

BOARD NEWS

New Center for Professionalism & Value in Health Care to Be Opened in Washington, DC

Jane Ireland

The American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) and the ABFM Foundation are pleased to announce the establishment of the Center for Professionalism and Value in Health Care based in Washington, DC. The Center will be led by Robert Phillips, MD, MSPH, who has been named as its founding Executive Director.

“Health care in the United States is in the midst of transformational change; professional self-regulation and the public trust are at risk. To meet this challenge, the ABFM Foundation has decided to make a strategic investment in the creation of the Center with the ultimate goal of dramatically improving health and health care,” said ABFM President and CEO Elect, Warren P. Newton, MD, MPH.

The new Center aims to create space in which patients, health professionals, payers, and policy makers can work to renegotiate the social contract. “The social contract between health care professionals and the public gives clinicians the privilege of self-regulation in exchange for responsibility to act in the best interest of patients. This contract is fraying as increased employment of clinicians creates pressures to serve business interests over those of patients. The erosion of autonomy, strain of regulation, and exploding reporting burden is producing unprecedented levels of burnout,” says Dr. Phillips. “It has gotten so bad,” continues Phillips, “that physicians are unwittingly asking many state legislatures to remove long-standing mechanisms of self-regulation and public accountability. We cannot afford to have the public question health professionals’ willingness to be accountable, and patients cannot afford our surrender of that role to payers and policy makers.”

The Center will seek to define value across the health care spectrum, reaching beyond medicine to engage the broader health care community as well as patients and families to consider what they believe professionalism and value mean, how to measure it, how to improve it, and how to engage and develop leaders. The Center welcomes collaboration with all others interested in professionalism and value in health care, including other specialty boards, other professions, and other organizations interested in working together on this common ground.

“The selection of Bob Phillips to lead the Center is an outstanding choice,” says James C. Puffer, MD, President and CEO of the ABFM. “In his role as ABFM Vice President of Research and Policy, he helped the ABFM Research Department grow to become an influential source of information about the value of primary care. He also led the launch of the national PRIME Registry, which now helps primary care practices in 49 states liberate data from their electronic health records, thus enabling easier monitoring and improvement of quality, measure reporting, and completion of certification requirements. He was instrumental in the creation and successful launch of the ABFM PHATE tool, which helps

practices understand how their patients are affected by social determinants of health and how to meet their needs, as well as to support enhanced reimbursement.”

Dr. Phillips graduated from the University of Florida College of Medicine and completed residency training and a health services research



Conflict of interest: The authors are employees of the ABFM.

fellowship at the University of Missouri. Before coming to the ABFM, he directed the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Primary Care. Dr. Phillips is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and was a Fulbright Specialist to the Netherlands and New Zealand. He currently serves on the National

Committee on Vital and Health Statistics, is a Professor at Georgetown University and Virginia Commonwealth University, and maintains a continuity family medicine practice in Virginia.

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