Section 1
Planning and Developing an IT Strategy

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The title of Chapter 1 in this section, “The Mission of Information Technology in Health Care: Creating a System That Cares” by Neal L. Patterson, the CEO of the Cerner Corporation, can almost be the title for this entire book, or, at least, for this first section. Patterson’s chapter serves as the umbrella for the state of the industry of the health information management field. New stakeholders, the rise of consumerism, and the promise of technology are creating the need to continually reexamine how health care is delivered.

As this first section progresses, the framework for planning and developing an organization’s information technology strategy is presented. The entire book utilizes an approach that takes the reader from theory to practice. In this section, Chapters 2 and 3 explore issues related to strategic planning, decision making, and the role of consultants in facilitating the process. The theory to practice route of implementing information systems is bombarded with obstacles and confounding issues, of which the book presents creative solutions. Based on this, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 showcase two domestic cases—the first, an integrated health delivery network, the second, a health system rated as one of the best in the United States—and an international case, Sweden. The chapter on Clarian Health System elaborates the utilization of the strategic planning process, mission development, and community outreach to reach its goals. The chapter on the Swedish healthcare system focuses on how government agencies facilitate the strategic planning process with a key element of having input from the citizens. It also brings us valuable information on an issue of major import to health care today, the development of a lifelong electronic health record. This entire section gives promise to all those embarking on information technology changes in their organizations.