

# We CAN Fix Healthcare

By **Stephen K. Klasko, MD, MBA**

The new book I've co-written with Dr. Gregory Shea and Michael Hoad, *We CAN Fix Healthcare: The Future Is Now*, is a journey through space and time to 2026, where we find that after the brutal election of 2016, Democrats and Republicans united around 12 disruptors that allow us to create the ideal healthcare of the future.

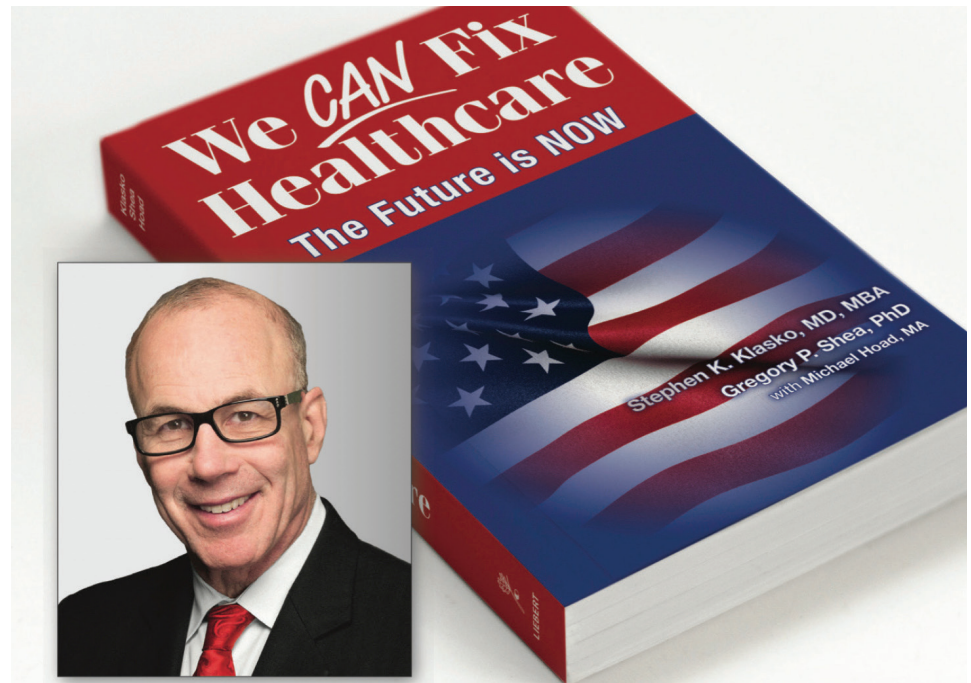
Sounds impossible? Well, that's why we had to bend the space-time continuum and write a history of the future.

In short, healthcare needs a new model that makes the existing failed model obsolete. Obamacare, accountable care organizations, and bundled payments are all part of the new strategy, but as we enter the next fifteen years of the 21st century, we are still getting "punched in the mouth" with rising costs, rising health disparities, and anger on both sides of the aisle. Yet, we are still told that it is "impossible" to fundamentally transform our complex, inefficient, expensive, inequitable and occasionally unsafe healthcare delivery system.

If one wants to change the healthcare system in America, three things need to happen.

First, we must examine the whole system objectively. The key word in the phrase "system of healthcare in America" is "system." To change a part without addressing the whole, in its "system-ness," leads to changing only a part. For real change, we need to look at the system when considering the parts and their interconnections.

Second, we need to look in the mirror. It is way too easy to absolve



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yourself, no matter what your role in the system, whether Democrat or Republican, provider or patient, employer or insurer. You own it – its successes and its failures. We have had the exceptional opportunity to work with physicians, providers and other stakeholders to improve outcomes and lower cost, much to the great satisfaction of patients and providers. We know people can make healthcare fundamentally better.

Third, "Do or do not; there is no try."<sup>1</sup> Yoda had it right. As we approach yet another election

cycle, it is time to decide whether we are willing to disrupt the system fundamentally or resign ourselves to what we have. Incremental, mission-accomplished changes just move the blade in the wound, prolonging the agony.

America has all the ingredients necessary to provide better, cheaper healthcare. It needs chefs who are willing to do, not try. We remain optimistic.

Our history-of-the-future approach to writing about healthcare transformation rests upon the

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assumption that an alternative and desired future can exist – and be achieved. It also transports the reader to another vantage point, to one freer of limits, filters, and biases of the moment. It can free the mind to consider new possibilities and for change: excitement born of envisioning a better world.

So, to quote Yoda again, “Difficult to see. Always in motion is the future.”<sup>1</sup>

In that vein, we have laid out four goals for American healthcare:

1. Affordable, accessible healthcare, regardless of race, religion or pre-existing conditions.
2. Training for the providers of the future, not the past.
3. Healthcare that has joined the consumer revolution.
4. Alignment of incentives and

creative partnerships between patients and providers that foster improvement of health for individuals and communities.

Here’s to realizing an optimistic future in American healthcare for all of us, our children and their children.

***May the fours be with you!***

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*We CAN Fix Healthcare* is an edited version of Dr. Klasko’s editorial essay, which appears in Vol. 1, #2 of *Healthcare Transformation*, [www.htboldhealth.com](http://www.htboldhealth.com).

To purchase a copy of *We CAN Fix Healthcare* go to: <http://www.liebertpub.com/hc>

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<sup>1</sup>Yoda is a registered trademark of The Walt Disney Corporation. *Star Wars* (Motion picture; 1977). Kurtz G. (Producer); Lucas G. (Director). United States of America: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.