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# Chairperson's Corner

By Sarah Osborne

**H**ave you ever been part of an event and just known that you had witnessed something great? When Shaun White made his final drop in the half-pipe at the Olympics this winter, I sat on the edge of my seat, holding my breath, watching him execute the run that would earn him yet another gold medal. Before the score was even up on the board, I knew it was something special, and his reaction when the official result posted was priceless. Years of hard work, training and perseverance all came to fruition in that moment.

In the actuarial profession, we don't have the same opportunity for moments of greatness as Olympic athletes do when they conquer their competition from across the world, climbing the podium to receive a gold medal and standing proudly through their nation's anthem. At least, that's what I used to think before Initiative 18111.

Early in 2017, ideas began circulating around the Society of Actuaries (SOA) regarding one of the most pressing issues in the United States—the cost of health care. Through many discussions and meetings, Initiative 18111 was born. In fact, when the planning first began, it was Initiative 17110, representing the fact that 17 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product is spent on health care versus 10 percent in other developed nations.

Unfortunately, by the time we began to publish materials for the first event, those figures had reached 18 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

The goal of Initiative 18111 is to bring together a broad group of health care system stakeholders, identify the major cost drivers of U.S. health care, and create an impactful plan of action. In Joe Wurzburger's Up Front column this month, you can read more about the process and some of the key contributors to making this happen. The Health Section Council is a cosponsor of Initiative 18111, and I had the pleasure of attending the event in March.

There will be more to follow in the coming months, and we will continue to keep you updated on the initiative's progress. But what I can tell you now is the event in March was fantastic. Leaders from diverse areas of the health care system had discussions, brainstormed, and were able to challenge each other freely and respectfully. I left with a feeling of excitement, knowing I had just been a part of something great. No, it's not quite the same as winning an Olympic gold medal, but what I imagine it might feel like to begin Olympic training. The SOA and the Health Section Council have a lofty, yet not impossible, goal. Great things are accomplished when you bring together the best of the best. If we can look back someday and say that we were able to make a positive impact on health care costs for millions of people, we will have won the gold. ■



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