



Pioneer Special Solicitation

A focus on consumer empowerment as a force for disruptive innovation in health and health care

SUMMARY

The Pioneer Portfolio supports innovative projects with the potential to transform health and health care and accelerate change, leading to dramatic improvements in people's lives. Since its start in 2004, the portfolio has encouraged and accepted promising unsolicited proposals for grants and contracts.

Launched in April 2006, the *Pioneer Special Solicitation* was a thematic call for proposals to stimulate and challenge the field to compete for their ideas. The portfolio staff saw it as an additional funding vehicle to increase the number of proposals submitted and ultimately funded, as well as a way to reach a broader audience. The team recruited a panel of outside experts to review the call for proposals and the submitted proposals. The solicitation focused on consumer empowerment as a driving force for disruptive innovation in health and health care. It funded four projects (one with two grants).

The Vision: Consumer-Driven Care

The vision of demand-side, consumer-driven care is to use market forces embodied by consumer choice to drive the system toward simpler, less costly, more convenient care alternatives. Some believe that "consumerism" has the power to transform the health care system with new benefit and network designs that would foster change in the organization of health care, with different forms of care provided in different settings that use different methods for reimbursement.

There is evidence that such innovations are already occurring with "minute clinics" for low-acuity primary care, medical homes for chronic care management, centers of excellence for high-acuity surgical procedures and specialty hospitals for ambulatory surgery and oncology.

What is Disruptive Innovation?

Disruptive innovation is a term coined by Clayton Christensen, MPhil, MBA, professor of business administration at Harvard University and author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*

(1997) and other books. It describes how innovative ideas evolve and diffuse. The term is most often applied in business contexts to describe a new business model that brings a product into the low-end or less-competitive end of a market that can compete profitably at lower costs, or brings to the market a product or service that is so much more convenient and affordable that a whole new population of people who previously could not afford to own it or did not have the skill to use it can now do so (e.g., home glucose monitoring).

The health care industry is ripe for such innovation. As is widely acknowledged, the American health care system is populated with specialists and subspecialists with extraordinary capabilities who benefit from cutting-edge scientific research. But little effort has gone into determining how to provide the health care that most of us need—most of the time—in a way that is simpler, more convenient and less costly.

The consumer-empowerment movement offers an opportunity to explore disruptive innovations that could significantly change the consumer experience by making access to care more convenient and affordable to a broader range of people, expanding consumer choice in selecting the services they receive and from whom they receive them, simplifying ways for people to manage their own health conditions or making it easier to engage in healthy behaviors.

The project list below links to Program Results on the projects funded under the special solicitation. Reports on projects are added as the projects are completed.

PROJECT LIST

[A Business Plan for Expanding an Online Health Center: Analyzing the business and legal issues for accessing contraception products via the Internet](#), Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette (Portland, Ore.) (ID# 63957)

[Ashoka Looks Internationally for Great Ideas: Replicating scalable innovations in health care from around the world](#), Ashoka (Arlington, Va.) (ID# 69237)

[Health Insurance Covering Preventive and Wellness Care for Independent Workers: Demonstrating an affordable and portable health insurance package for independent workers](#), Freelancers Union (Brooklyn, N.Y.) (ID# 63951)

[Identifying Ways That Health Systems Can Deliver Better Care at a Lower Cost: Disruptive innovations within seven integrated health systems lead the way](#), Innosight Institute (San Mateo, Calif.) (ID# 66571)