



**SOCIETY OF
ACTUARIES**

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Editor's Corner

By Rick Pawelski

I recently had a conversation with a former colleague who had submitted an article for publication in *Health Watch*. He was also interested in working on additional ideas for it, but he was concerned that perhaps one had to have the right job title or the proper connections with the Society of Actuaries (SOA) to get an article published in the digital pages of this newsletter. I was surprised to hear that. In the preceding month I had been splashing noisily in the deep end of my new volunteer position as editor, trying to figure out how to keep a steady supply of quality content in the pipeline for future issues of *Health Watch*. The conversion to more frequent digital output was a move to near-constant management of that pipeline. Let's just say I have been more concerned with the supply side than the demand side.

I would like to tell all of our readers just what I told my old teammate: *Health Watch* encourages and welcomes contributed articles of quality from all contributors. It doesn't matter who you work for or who you know, if you've got an interesting and educational story to tell, then share it with us. If you need help developing an idea into a document, we can provide it. Our mission is to inform and educate the members of the Health Section, and we will energetically leverage any and all input from all corners to do so.

We members of the Health Section are also encouraged—by each other—to contribute articles to *Health Watch*, so to practice what I preach, I recently reached out to a coworker and the two of us put together an article. This was a new experience for both of us, but we wrote about what we knew, trying to make it interesting and informative. Through this process I benefitted intellectually from the effort of rooting through all I've learned and done over the last few years in an attempt to narrow it down to only the most useful, important and universal facts. You will see that article in a future issue of *Health Watch*; I hope you find it worth your time.

Over the last few months I have become not only an editor but also an author. These were not things I planned for in advance, which makes me think about skiing. Specifically, skiing through the trees. "Skiing the trees" is another thing I once thought I would never do; there's an enhanced element of risk that comes with sliding between and around trees that once seemed unbearable to me. Over time, I got a bit better at the edging, rotation, and pressure movements required to make your skis do what you want them to do, and I eventually got comfortable with the idea of heading off the trail and into the glade. I discovered that skiing the trees is an exercise in decision making—you have to decide immediately which gap between trunks you're headed for next, and that outcome will present you with another decision, another outcome requiring yet another decision, and so on. I found it a useful metaphor for professional life, where today's decision is based on the outcome of so many decisions we've already made, and we can only see so far into the glade, where tomorrow's decisions await.

The SOA volunteer experience has been that way for me. When I first followed the leadership of others I knew and became an SOA volunteer, I didn't really know what to expect. I only knew I was willing and hopefully able to point my metaphorical skis into that glade and start making turns. Along the way I've learned about actuarial science, task management, communication and other things, and now that I've begun working on *Health Watch*, I'm excited to see what lies a little farther down the slope. We've got some articles in the pipeline for future issues, and if you're interested in digital health or pharmacy pricing, you'll want to stay tuned. Beyond that, it depends on you. Like all volunteer-driven organizations, the Health Section depends on the energy, industry and creativity of its members to benefit the general good. If you're reading this, you've almost certainly got expertise and experience that will be interesting and informative for others to read about. I encourage anyone with any interest to help define our future together by contributing to *Health Watch*. ■



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