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## **Dr. Karen Davis**

### **Director, Roger C. Lipitz Center for Integrated Health Care at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University**

Dr. Karen Davis helps to lead the center in studying and disseminating practical, cost-effective approaches to providing comprehensive, coordinated, and compassionate health care to chronically ill people and their families.

Before joining Hopkins, Dr. Davis was President of The Commonwealth Fund and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Policy in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Davis, along with Dr. David Blumenthal and Stuart Gutterman has recently published a lengthy article, the first of two, in the New England Journal of Medicine, discussing what Medicare has accomplished, and the changes that have been made to the program.

### **Subject Area/Topic: Medicare Policy: Past, Present, and Future**

**Highlights:** At a time when the Affordable Care Act remains under attack Dr. Karen Davis, brought good news about our national health care system.

- Between 1970 and 2012, the number of Medicare beneficiaries increased from 20 million to 51 million. During the same period, the percentage of 65 and older uninsured Americans decreased from 48% to 2%.
- In its first 50 years, Medicare has achieved its goal of ensuring access to care and financial protection for its beneficiaries.
- We are moving toward an integrated health care system similar to the much-praised Kaiser Permanente Plan. This will include "...value related payments"—that is, payment for results as opposed to the current fee-for-service.

The projected life of the Medicare Trust Fund has been extended to 2030 and with minor cost adjustments could be extended further.

Early Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Medicare:

- Health care costs have gone down since enactment of the Affordable Care Act. Medicare costs projected by the Congressional Budget Office for 2011 through 2020 are now one trillion less than originally projected.
- Free preventive care services are available for 71 million who are under 65 and 31 million Medicare beneficiaries.
- Hospital 30-day readmission rates have fallen substantially since passage of the Affordable Care Act.