

## Family Medicine And The Health Care System

# The Medical Home: Growing Evidence to Support a New Approach to Primary Care

Thomas C. Rosenthal, MD

From the Department of Family Medicine, University of Buffalo, NY

Correspondence: *Corresponding author:* Thomas C. Rosenthal, MD, Department of Family Medicine, University of Buffalo, 462 Grider Street, Buffalo, NY 14215 (E-mail: [rosenth@acsu.buffalo.edu](mailto:rosenth@acsu.buffalo.edu))

**Introduction:** A medical home is a patient-centered, multifaceted source of personal primary health care. It is based on a relationship between the patient and physician, formed to improve the patient's health across a continuum of referrals and services. Primary care organizations, including the American Board of Family Medicine, have promoted the concept as an answer to government agencies seeking political solutions that make quality health care affordable and accessible to all Americans.

**Methods:** Standard literature databases, including PubMed, and Internet sites of numerous professional associations, government agencies, business groups, and private health organizations identified over 200 references, reports, and books evaluating the medical home and patient-centered primary care.

**Findings:** Evaluations of several patient-centered medical home models corroborate earlier findings of improved outcomes and satisfaction. The peer-reviewed literature documents improved quality, reduced errors, and increased satisfaction when patients identify with a primary care medical home. Patient autonomy and choice also contributes to satisfaction. Although industry has funded case management models demonstrating value superior to traditional fee-for-service reimbursement adoption of the medical home as a basis for medical care in the United States, delivery will require effort on the part of providers and incentives to support activities outside of the traditional face-to-face office visit.

**Conclusions:** Evidence from multiple settings and several countries supports the ability of medical homes to advance societal health. A combination of fee-for-service, case management fees, and quality outcome incentives effectively drive higher standards in patient experience and outcomes. Community/provider boards may be required to safeguard the public interest.

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