



**New Episode of “Prescriptions for Health Reform” Available At [BlueCrossFoundation.org](http://BlueCrossFoundation.org)**

**CONTACT:**

Susan Ryan-Vollmar  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation  
617.246.2404  
[susan.ryanvollmar@bcbsma.com](mailto:susan.ryanvollmar@bcbsma.com)

AUGUST 21, 2009 — Phillip Longman asserts that the Veteran’s Administration is providing the safest, most effective, and most scientifically-driven healthcare in the United States today in the latest episode of “Prescriptions for Health Reform.” Longman, author of *Best Care Anywhere: Why VA Health Care Is Better Than Yours*, explains how:

- **The VA establishes a life-long relationship with its patients:** “It starts when they get out of the service and extends as far as long-term nursing care. What this means is that the incentives on the institution are extremely different than with any other healthcare provider. Generally in American medicine today ...[i]f you put a lot of money into prevention and disease management, it creates a lot of good for the patient down the line, but almost always, that patient is no longer in your plan by the time the benefits show up, so you’re actually benefiting some competitor.”
- **The VA has set the standard in electronic medical records:** “[B]ecause the VA has been totally wired now, since the 1980s, it has a tremendous database of patient records that researchers can go back after the fact and begin to see what works and what doesn’t. For example, the VA, using its electronic medical records, identified the dangers of Vioxx long before the FDA or anybody else did, and of course that’s a drug that killed more Americans than died in the Vietnam War.”

A transcript of the podcast interview is available here:

<http://bluecrossfoundation.org/~media/Files/Podcast/Podcast%20Transcripts/090821LongmanTranscript.pdf>

Listen to the podcast here: <http://bluecrossfoundation.org/Multimedia/Podcasts/Prescriptions.aspx>

New episodes of "Prescriptions for Health Reform" are uploaded every two weeks at [BlueCrossFoundation.org](http://BlueCrossFoundation.org); they are also available via free subscription from iTunes. Grantmakers in Health recently highlighted the podcast series in a resource list of what health care foundations are doing to educate and inform those involved in the national health care debate. Past episodes of "Prescriptions for Health Reform" feature interviews with Shannon Brownlee, author of *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine is Making Americans Sicker and Poorer*; Dr. Jerome Groopman, author of *How Doctors Think*; and Melody Petersen, author of *Our Daily Meds*.

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#### **More About The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation**

The mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to expand access to health care. Through grants and policy initiatives, the Foundation works with public and private organizations to broaden health coverage and reduce barriers to care. It focuses on developing measurable and sustainable solutions that benefit uninsured, vulnerable and low-income individuals and families in the Commonwealth, and served as a catalyst for the pioneering Massachusetts health care reform law passed in 2006. The Foundation was founded in 2001 with an initial endowment of \$55 million from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The Foundation operates separately from the company and is governed by its own 18-member Board of Directors. It is one of the largest private health philanthropies in New England and in 2007 was awarded the Paul Ylvisaker Award for Public Policy Engagement by the Council on Foundations.