Henderson, national leader of PricewaterhouseCoopers Electronic Health Research, emphasizes primary and preventive care. “A primary care physician stra- tegy is key if you want to do differently as an ACO to improve and maintain the quality of care,” he says. ACOs will need a fully functional, electronic health record, as well as health information exchange to manage care and share information across multiple sites of care. Without effective IT systems, an ACO will be a non-starter, says Bruce Denzer, ACO lead for Premier. Among other things, he recommends that systems be fit for purpose, that they be able to manage relationships with payers and other providers in the market, and that they be able to measure appropriate performance and quality metrics.

Payment reform is one of the foundations for ACO formation, holding promise for substantial shared savings. However, many believe that the approach is slow and the results are limited. Henderson says that the approach is often considered as a way to manage costs and is not expected to transform the delivery system. "ACOs will have to have a strong primary care base," notes Jim Smith, senior vice president of the Camden Group. ACOs will require a shift in thinking from high volume to high value, emphasizing primary and preventive care. "A primary care physician strategy is key if you want to do differently as an ACO to improve and maintain the quality of care," he says. ACOs will need a fully functional, electronic health record, as well as health information exchange to manage care and share information across multiple sites of care. Without effective IT systems, an ACO will be a non-starter, says Bruce Denzer, ACO lead for Premier. Among other things, he recommends that systems be fit for purpose, that they be able to manage relationships with payers and other providers in the market, and that they be able to measure appropriate performance and quality metrics.

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