



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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# Health Watch

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# Chairperson's Corner

by Jennifer Gillespie



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It feels like every day there is an announcement in the news about layoffs at yet another company. The pressure rises for everybody, including those who are currently employed, as we wonder what we can do to make ourselves either indispensable in our current job or perfect for a desired job. Consider what a list of career resolutions written by Amy Lindgren for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* might mean for actuaries, as well as the many ways the Health Section and the SOA support us in these endeavors.

**Resolution #1:** “Find at least one club or professional association in my current or potential field and sign up for its newsletter so I can stay on top of current trends.” Joining the SOA’s Health Section is a great place to start! Other ideas include: joining a local actuarial club; joining other relevant sections of the SOA; and branching out to get involved with a related professional organization, such as the DMAA-The Care Continuum Alliance or the American Society of Health Economists, for instance. While working on “Untapped Opportunities for Actuaries in the Health Industry,” the SOA has been reaching out to organizations such as these to strengthen the connection and demonstrate actuaries’ relevance to them.

**Resolution #2:** “Attend at least one professional association meeting so I can connect with others.” The Health Spring Meeting in Toronto in June will include many opportunities to network with other actuaries—receptions, lunches, breaks and even a baseball game! Closer to home, most of the local actuarial clubs host lunches, dinners, receptions and other meetings where you can get to know the other actuaries in your metro area or region.

**Resolution #3:** “Take one seminar, workshop or webinar in my field, or attend a conference.” Many volunteers have been working hard to put together a great agenda of sessions for the Toronto meeting. The Health Section will also be holding another round of “boot camps”—intensive seminars pro-

viding in-depth knowledge of the key areas of health actuarial practice—this August in Seattle, Wash. Anticipated topics include: Medicare Pricing (Parts C & D), Disability and Long Term Care Pricing, Professionalism and Valuation. There are also a variety of webinars offered throughout the year by the Health Section, by the SOA and by the American Academy of Actuaries.

**Resolution #4:** “Read one book, magazine or online article about developments in my field.” Keep reading this issue of *Health Watch!*

**Resolution #5:** “Identify someone in my department, company or field to contact for occasional advice.” A great source for advice and inspiration is *imageoftheactuary.org*, the SOA’s Web site devoted to promoting the “Actuaries Brand.” The site includes stories of actuarial pioneers who have opened up new fields for actuaries to explore and to make our own special contributions, along with many other resources that will help you maximize your professional potential.

**Resolution #6:** “Review my work accomplishments to date and organize them in some way, perhaps in a portfolio of work samples or a list of projects.” It’s easy for actuaries to label ourselves simply by where we are in the exam process or by the department we work in. But our value to the company (and also to the market) is in the work that we do. What are some of the successful results you’ve achieved with the projects you’ve worked on or managed over the years? This is also an opportunity to position yourself to take part in endeavors that go beyond the day-to-day tasks that you’ve engaged in up to now. For example, with the recent call for essays on “Visions for the Future of the U.S. Health Care System,” the SOA and the Health Section are seeking to promote the contributions that actuaries can make to the ongoing debate on health care reform.

**Resolution #7:** “Schedule at least two networking meetings with people outside my



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field.” What better place than the spring meeting to find non-actuaries with whom we have something in common! Many non-actuaries have been invited to speak on panels because their work and their perspectives are closely linked to what actuaries do, and they may be open to continuing the conversation.

Resolution #8: “Update my resume.” Consider writing an article for *Health Watch*—and adding “author” to the list of your accomplishments! Other examples of volunteering for the SOA—an exam committee, council participation, speaking at a meeting—also look great on a resume.

Resolution #9: “Add one significant work experience to my life—a new project on the job, or a board membership at a local non-profit, or a committee assignment at work.” It’s the time of year to consider running for the council of your favorite SOA section. This will increase your connection to other

actuaries, advance your leadership skills and allow you to give back to the organization.

Resolution #10: “Finally explore my options and decide about finishing an old degree or training program, and get started or let it go for good.” There are the obvious parallels here for those in the middle of actuarial exams. However, we can also work through the modules as continuing education to update and expand our knowledge of our current or desired field.

If you are inspired to get involved with the work of the Health Section (running for the Section Council, writing an article for *Health Watch*, presenting at a meeting, working on a task force, etc.) or you just want to learn more about these opportunities, please contact any member of the Health Section leadership listed on the masthead of this issue of *Health Watch*. We are always happy to have more people get involved. ■

**Editorial Correction:** In the January issue of *Health Watch*, Marianne Miller’s contact information and author photo were missing from her article. We apologize for this oversight.



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