



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

# Health Watch

October 2011 – Issue 67

# Chairperson's Corner

By Judy Strachan

The 2011 SOA Health Meeting in Boston is now history. Boston was a great place for a meeting, and the roster of sessions was excellent, so the meeting broke all records for attendance. The Health Section Council coordinated over half of the sessions at this meeting. In addition, another Medical School for Actuaries, which received such positive reviews after the 2010 Boot Camp for Health Actuaries, was held at the end of the Boston meeting. A new smartphone meeting application was introduced for the meeting, putting access to maps, the meeting agenda and copies of the handouts at your fingertips. Another first for the meeting was a Twitter feed about events at the meeting.

Outside of activities related to the 2011 Health Meeting, the section council has continued to focus on the section's mission. We continue to have more ideas for projects than we have resources and time. Our mission statement has aided us to focus the highest priority projects. Our priority projects need to:

- Provide relevant educational opportunities and member communications,
- Facilitate practical research, and/or
- Expand the marketplace relevance of the health actuary brand.

## Joint Meeting with the Academy of Actuaries' Health Practice Council

During this year's annual joint meeting with the Academy of Actuaries' Health Practice Council held in June, the practice council and the Health Section Council reviewed the action items identified during last year's strategy session. While much remains to be done, both groups had taken action to address the majority of last year's action items. The highest priority action item from last year's meeting was to develop the profession's resources for performing rapid health research. One of the major projects addressing this action item is the Health Actuarial Research Initiative discussed below. Increasing the visibility and improving the perception of the health actuary brand, another

action item, was addressed by the Untapped Opportunities Task Force appointed by the SOA board of directors, also discussed below.

The major initiative identified by the group for the coming year is to identify and work on opportunities to increase the cooperation and coordination both between the Academy Health Practice Council and the Health Section Council and between health actuaries and other health professionals. The goal of the effort is to increase the visibility and the influence of the profession on health policy and health research.

## Untapped Opportunities for Health Actuaries

In 2004, at the urging of the Health Section Council, the board established the Untapped Opportunities for Health Actuaries Task Force. The 2011 accomplishments for this task force include:

- A new resource of role profiles of nontraditional health actuaries, housed on the Untapped Opportunities Web page.
- A recruiter roundtable the evening before the health meeting, to learn from a focus group of non-actuarial health care recruiters.
- Provider payment reform activities, including attending conferences offered by other professional groups, offering webcasts on related topics and creating a new work group to address payment reform initiatives.
- Sponsoring the faculty for the June Medical School for Actuaries, with planning and oversight executed by the Health Section.
- The Massachusetts Connector Research Project, which was approved and committed in 2010 and results are expected later in 2011.

Because this initiative is now considered by the SOA board of directors to be operational rather than strategic, responsibility for continuing the work of this task force has been transferred to the Health Section Council as of July 2011. The

ISSUE 66 OCTOBER 2011

## Health Watch

Published by the Health Section Council of the Society of Actuaries

This publication is free to section members. Current-year issues are available from the Communications Department. Back issues of section publications have been placed in the SOA library and on the SOA website: ([www.soa.org](http://www.soa.org)). Photocopies of back issues may be requested for a nominal fee.

### 2011 Section Leadership

Judy Strachan, *Chairperson*  
Kevin Law, *Vice Chairperson*  
Kristi Bohn, *Secretary & Treasurer*  
Robert Cosway, *Council Member*  
Beth Grice, *Council Member*  
Scott Haglund, *Council Member*  
Jon Hendrickson, *Council Member*  
J. Patrick Kinney, *Council Member*  
Sudha Shenoy, *Council Member*  
Dewayne Ullsperger, *Council Member*  
Karl Volkmar, *Council Member*  
Ross Winkelman, *Council Member*

Mary van der Heijde, *Editor-in-Chief*  
ph: 303.299.9400  
[mary.vanderheijde@milliman.com](mailto:mary.vanderheijde@milliman.com)

### Editorial Board Members

Pat Kinney  
ph: 585.238.4379  
[Patrick.Kinney@excellus.com](mailto:Patrick.Kinney@excellus.com)

Jeff Miller  
ph: 913.707.0067  
[jeff@jdmfsa.com](mailto:jeff@jdmfsa.com)

Karin Swenson-Moore  
ph: 206.332.6461  
[kmswens@regence.com](mailto:kmswens@regence.com)

### SOA Staff

Kathryn Baker, *Staff Editor*  
ph: 847.706.3501 f: 847.706.3599  
[kbaker@soa.org](mailto:kbaker@soa.org)

Sara Teppema, *Staff Fellow Health*  
ph: 847.706.3511 f: 847.706.3599  
[steppema@soa.org](mailto:steppema@soa.org)

Jill Leprich, *Project Support Specialist*  
ph: 847.706.3645 f: 847.706.3599  
[jleprich@soa.org](mailto:jleprich@soa.org)

Julissa Sweeney, *Graphic Designer*  
ph: 847.706.3548 f: 847.273.8548

Facts and opinions contained herein are the sole responsibility of the persons expressing them and should not be attributed to the Society of Actuaries, its committees, the Health Section or the employers of the authors. We will promptly correct errors brought to our attention.

© Copyright 2011 Society of Actuaries. All rights reserved.  
Printed in the United States of America.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Judy Strachan, FSA, FCA, MAAA, is a specialist leader with Deloitte Consulting LLP in Parsippany, N.J. She can be reached at [judy.l.strachan@gmail.com](mailto:judy.l.strachan@gmail.com).

Health Section Council has identified the following list of tasks to pursue over the next year:

- Continue to explore the application of complexity science for improving the quality and usefulness of actuarial models of health care systems,
- Expand ideas for clinical training beyond boot camp material,
- Continue to review SOA health research assets for opportunities to leverage at conferences, for use in articles, to use as vehicles for networking with other organizations and to enhance the health actuary brand, and
- Continue to review SOA educational programs for gaps in education and exposure to emerging areas of practice.

## Health Actuarial Research Initiative (HARI)

HARI, an initiative of the SOA board of directors, was inspired by the discussions between the SOA Health Section Council and the Academy Health Practice Council in June 2010. The Board has

committed \$300,000 per year for 2011 and 2012 for health research. The first project the oversight group identified is a study of risk adjustment as it pertains to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the risk adjustment project was released on May 13 and is available on the SOA website. The oversight group has identified the next two HARI topics, a comparative study of health care trend drivers, and of accountable care organizations and risk; work has begun on defining these projects in greater detail with a goal of issuing RFPs this year for one of them and next year for the second.

## Wrap-Up

My term as chair of the Health Section Council ends this month, and Kevin Law will take over the chair. My three years on the council have been busy and interesting, and the future for the Health Section Council promises more of the same for Kevin. ■

---

or to skew it one way or another, to achieve some purpose, and not follow all of the objectivity and the requirements of the profession, then the result might be handy for one brief moment, but from then on our work would be useless, and would have no value whatsoever. I think that is exactly the same in the private sector as it is in the government.

**MV:** You talked about how technical neutrality, in some cases, can be seen as opposition to a particular viewpoint. Do you feel that we have any risk of becoming irrelevant, or that our voice would not be heard in the future because of that, or do you think that our obligation continues regardless?

**RF:** Well, our obligation continues without question, but I do have that concern—I'll be honest about that. In recent years, as we've seen the level of partisanship in the public sector go up, there's been less interest, it seems, in the technical aspects of the programs, and more interest in the political aspects. So I do worry about us being marginalized

## An Interview with Rick Foster | FROM PAGE 1

or no longer being useful for the very things that we're so good at, and the very things that should be paid attention to. Even though it seems that fewer and fewer public leaders and politicians tend to pay attention to the formality of the technical details which will make or break the success of any product or program in real life. So, I think we may be marginalized for a little while, but it may take only one or two spectacular failures before we're back in business the way we've always been, and the lessons learned.

**MV:** Tell us about the role that the media has played in this partisanship, and in your role in trying to provide technical information and unbiased information.

**RF:** The media is very interested in reporting all of this. They tend to focus a little more on the more sensational aspects, I'm afraid. Still, it's been a valuable voice on behalf of our work, and we try to assist the media behind the scenes in understanding