curve

Preparing for the future—and working to make it a bright one

What will the future of health care look like? It's a question many are asking these days, as our government hammers out a plan for health care reform while providers around the country grapple with how best to prepare for challenging times ahead.

While none of us holds a crystal ball, a clear-eyed look at projected trends makes it easy to foresee what we can expect. Nationally, both the total population and the proportion of people over 65 will climb an upward curve—increasing demand for health care services. Health care reform could extend medical coverage to millions more people, further accelerating demand—particularly for primary care services. Yet futurists also project shortages of the physicians needed to care for this increasing caseload.

Duke Medicine faces particularly steep increases in demand for services from a growing population. Although the global economic crisis has caused rising unemployment in North Carolina as elsewhere, the Triangle area continues to attract newcomers at a prodigious pace. With our founding mission of improving health care in the Carolinas, and as a leading provider of specialty care in the Southeast, we are mindful of our responsibility to meet the needs of this region by expanding access to both high-quality preventive care and the most advanced interventions for the seriously ill.

In the face of looming imbalances between supply and demand, it's clear that future needs cannot be met without truly innovative approaches. At Duke Medicine, we see these challenges as an opportunity to make much-needed changes to strengthen the care delivery infrastructure, both across our own institution and nationally.

Among the most important steps we are urging our nation to take is to actively explore pioneering models of care that more effectively incorporate physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, care managers, and even health coaches into patient-centered care teams. Such models hold great potential to expand access to care while controlling costs and improving outcomes. Through a Duke-Durham community partnership called "Just for Us," for example, teams are bringing health care to low-income seniors in their homes, with information technology supporting communication among the whole team regarding the patient's treatment plan. The program has measurably improved diabetes, hypertension, and weight management, while dramatically reducing hospital admissions and ER visits.

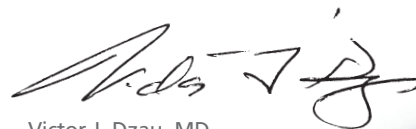
Developing these next-generation models of care will be critical to relieving the projected strain on primary care services—as will training the caregivers who ensure their success. In the past year, Duke's physician assistant (PA) program—the nation's first—moved to a new, larger facility, laying the groundwork for program expansion, while our School of Nursing announced plans to increase enrollment in its accelerated bachelor of science in nursing program.

We are bringing together our medical, PA, physical therapy, and nursing students for training experiences that provide a solid foundation for team-based clinical models. And we have launched initiatives to train senior-level clinicians who can provide wise leadership in challenging times—becoming first in the state to offer a doctor of nursing practice program, and creating a novel Management and Leadership Pathway for Residents program to train physician executives (see page 16).

We believe these new models of care, coupled with supportive caregiver training, can provide a blueprint for addressing the coming spike in demand for health care nationwide.

We're also preparing to meet future needs on the local level, using blueprints of a more literal kind. As you can read in this issue of *DukeMed Magazine*, we are embarking on historic, multiyear projects that will transform our medical center campus—including building a major addition to Duke University Hospital that will add over 580,000 square feet, modernize 160 beds, and add 16 new operating suites; constructing a new 267,000-square-foot cancer center that will expand and consolidate our outpatient cancer services; and planning a new medical school learning center. Together these projects will help us meet projected increases in demand for clinical services while providing our patients with the best possible care experience—and support the innovative training and research that will lead to further advances in care.

What will the future of medicine look like? At Duke Medicine, it's a question we've been asking—and answering—for nearly 80 years. In the midst of the daily hum of caring for patients, teaching students, and conducting research, we continually seek ways to do these things better tomorrow than we do today. It's a quest that continues to guide the evolution of our institution—and we look forward to sharing our progress with you over the years to come.



Victor J. Dzau, MD  
Chancellor for Health Affairs,  
Duke University  
President and CEO,  
Duke University Health System  
James B. Duke Professor  
of Medicine

