We have great pleasure in seeing this special issue published. Not only does it represent an important, but under-researched, topic, but it also brings together a truly international report on healthcare delivery reform research work.

We hope the combination of very good articles in this special issue will encourage the publication of more research in the area of healthcare delivery reform. We highly appreciate the efforts of all reviewers and authors, including those whose articles were rejected, in making this special issue a reality. We are overall delighted to have had the opportunity to bring together scholars adopting a variety of perspectives to examine the role of reform initiatives in healthcare and the leveraging of healthcare IS projects. The four articles in this special issue make a substantial contribution in enhancing our understanding of the complex challenges involved in reforming our healthcare delivery systems. These articles also open up a variety of avenues for research into healthcare IS and the role of reform initiatives that we hope will spur further research work in this important area.

The article by Currie and Finnegan provides extensive descriptions of the policies surrounding the planned implementation of Electronic Prescribing Systems in the UK NHS, together with some good evidence of practices and pitfalls.

Sammon and Adam present a very detailed comparison of two intensive case studies of the implementation of large-scale information systems, the primary case being that of the Irish National Health Service. The aim of comparing it to a second case study, that of a private multinational in the supply chain management industry, is interesting in that both systems implementations present many similarities.

Persson, Stirna, and Aggestam analyze a detailed case study of implementing a knowledge management system in a Swedish hospital and provide excellent evidence of best practices, which is the main theme of this Special Issue.

Finally Batenburg, Versendaal, and Breedveld explore an important topic, very appropriate to this Special Issue. IT for the elderly is a crucial and growing field, currently under-researched, and the main findings presented here on the role of IT in supporting the independent functioning of the elderly in everyday life in The Netherlands are of great interest.

This Special Issue is the prelude to the International Journal of Healthcare Delivery Reform Initiatives (IJHDRI) and contains four articles examining the complex issue from different perspectives. We draw on the framework of service delivery reform to highlight the contributions of the articles in
this issue. The framework suggests that reforming service delivery in organizations can be viewed as a combination of the quality of service being delivered, service coordination, accuracy, and timeliness of service. These service problems reflect difficulties with respect to the access, application, and benefits from services delivered by healthcare providers and attempt to provide a systematic means to articulate an answer to the question: If reform initiative is the solution, then what is the problem? Problems with reform initiatives are linked to the complexity of reforming healthcare delivery and initiating new tasks/functions required to solve specific problems.