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*The Physician
Condition:
The Age of Economic Medicine*

*The Quality Colloquium
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Quality

is a highly subjective abstraction.

What are the standards?

Who will identify the standards?

Who will define the standards?

Do the standards produce a higher level of
quality?

Do the standards allow people to be
productive?

factors that have an impact on health care:

Growth of the United States population ...

Increased demand for physicians' services due to economic expansion ... Increased demand for more medical care by an aging population ...

Increases in malpractice insurance premiums and concomitant legal issues ... Insurance carriers and Managed Care Organizations that dictate practice methods and income ...

Physicians' salaries that lag behind the rising rate of inflation ... Retirement of practicing

physicians ... Physician hours—an average of nearly 60 hours per week—involved in

professional activities ... Decline in productivity

... Geographically dependent lifestyle effects ...

Broad Disconnects: *healthcare is different today than during any other century and that makes it entirely different from the type of healthcare most people expect.*

What has been missing is a diagnosis of the tragic condition of the medical profession as the result of a withering away of its traditional structures ...

one extreme social transformation

before the last quarter or third of
the 20th century had been
male-determined from the
start; **it is now
becoming female-
determined ...**

**social & psychological change,
economic change**

**... it is also
age-determined.**

Within the medical profession:

***Baby Boomers and the first ½ of
Generation Xers comprise***

***↑ 60% of the physician
workforce. The latter half of
Generation X accounts for***

↓ 20% of that total.

—T. Pasko & D.R. Smart, “Physician Characteristics and
Distribution in the U.S.”/2004

Baby Boomer physicians may gripe about the then-and-now states of medicine, but they also...

1. *appreciate the nature of their profession...*
2. *are positioned to voice their opinions and make high-level decisions...*
3. *have made a comfortable living over time.*

Generation X is more likely to have been enveloped in a career-long bureaucratic system, which could lead to a less satisfying work experience.

While the nature of physicians' work has not radically changed over time, the demands of their work have changed.

The clearest indication:

**what used to be a
“physician” is now
a “provider” and
what used to be a
“patient” is now a
“consumer.”**

“The surest
foundation of a
manufacturing
concern is quality.”

—Andrew Carnegie

15 centuries since Hippocrates

Landmarks of Today

quality of care & outcomes

malpractice & tort reform

healthcare insurance &
managed care

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one big question:

Does this fortify the most
fundamental part of
health-care delivery—
the doctor-patient
relationship?

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