

30 FROM THE PAST

From Altman to Waxman, 30 people who have had a powerful impact on healthcare

Altman: Policy architect

With more than three decades of experience helping shape federal and state healthcare policy on some of the most critical issues, including Medicare reform and universal health coverage, Stuart Altman has earned guru status.

Currently, Altman, 68, is a professor of health policy and economics at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management as well as the school's dean, a position he also held from 1977 to 1993 (he also served as the university's interim president from 1990 to 1991). He's also chairman of the

Council on Health Care Economics and Policy, a nonpartisan think tank sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and a longtime member of the Institute of Medicine.

When Altman talks, people listen, said Joseph Morone, chairman of the Tufts University board of trustees, in an interview with *Modern Healthcare* last year. That might be why Altman, who has a master's degree and a doctorate in economics from the University of California

at Los Angeles, has been asked to proffer his expertise on about a dozen key advisory boards on healthcare and other issues.

He was appointed by President Clinton to the National Bipartisan Commission on the

Future of Medicare and was the first chairman of the Prospective Payment Assessment Commission, the panel formed in 1984 to advise Congress on the Medicare payment system and a predecessor to today's Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. He was also a senior member of the Clinton-Gore health policy transition team after their election in 1992. **30**



ALTMAN

Berwick: Quality catalyst

If there is an Ernest Amory Codman of the past 30 years, a likely candidate would be physician Donald Berwick. In fact, in 1999, Berwick was given the annual Codman Award by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in recognition of his work in quality improvement, a field Codman pioneered in the first half of the 20th century.

Awards and achievements have both come aplenty for Berwick, a summa cum laude graduate of Harvard College and a cum laude gradu-

ate of Harvard Medical School who also holds a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. In 1989, he authored "Continuous improvement as an ideal in healthcare," published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, that has become a seminal article in the quality improvement movement, advocating the application to healthcare of quality improvement techniques used in other industries.

Since 1991, Berwick has served as co-founder, president and chief

executive officer of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Boston, a not-for-profit that has campaigned for quality improvement efforts in healthcare in the U.S., Canada, Europe and the Middle East. The IHI's recently completed 100,000 Lives Campaign reported 3,100 participating hospitals had actually saved an estimated 122,300 lives.

This year, Berwick, 59, was voted by his peers onto the *Modern Physician/Modern Healthcare* list of the 50 most powerful physician-executives. An elected member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, Berwick served as a member of the IOM's Committee on Quality of Health Care in America, which launched the slowly building revolution in healthcare quality improvement. The committee published in November 1999 *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*, which gave the healthcare industry one of its most totemic phrases: "At least 44,000, and perhaps as many as 98,000 Americans, die in hospitals each year as the result of medical errors."

In an interview with *Modern Healthcare*, Berwick's Harvard colleague and fellow physician researcher Lucian Leape, who helped calculate the oft-quoted death toll from hospital errors, said, "Nothing the IOM has ever done has had the impact of that report." **30**



BERWICK

From the *Modern Healthcare* archives

We can yak all we want about improving quality, cutting costs and increasing value in healthcare delivery, but unless clinicians take it upon themselves to lead the charge, it isn't going to happen. That's the belief of Donald M.

Berwick, president and chief executive officer of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston. Berwick ... has made a career out of pushing for quality improvement in medicine.

—Feature story, June 16, 1997