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THE EVOLUTION OF OUR RESEARCH

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As we conclude the year and prepare for 2015, let's take a moment to review 2014 and look at the agenda for next year. The past 12 months have been quite busy in developing and completing a new evolution of how our organization identifies and creates new research to benefit both the actuarial profession and the public. I am proud to see the ongoing efforts from Society of Actuaries (SOA) volunteers and staff in creating necessary research to help advance our profession.

Earlier this year, the SOA-commissioned Blue Ribbon Panel on Public Pension Funding helped foster a dialogue about pension plans with the public, regulators and policymakers. We saw important development of experience studies on life, health and retirement topics, including the release of an updated private plan mortality tables and mortality improvement model. Our U.S. retirement research focused on the effects of provisions from the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014 (HATFA-14). The creation of the SOA Regulatory Research Advisory Council also set a new precedent for how we plan for future research and how this information can be provided to regulators to inform them of major issues and challenges.

We have also identified new approaches to how we publish research. For example, we hosted a call for papers to gather the latest insights on predictive modeling and had a quick turnaround to publish the collection of papers. We have incorporated this lean, time-sensitive approach as one way to evolve how we identify, complete and disseminate research for our members. We have also added several new capabilities and data resources to support research projects. We have partnered with the Canadian Institute of Actuaries to pursue Canadian pension research, engaging a Canadian actuary to help conduct this vital work.

On the health front, we added a new staff health research actuary to help develop and manage health research projects for our members and the public. We secured an agreement with the Kansas Insurance Department for access to their health care cost data. This health project will help develop research analysis on the evolution of U.S. health care under the Affordable Care Act, and it also sets the stage for future research projects with other states on health care data.

Looking ahead we will continue to explore new ways to mine for research, and there are certainly recent data developments that will help with health and pension analyses.



While this past year has been a time of new research work, the coming year will certainly keep a strong momentum. Stay tuned for more research updates with experience studies, original research reports and much more. **A**

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