



Article from

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Up Front With the SOA Staff Fellow

By Joe Wurzburger

This issue of *Health Watch* is being released during a time when there is a significant amount of focus on the results of an election. Many of us may find ourselves reflecting on what was accomplished during the term that is coming to a close. Others are looking ahead at what may await us in the new term. Will the transition in leadership be smooth? How might our direction change? What does this future hold?

I am, of course, talking about the end of the Society of Actuaries (SOA) year that occurs in October and the results of section elections, especially as they pertain to the Health Section. (Wait, you thought I was referring to something else?)

Let's start with a look back before we shift our focus to the future.

REFLECTION

The Health Section accomplished a great deal during this past SOA year. Any one of these could be the subject of its own article (and one of them is!), but for the sake of brevity I'll limit myself to bullet points.

- **Record-breaking Health Meeting.** As you'll read in Brian Pauley's article in this issue, the 2016 SOA Health Meeting was one for the record books. It was the most highly attended Health Meeting in the SOA's history, and the formal feedback supports anecdotal evidence that the breakout sessions were stellar. Instead of going into detail here I'll recommend that you read Brian's article to learn more.
- **New and improved *Health Watch*.** Hopefully you'll notice that the copy of *Health Watch* in your hands is more colorful than those from prior years. And if you're reading online, you may notice a formal digital version (in addition to the PDF that has existed for some time) with a vanity URL: healthwatch.soa.org. While these may seem like cosmetic improvements, they are representative of renewed commitment to the publication's high standards. For many of our section members, *Health Watch* is one of their most valuable benefits of membership. The Health Section Council places great importance on producing a high-quality publication.



- **Impressive slate of webcasts and podcasts.** Webcasts have included topics as varied as behavioral economics, high-cost drugs, Medicare Supplement, Own Risk and Solvency Assessment (ORSA), MACRA and risk adjustment, just to name a few. Health Section podcasts have provided additional content (at no cost, I might add); one of the podcasts even garnered some media attention, as the interview with Brent Plemons at the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) was the subject of an April article in *LifeHealthPro*. Special thanks go to JoAnn Bogolin (the section's webcast coordinator) and Dave Dillon (podcast coordinator).
- **ACA Exchanges Initiative.** The SOA, in general, and the Health Section, in particular, pride themselves on thought leadership. With that in mind, the section recently unveiled a collection of research and articles pertaining to the Affordable Care Act (see www.theactuarymagazine.org/category/aca-initiative). Central to the project was the SOA research report, "An Examination of Relative Risk in the ACA Individual Market." In addition, an all-star cast of authors representing nearly every relevant perspective submitted articles that addressed the following statement: "With the release of two years of risk adjustment data, discuss the prognosis and challenges for the future of a risk adjusted market. In particular, please consider the long-term sustainability of the market." The research upheld the high standards expected from the SOA, while the impressive variety of perspectives represented in the articles reinforced the idea that there is no one-size-fits-all answer to the challenges we all face in today's dynamic health care world.
- **Regulatory Resource.** The SOA's Regulatory Resource was unveiled in August, and one of its primary features is a resource dedicated to the health practice area. Volunteers from the Health Section were the key drivers to make this happen. Special thanks go to Josh Hammerquist, who provided excellent

leadership for this team. If you haven't already, please check it out at <https://www.soa.org/regulatoryresource/health>.

I could go on, but hopefully you get the idea. It was a wildly successful and impactful year for the Health Section.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to the next year, the Health Section is poised for continued excellence.

- On Nov. 14, the Health Boot Camps get underway in Portland, Oregon. For those of you looking for two days of hands-on, in-depth learning in the areas of Advanced Commercial Pricing, Medicare Advantage and Part D, or Valuation, this is the place to be. An additional half-day professionalism session on the 16th gives actuaries a chance to earn all of their professionalism continuing education (CE) in one morning. There is still time to register at <https://www.soa.org/Professional-Development/Event-Calendar/2016-health-boot-camp.aspx>.
- The Health Meeting moves to Hollywood, Florida, where the hope is that the outstanding content (and, let's be honest, the beautiful beach) draws in yet another record crowd.
- Health Section strategic initiatives that are currently underway promise to provide further examples of thought leadership, particularly in the areas of value-based care and public health.
- More high-quality webcasts and podcasts are planned, along with excellent *Health Watch* articles and leading-edge content at meetings such as the SOA Annual Meeting & Exhibit and the Valuation Actuary Symposium.

In addition to the items listed, the Health Section Council and its various subgroups will continue to proactively track the seemingly nonstop changes occurring in the health care space and deliver educational content that is necessary and timely.

GRATITUDE

None of this would be possible without strong efforts from our volunteers. There are too many to name in this article without fear of inadvertently leaving someone out. But I would like to recognize a select few.

- Elaine Corrough has provided exemplary leadership in her role as the Health Section Council chair. The role requires her to juggle many balls at once (in addition to her busy day job), but she managed to do so while projecting calm and facilitating a highly collaborative environment. We are lucky that she will remain on the council for one more year.
- Lessening the blow of losing Elaine as the chair is the fact that Brian Pauley has proven himself to be a very skilled

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leader in his role as the council's vice chair. The council is in good hands as Brian ascends to the chair position.

- Five members of the council complete their terms this month. Terri Bauer, Dave Dillon, Julia Lambert, Marilyn McGaffin and Michelle Roark made too many impactful contributions to the Health Section to be able to do them justice in one article. Suffice it to say, they have earned our genuine gratitude for all they have done.

JOIN US

Please consider volunteering yourself. There are many ways to get involved with the Health Section. Some commitments are large, such as being on the Health Section Council. But there are many ways to get involved on a smaller scale, as well. In addition to giving back to the profession, there are many benefits for you and your own career development, including but not limited to developing leadership skills and broadening your network.

The SOA recently created a series of videos about volunteering. (One of the featured speakers is the Health Section's very own Elaine Corrough!) I encourage you to visit the SOA's YouTube channel to check them out. One in particular that I think you'll find worthwhile is called "Professional Interest Sections" and can be found at <https://youtu.be/3wIsYOiCQDw>.

This month we also welcome new members to the Health Section Council. At the time of this writing, their identities are not yet known. But I do know the caliber of people who are on the ballot, so I can confidently say that we are lucky to be welcoming such a strong group. And I hope that you will consider volunteering yourself sometime soon so that I can extend a warm welcome to you, as well. ■



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