



## Chairperson's Corner

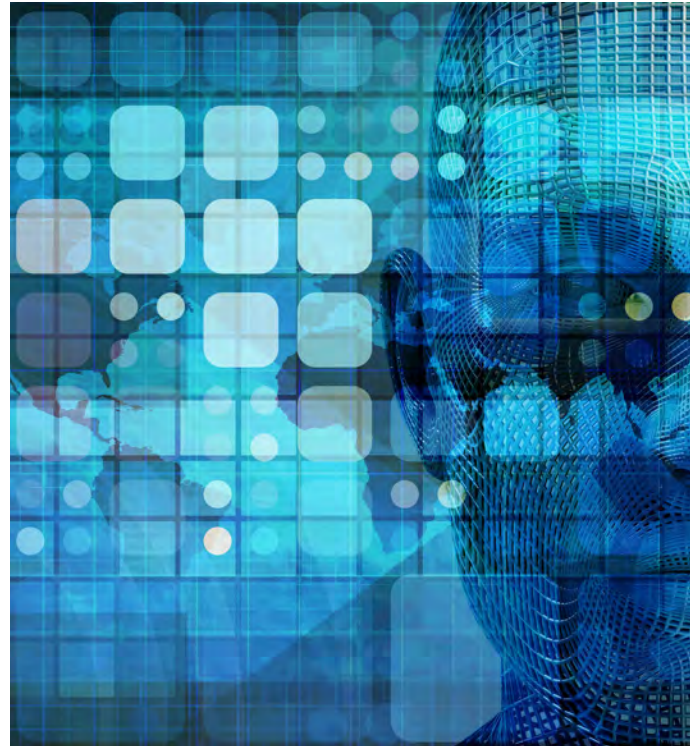
By Joan Barrett

*Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.*  
—John Lennon

I have used this quote from John Lennon frequently, but never as frequently as in 2020. I remember New Year's Eve, waiting for the ball to drop and planning so many fun family trips and celebrations. Then came COVID-19. Suddenly, trips were canceled and celebrations became more subdued. I cannot complain, however. My family and I are safe, happy and closer than ever. We were very lucky. Many of my friends have lost loved ones. My heart goes out to each and every one.

In January, the future also looked bright for the Health Section Council. We had quite the agenda planned for 2020, including the release of several strategic initiatives, podcasts, webinars, several issues of *Health Watch* and, of course, our signature event, the Health Meeting. Then came COVID. Thanks to the leadership of our chair, Jackie Lee, and with the support of our staff partner, Joe Wurzburger, and the section specialist, Dee Berger, the Health Section Council was able to meet the challenge of educating our members on the latest COVID information and the impact to our daily work quickly and effectively. In just a couple of weeks following the shutdown, we were able to provide two free webinars and three podcasts on COVID to our members. Since the initial rush following the shutdown, we have been able to produce two additional COVID podcasts and the health track for the SOA Virtual COVID Symposium. Of course, no discussion of our COVID efforts would be complete without a hat tip to the Society of Actuaries' health research actuary, Achilles Natsis, whose COVID updates and COVID model have been so valuable to all of us.

Needless to say, we did have to change our plans. I was very disappointed that we could not hold the Health Meeting in person. I always enjoy the Health Meeting. It gives me a chance to see old friends and to meet new ones. This year was especially hard because I really enjoy downtown Chicago. On the positive



side, more people than usual were able to attend the virtual sessions, and we received very positive feedback on the format and sessions. With this feedback in mind, we are looking into hybrid alternatives for next year.

Our remaining plans were delayed but not canceled. Some of the 2020 highlights so far:

- On March 23, 2020, the 10th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Health Section Council released our strategic initiative, [The ACA@10](#). This initiative featured a data-driven research project, "50 States, 50 Stories," by Hans Leida, Lindsey Kotecki and Paul Houchens of Milliman. As the name implies, the report demonstrated that the success of the ACA varied by state. Other key features of the ACA were discussed in articles by Kurt Wrobel, Greg Fann, Dave Dillon, Ryan Mueller and others.
- In April, we released our [Value-Based Care](#) strategic initiative. More and more we are seeing reimbursement methodologies rewarding providers who provide value-based care. This initiative provides a framework for actuaries as they incorporate this important concept into

their day-to-day work. This effort was led by Jay Hazelrigs and Kelsey Stevens.

- The third strategic initiative released this year was the [Actuarial Perspectives on Prescription Drug Financing](#) led by Greg Warren. One of the few things Democrats, Republicans and independents all agree on these days is that the cost of prescription drugs is way too high. This strategic initiative provides some much-needed transparency into prescription drug financing. Greg and his team are currently developing a second round of articles.
- We have published five issues of *Health Watch*, thanks to our editors, Rick Pawelski and Casey Hammer, and to Julia Anderson Bauer, the former publications manager at SOA. These issues have covered a wide range of topics, including rural health care, quantile regression, vendor measurement and risk adjustment.
- We have provided over 50 webinars and virtual meeting sessions this year on topics ranging from machine learning to best practices for rate filings. This would not have been possible without the leadership of Kelsey Stevens and Deana Bell.
- Dave Dillon and Jackie Lee have done over 25 [podcasts](#) with topics ranging from gene therapy to interviews with industry leaders like Katie Keith, Dave Cutler and Larry Levitt.

We did delay release of the Managed Care 3.0 (MC3) strategic initiative. The term “Managed Care 3.0” refers to the fact that the first attempt to control health care costs, Managed Care 1.0, was very punitive in nature—restrictive language, limited benefits and so on. The second attempt, Managed Care 2.0, included more consumer-friendly features like disease management programs. Managed Care 3.0 is consumer-centric and focuses on the overall health of the consumer and the consumer experience. This strategic initiative, led by Sarah Osborne, will highlight innovations in the U.S. health care system that drive quality and efficiency so that other organizations can learn from them. There are two workstreams associated with MC3. The Technology workstream, led by Sudha Shenoy, will focus on how technology may promote efficiency in the health care system and how it may empower the consumer. The Case Studies workstream, led by Karen Shelton, will take an in-depth look at specific innovations.

We are just now launching two new, exciting strategic initiatives. The first will focus on social determinants of health (SDoH). There is increasing evidence that SDoH such as education, job status and income have a significant impact on modifiable health outcomes. The starting point for this effort will be the upcoming release of a research report on comparing measures of SDoH to assess the population risk. The authors of this report include Rachel Everhart of Milliman and Ashlee Cerda of Colorado



Managed Care Network. From there, we will be developing a framework for further analysis. This effort will be led by Jim Mange.

The second strategic initiative, Classroom for Actuarial Methods (CRAM), is being led by Geof Hileman. The goal will be to develop new ways to deliver content in a bite-size format, such as short videos or infographics. The initial focus will be on complex, technical topics like predictive analytics. Once the process is developed, however, other content may be delivered in these formats.

There is certainly a lot going on. So, how do you keep up? One place to start is the [Health Section](#) webpage. The landing page includes notices of upcoming webinars and recently released podcasts, research reports and strategic initiatives. The [Resources](#) page includes links to completed strategic initiatives, podcasts and research projects. Also, as the name implies, the newsletter tab will bring you to past and present issues of *Health Watch*. You may also want to refer to the [SOA Calendar](#) and the [Health Research](#) pages.

If you are looking for a community with similar interests as you, you may want to join a subgroup. We have several active subgroups, such as Medicaid and Public Health, that hold regular meetings with presentations and active discussions. To join a subgroup you just have to sign up for a [listserv](#). Another resource, [SOA Engage](#), provides a forum for exchanging ideas on a specific topic. In recent months, many members have been using this platform to exchange ideas on COVID.

I have to admit that the first thing I do every morning is to check Twitter and LinkedIn to see what is happening in the world. On Twitter you will want to follow specific people or organizations. Many of the people mentioned in this article are active on Twitter. I am [@JoanBarrettFSA](#). Please follow me and I will follow you back. On LinkedIn you can not only connect with an individual, but you can also join the [SOA Health Section subgroup](#). I really like the subgroup because many of the articles are from folks I am not currently connected with. We use the hashtag [#soahealth](#) for our tweets and posts.

Needless to say, everything we do is dependent on volunteers. I am a longtime volunteer and, I have to say, I have gotten much more out of volunteering than I have put in. Not only have I made many lifelong friends, but it has also made me a better actuary. If you are interested in volunteering, you can sign up using the SOA Volunteer Database. The database contains current positions we need to fill.

Speaking of volunteers, it is time to say good-bye and thank you to Jackie Lee, Rick Pawelski, Marilyn McGaffin and Geof Hileman as they roll off the council. I will miss your thoughtful comments, your tireless efforts, your smiles and, most of all, your sense of humor. You have done so much for the Health Section Council and the profession in the past few years. I am looking forward to seeing what is in store for you going forward.

I would also like to welcome our new members, Shereen Sayre, Kevin Francis, Shuaiqing Liu and Matt Kramer. I am really

looking forward to working with you. We have lots of plans for the next year. ■

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