



Executive Editor's Letter

In this issue, *Hospital Quarterly* readers can indulge themselves in an eclectic collection of articles. We cover a range of significant topics including hospital law, crisis management, physicians in an integrated system and the accountability of our foundations. But your attention will be quickly drawn to our feature articles discussing performance comparisons or "benchmarking" as a method of improving hospital practices. George Pink and Ted Freedman report on the Toronto Academic Health Science Council's Management Practice Atlas, while Chris Helyar, Jim Flett and others provide benchmarking comparisons of 20 Canadian teaching hospitals. Richard Averill provides a window on the use of provider performance comparisons in the United States, and Bill Bain reports on performance measures and accountabilities in England. All Canadian hospitals can benefit from this material.


In every situation, information technology is the key enabler that allows us to measure our performance in an almost limitless fashion. This has brought us many challenges and opportunities - some of which are covered by authors such as Richard Alvarez, Duncan Sinclair, Ralph Korpman, Jeff Edelson and Ron Kaczorowski.

We have tried to provide a comprehensive report on benchmarking and information technology, yet we have only begun to address the management challenges created. Readers are encouraged to respond with suggestions for future issues that will provide practical applications of these strategies and management tools.

And our readers do respond. The issue of "private" versus "public" healthcare covered in the last *Hospital Quarterly* provided some passionate reactions which are published in this issue. Other readers have pointed out the importance of ardent debate, and so we will always endeavor to publish thoughtful submissions and reactions.

We have plans. Our Summer issue will deal with the strategic question of money. Many hospitals find themselves unable to build new facilities, replace infrastructure or finance restructuring. They want to know where to turn. They are also looking for ways and means to reduce operating costs, and they want to learn about the new strategies being employed to maximize revenues. Starbucks or Second Cup anyone?

This Fall, we will cover disease management from the hospital perspective - a topic introduced in this issue by Jeff Edelson. Our editorial team is gathering information and will explore this approach with the members of our editorial board, who are dedicated to providing you with practical, valuable and substantial materials. So contact any one of them if you have good ideas about this or other topics.

The contributing editors of this and past issues have my unreserved respect for taking the time to provide these valuable materials. And we are indebted to Kevin Higgins of 3M Canada for helping to compile this issue. We are all the beneficiaries. 

Thank you.

Peggy Leatt, Ph.D.