

The Hayes Report

Do mechanical stretching devices improve health outcomes in patients after joint surgery when compared with conventional physical therapy? Does Botulinum toxin reduce the frequency, severity, or duration of migraines? Compared with other imaging techniques, how accurate is PET (or PET-CT) for diagnosis and initial staging in patients suspected of having ovarian cancer?



When health care providers and insurers want answers to important questions like these, they frequently turn to Hayes, Inc., the international research and consulting firm launched in 1989 by WINIFRED HAYES, PhD, MS '74, BSN '71. Today, with 35 scientific analysts located throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and New Zealand, the company produces more than 200 evidence-based reports annually on new technologies and protocols for hospitals, government agencies, and health care insurers—including the Mayo Clinic, Kaiser Permanente, United

Healthcare, Wellpoint, Tricare, and CareFirst.

“Evidence should be the foundation for all clinical decisions in health care, but too often we see new technologies adopted and disseminated prematurely, [in part] because we, as a society, are enthralled with new technology,” says Hayes, who was a founding member and the first president of the National Association of Independent Review Organizations (NAIRO).

When Hayes launched her company more than two decades ago, her primary customers were senior claims examiners for health insurers. They needed scientific proof that new treatments and protocols were safe before they could approve reimbursement—and the information being provided was “pretty abysmal, and often based on someone’s opinion,” says Hayes. Currently, Hayes’ audience consists largely of physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. Among a wide range of services, her company provides subscribers with access to evidence-based assessments and information on more than 1,000 medical technologies, including devices, drugs, and procedures; clear information regarding the impact of a technology on patient outcomes and safety; and the proprietary “Hayes Rating”—an evidence-scoring system that has become a standard in the industry. Hayes’ scientific analysts hold advanced degrees in health-related fields, and many of them, like her, have a background in nursing.

She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (1971), Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Certification (1977) and Master of Science (1974) degrees from the School of Nursing and holds a PhD from Johns Hopkins’ Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Today, with health care reform efforts in full swing, the work of Hayes, Inc., couldn’t be more timely. In an era in which legislators, health care leaders, and insurers are looking for ways to improve efficiency and cut costs, while improving patient outcomes, “there is increasing appreciation for the clinical and financial value that evidence-based solutions bring,” says Hayes, who lectures widely and has served on the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, Emory University, and the University of Maryland. She is currently affiliated with the Senior Scholars Program in the Department of Health Policy at the Jefferson Medical College.

With the growing trend toward personalized medicine, made possible in part by a burgeoning number of genetic

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screening tests, Hayes says she is proud of her company’s ongoing advances in genetic test evaluation. “The field is exploding, with more than 1,500 genetic tests on the market today, many produced by small labs.” Such testing demands scrutiny, she says. “Indiscriminate genetic screening can cause more harm than benefit, and there is the potential for a huge misuse of dollars.”

In response, Hayes, Inc. has pledged to produce a scientific report for every genetic test this year that is newly CPT-coded (codes assigned by the American Medical Association to medical services, tests, and procedures that are used by providers and insurers to submit and process health care claims for payment). “We are the leader in the genetic testing field in terms of test evaluations—the source that most organizations turn to,” says Hayes.

—Sue De Pasquale