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Thank you, Harvey. On behalf of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation I accept this report with great pleasure and with real excitement for the task ahead. Thanks, also, to Secretary Shalala for such a superb job guiding the committee's work through the past two years. I know it has not been easy. I also want to express my appreciation to the committee's vice chair, my good friend Linda Burnes Bolton, and to all the committee's members. Several are here today.

First, though, let me provide some context. Today is a huge milestone in America's long and often troubled journey toward better health care— a defining moment – a “tipping point”— for nursing in America. This marks the difference between the way nursing used to be – and the way it is going to be. I believe it will be like the difference between night and day.

At the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation we've looked forward to this moment for a long, long time. Two years ago, we asked the IOM to map out exactly what it would take for a re-imagined and re-engineered nursing profession to assume a radically more effective role in confronting the health system's escalating crises of care and cost.

The result is a report from Secretary Shalala's committee that matches the visionary scale and high-impact of other landmark studies by the IOM like those on the quality of care, medical errors, disparities and public health. This is serious business. We've committed some \$10 million on the investigation and research driving this report – and on readying the field for what is certain to be a period of profound change.

Now, on its face, the report is about the future of nursing. Don't be misled. It's really about a final piece of health care's larger puzzle. This seminal document establishes nursing's centrality in providing patients with the high quality, effective, efficient and safe patient-centered health care. This is what Americans expect and deserve.

The findings are courageous, sharply-drawn and straight-forward. They are based on thorough research and solid evidence. Some conclusions, of course, may be controversial. That's because they are so consequential. The most important conclusion is that we can do this – but not without an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration across America's public and private sectors.

Amazingly, it's already started. Right now more than 1,000 of health care's leaders, educators and practitioners are watching and listening online from hospitals, colleges, universities, executive suites, government agencies and nursing schools all across the country. Collectively, we share a determination to lead change, advance health and nursing, and achieve for patients the very best outcomes possible— all while holding the line on costs.

This is not an easy task. In a moment Secretary Shalala will give you more of the details. What you will hear is nothing less than a call to action. It is a call I will answer personally and professionally. I challenge you to do the same. And please know this – our Board, led by Tom Kean, co-chair of the 9/11 Commission, considers this a legacy commitment by our philanthropy – one that is vital to the strength of health care in our nation. And so do I.

So, as we harness our energies, as we work together, as we accelerate our efforts, please know that we are recreating nursing in America. That is the promise of this report.

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