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I'm sure everyone will agree that 2012 was an exciting year! Especially for actuaries practicing in the United States, the Supreme Court Decision on the Affordable Care Act and the Presidential election had most of us on the edge of our seats. Now that we've closed the door on the year, we should take time to reflect on last year's issues and outcomes. After that, it is time to tackle the issues that will face us throughout the year ahead.

Reflecting on the current status of the U.S. social insurance programs and looking forward to tackling the issues ahead was certainly on the minds of the authors who contributed to our January publication. Our newsletter begins with a look at the problems and possible outcomes of the state Medicaid programs due to the Supreme Court decision on the Affordable Care Act. Further in the issue, we take a look at the Social Security program. In our June publication, we introduced the newly formed subgroups of the SIFP Section. We've included a second article on Medicare from The Government Health Care Subgroup. Last year they outlined various issues with the Medicare program, and, in this publication, they attempt to outline possible solutions. Also included in our January newsletter are two more thought-provoking articles. The article, "Breaking Promises," takes a look at why society has difficulty in making the hard choices that must be made to sustain the social programs that we have created. The second article keeps alive the theme of the June issue, where we explored an actuary's duty to the public.

In our attempt to "ring in the New Year," we've literally "turned some new corners." We are excited to bring to you two new sections in our newsletter. We've added a Chairperson's Corner along with another section at the end of the newsletter. In this last section we share advice and tips that actuaries can use in their everyday work and studies. Our first contribution includes advice on navigating through the overwhelming amount of information regarding health care reform and regulations as seen through the eyes of an actuary in the United States. Check this out in our Actuarial Tips and Tricks Corner found at the end of the newsletter. We hope you enjoy it!

Many of the issues surrounding the U.S. social insurance programs impact all of us in some way. Actuaries throughout the world are faced with many of the same problems with regard to the social insurance programs that exist in their own countries. We hope that you will find the following articles useful both personally and professionally. Feel free to contact us with your own thoughts on social insurance programs in any country and the many problems they face today. 



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