



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Letter from the Editor

by Mary van der Heijde

I am sure we all relate to this situation: someone asks me what I do for a living, I respond that I am an actuary, and am met with a blank stare. Despite the actuarial profession often being ranked as the #1 job in the country, many folks simply don't know what we do. However, this is changing. What an interesting evolution, from those within my own extended family not knowing what an actuary is, to major news outlets interviewing actuaries or making reference to actuaries in prime time. Health care reform has clarified the need for the understanding and measurement of risks, and it is exciting to see how this new focus has increased awareness of the role of the actuary.

As evidenced by the wide spectrum of topics contained in this issue, the role of the actuary has become increasingly broad. As our roles continue to expand, it strikes me that in many ways we are moving from being those who merely measure and forecast risk, to those who help design creative approaches to mitigate the risk in the first place. You can't manage what you can't measure, and in developing improved approaches to measuring risk, we are increasing the value of the actuary in managing risk.

In this issue, Steve Tutewohl's article offers helpful background about what clinical integration is, why it is important, and how to measure its value. We have included part one of a two part series by Steve Melek, about the new requirements of mental health parity. Part one includes the logistics and implementation details to comply with new parity requirements. Part two will appear in the next issue, and will focus on understanding how these rules could impact business decisions going forward.

Max Rudolph provides a follow-up piece to the enterprise risk management features in the last issue, and John Cameron conveys information about health risk

assessments within the limitations of the new Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). Troy Filipek's article provides great insight into the notable changes in the market for and use of generic drugs.

This issue's Navigating New Horizons feature focuses on Jeff Miller, and how his entrepreneurial spirit has guided his actuarial career. As well, Carolyn Young shares her non-traditional role at Independence Blue Cross, and some of the exciting new areas in which she is involved.

I would like to introduce the new members of the Health Watch editorial board: Karin Swenson-Moore, Pat Kinney, and Jeff Miller. We are fortunate to have their additional vision and input.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Health Watch, and encourage you to contact us with your thoughts and opinions. ■



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