



Primary Care for America

Special Report to Congress:

Why Primary Care is the Key to Transforming the U.S. Healthcare System

In their landmark report, [Implementing High-Quality Primary Care](#), the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine (NASEM) concluded:

“Primary care is the only health care component where an increased supply is associated with better population health and more equitable outcomes. For this reason, primary care is a common good, which makes the strength and quality of the country’s primary care services a public concern.”

[Primary Care for America](#), a collaboration of medical associations and value-based health care organizations, believes firmly this statement to be true – primary care is a common good and we, collectively, need to work to strengthen, improve and invest in our nation’s primary care infrastructure. We launched Primary Care for America around a shared belief that primary care should be the foundation of our health care system and increased access to patient-centered, comprehensive, and continuous primary care is the key to better health for individuals, communities, and our country.

Primary care is the foundation of our health care system, but misplaced priorities have diminished health outcomes.

We have come together at a vital time in the history of our health care system, a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the flaws and limitations of our current health care infrastructure. Despite spending twice as much on health care as other countries, the U.S. continues to significantly lag behind its international peers in health outcome metrics such as life expectancy and chronic disease burden. We are experiencing growing health disparities and inequities in our healthcare system. Even with increased access to health insurance, individuals and families face unprecedented financial costs in obtaining health care services – a fact that is leading many to delay care, which only increases the severity of their illness or disease state.

Many of the challenges we face are grounded in the simple fact that, for decades, the U.S. has underinvested in and underprioritized primary care. According to the NASEM report, primary care accounts for 35% of health care visits in America, yet it only receives about 5% of all health care expenditure in our nation. Shockingly, a [recent study](#) found that our overall investment in primary

care has declined in 39 states. This unfortunate truth demonstrates that primary care is not being prioritized despite studies indicating that increased supply results in better outcomes and decreased cost. Primary care physicians operate on the front lines and serve as the keystone of our health care system. It is time our policies reflect that reality.

A health care system that prioritizes patient care.

Patients deserve a health care system that drives innovation, delivers patient-centered integrated care, guarantees equitable access, and ensures effective care for future generations. If we are serious about improving health outcomes and lowering health care costs in America, we must immediately commit to investing in a better approach that recognizes the value of comprehensive primary care instead of our current system that overemphasizes episodic sick care.

The physicians, clinicians, and clinics represented by the members of Primary Care for America believe it is time for a renewed commitment to patient health, and this commitment starts with re-establishing primary care as the foundation of our health care system. To achieve the full potential of primary care policymakers and payers should:

1. Identify and implement policies that increase innovation in primary care delivery and payment.
2. Adopt policies that immediately transform and expand the primary care workforce.
3. Improve access to primary care for patients in underserved communities.

Our organizations are demonstrating every day, in communities around the country, that a greater investment in primary care produces better health outcomes, reduces health disparities, and allows for an efficient use of our limited health care and financial resources. We invite you to join us as we change the conversation about primary care and create a health care system that prioritizes the health of Americans.

Primary Care for America (PCfA) is a collaboration focused on demonstrating the value of primary care, the need for increased primary care investment and the importance of innovation in primary care delivery and payment models. PCfA is comprised of a diverse group of key partners in the American health care industry: Agilon Health, Aledade, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Physicians, Catalyst Health Network, ChenMed, Elation Health, Everside Health, MDVIP, National Association of Community Health Centers, One Medical, and VillageMD. For more information about Primary Care for America, visit primarycareforamerica.org