



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

Health Section News

October 2002 – Issue No. 44

Chairperson's Corner

by Daniel L. Wolak

The San Francisco meeting held in June provided us an opportunity to see which way the wind was blowing in our health-care markets. Unfortunately, we quickly found which way the winds were blowing in San Francisco, which were off the bay at 65 degrees Fahrenheit! For us from the Northeast (and the Midwest) who wait all year for summer to arrive in late June, that wind was an unpleasant surprise. But at the health meeting, the Health Section sponsored several events that provided us direction on our "winds".

Survey Says...

At the Health Section Hot Breakfast in San Francisco, attendees were served up bacon and eggs..and a health section survey to complete. Of those attending, 123 completed the survey. Now, I'm not sure of the confidence interval we have in regard to the statistical results, but we did get a sense from you which way the "wind was blowing" regarding several issues.

- 110 out of 123 responded that the San Francisco sessions were "relevant".
- 105 out of 123 responded that they read several to all of the articles in the *Health Section News*.
- Only 1 out of 123 responded that the *Health Section News* was NOT valuable to them. (I guess there is one in every crowd!)
- What really surprised me was that 61 out of 121 respondents said that they would ONLY like an electronic version of the *Health Section News*.
- Only 2 out of 123 indicated that they do NOT want the Health Section to continue to support research projects such as the Risk Adjusters Project. (The strong interest in continuing to support research was a pleasant surprise for me.)
- Regarding research, 87 supported a mandatory dues increase of \$10; another 12 supported an optional dues increase to fund research!
- In regards to using technology, a smaller number responded. 45 out of 84 respondents have used the Health Section Web site during the past year.
- 19 out of 123 have used the Health Section list serve.

So the results do provide the members of the Health Section Council direction as we move forward. We need to consider a way of making this newsletter available to everyone electronically, but also provide a paper copy to those who request one. We will continue to support research, and will consider a vote on the council to increase dues to do so. And we will look for ways to better utilize the Web site and the list serve.

Practical Health Care Reform

The Health Section sponsored a luncheon speaker, Brian Kleppler, who is the Executive Director of Center for Practical Health Reform. Dr. Kleppler's presentation was thought provoking and energized. He was excited about the opportunity to address close to 400 health-care actuaries. From those I spoke with, the feedback was very favorable. (Maybe I should have made that a survey question, too!)

Brian stated that if there is a single idea that is at the root of the system's troubles and that defines his project, it is **accountability**. At present, the results of health care processes are all but invisible, which makes it difficult to compare and manage quality and cost. Worse, those who do gather performance information tend not to share it; reliable, publicly available data that everyone can use is scarce. This single fact thwarts our capacity to rein in costs quickly enough to stave off eventual system collapse. His organization sponsored a meeting in Chicago on July 13 with various players in the health equation. If you would like to monitor the winds of healthcare change, Brian's web site is www.practicalhealthcare.org.

New Council Members

With the results of the recent election tabulated, the new members of the council who will begin a three-year term beginning in October are: Bryan Miller, John Lloyd and Karl Volkmar. Congratulations to all!!

And Thanks

Thanks to all of the speakers and moderators who made the San Francisco meeting successful. A special thanks from the Health Section goes out to Bob McGee and Karl Volkmar who were the Health Section representatives on the Program Committee. 📧



Daniel L. Wolak, FSA, is chairperson for the Health Section Council. He is senior vice president of Group Operations at GeneralCologne Re in Stamford, CT. He can be reached at dwolak@gclifere.com.