

## Introductory Letter from Joseph T. English, MD

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Dear Readers of the Roundtable Journal on Health Policy,

From the earliest days of our country's history, when five physicians led by Benjamin Rush signed the Declaration of Independence and served heroically in the Revolutionary war, physicians have helped to create what many describe as the greatest country in the world with superb medical care being one of its proudest achievements. People come from far and near to benefit from its skill and to learn from its progress.

As evidence of its importance, expenditures for medical care have now become 20% of the world's largest economy. Yet, affordable healthcare is still not available to all our citizens.

Efforts to achieve this goal in the past have faltered. Obama was the first American President to introduce legislation, which was enacted by the Congress, to achieve this objective. He made access to our healthcare system his most important domestic priority. But the ACA has experienced multiple problems and is a major contributor to the annual deficit of the federal government, which now approaches \$20 trillion per year.

It is the intent of President Trump to alter or replace this legislation while retaining some of its most desirable features. He has chosen a physician to lead this effort. And it is clear that physicians must be an important part of the development of any new legislation.

The American Medical Association has appealed to medical schools to provide additional education to help young physicians contribute to this goal. New York Medical College students have been among the first to respond to this need. With the help of the college's Sydney Frank Grant Program, several hundred of our students have participated in Health Policy Fellowships, Roundtables, and Senior Electives.

However, the recent initiative to create a new Journal allowing NYMC students to express their views on health policy and other important subjects is a most important development. In their own words, "it is imperative that young medical students and physicians engage in meaningful discussion about healthcare policy and society and become physicians who not only treat patients but also understand the complexity of healthcare policy in the United States and the world".

We wish them well and eagerly await their views on how to achieve quality and affordable healthcare for all our citizens.

Sincerely,

Joseph T. English, MD

*Sidney Frank Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*