Foreword: health policy and cardiac electrophysiology

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Although state-of-the-art technology has been a hallmark of medical care in the USA, the American health care system is undergoing a transformative change. Enactment of sweeping federal legislation designed to improve access and limit rising costs, potential changes to medical device regulation to increase the burden of proof for safety and efficacy, and implementation of new methods to measure and incentivize high-quality and appropriate care are a few of the many issues likely to impact all medical specialties in America. In this regard, the relatively young and rapidly evolving specialty of Cardiac Electrophysiology (EP) stands out, because it treats a growing population of patients, often using new and expensive medical technologies. Changes to our health care and regulatory systems will have great implications for EP practitioners and the patients they serve.

In this issue of the *Journal of Interventional Cardiac Electrophysiology*, we have gathered several articles that address different aspects of health policy pertinent to the electrophysiology community from the viewpoints of multiple different stakeholders. The first set of articles addresses the topics of quality improvement, policies regarding procedure volume, and the status of health care reform. A second set of articles explores the reimbursement and regulatory issues surrounding implantable cardiac devices. The final set of articles examines how to assess patient outcomes and incorporate patient perspectives into clinical health policy. We believe (hope?) that you will find these articles to be a stimulating sample of the issues and opportunities in the health policy arena for cardiac electrophysiology.

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