Primary health care is foundational to a robust healthcare system, to achieving the quadruple aim of health care, and to improving health equity in the United States and around the world. Unfortunately, primary care is not currently well-positioned to achieve the outcomes our health system needs. Recently, many public and private sponsors of health care research have had increased their focus on primary care enhancement as a necessary step to improve health outcomes. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality have devoted more than a billion dollars to research and demonstration projects aimed at transforming care, largely in primary care. However, it is unclear how the findings from these projects will be implemented and sustained on a broad scale.

In 1994 and 1996, an Institute of Medicine committee convened to study primary care produced foundational and influential work to define primary care and to set out an ambitious plan and roadmap for primary care in the United States. However, much has changed in the health care system in that time, including the ongoing evolution of technological innovation in health care. In December 2018, National Academies’ leadership approved plans for a new study that will examine the ways in which health care is changing and to develop a plan of action for implementing effective primary care in the current and evolving environment. The scope of the approved study is outlined in the Statement of Task below.

For consensus studies, the National Academies often engage a broad range of non-profit sponsors in a funding coalition to support the project— including foundations, associations, universities, etc. Sponsors have the opportunity to share their work and priorities with the committee during the information gathering stage, and to engage in a discussion with the consensus committee at their first open meeting to provide input on the types of recommendations that would be most useful. Sponsoring organizations can also suggest experts to engage in the study process, including nominating individuals for consideration in the committee selection. All sponsors of the study will be acknowledged on the project webpage, in public meeting briefing books, and in the resulting published report. Sponsors also receive a briefing and advance copies of pre-publication reports prior to public release, as well as complimentary copies of the final printed report.

The National Academies estimate that this particular study will take 18 months and will cost approximately $1.2 million to carry out. If interested in exploring study sponsorship or learning more about the match opportunity, please contact Sharyl Nass, PhD, Director of the Board on Health Care Services at the National Academies. Dr. Nass can be reached at snass@nas.edu or at 202-334-2320.
Statement of Task for the National Academies Consensus Study

“Implementing High-Quality Primary Care”

An ad hoc committee, under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, will examine the current state of primary care in the United States and develop an implementation plan to build upon the recommendations from the 1996 IOM report, "Primary Care: America's Health in a New Era", to strengthen primary care services in the United States and inform primary care systems around the world. The implementation plan will consider:

- Barriers to and enablers of primary care innovation and change;
- The appropriate scope of primary care to address the needs of individuals, families, and communities;
- The role of primary care in achieving population health outcomes and health equity goals;
- The evolving role of technological innovation in delivering patient-centered primary care;
- Education and training for the changing workforce in primary care;
- Care delivery and payment models across different communities and care settings;
- Efficient approaches to meaningful measurement and continuous improvement of care quality;
- Changing demographics and the primary care needs and access of different patient populations;
- Identifying and addressing social determinants of health and delivering community-oriented care; and
- The infrastructure (workforce, data, and metrics) needed to evaluate effectiveness of innovation and improvement.

To develop the implementation plan, the committee will address successes and limitations of innovations in primary care in the United States and internationally and will recommend ways to effectively scale and implement successful innovations and programs in US health care settings.

Workplan and Timeline

A committee of approximately 12 expert members will be appointed by the National Academies. With the support of professional staff, the committee will examine the issues presented in the statement of task and develop consensus recommendations. The committee will analyze current scientific evidence and will communicate extensively with sponsors and other stakeholders in the committee's information gathering process in accordance with institutional guidelines. The report will be subject to standard external review procedures prior to public release (in prepublication form, about 15 months after study launch). The final report will be made available online, free of charge.