



**SOCIETY OF  
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## Digital Format Enables Quicker, Timelier Delivery



**S**tarting in October, the Health Section’s newsletter, *Health Watch*, has moved to a semimonthly, fully digital format. We interviewed Marilyn McGaffin, the *Health Watch* editor, and Karen Shelton, the Health Section chairperson, to get insight into this change and what it means for Health Section members.

***Health Watch (HW):* Why did the Health Section decide to move its flagship newsletter to a digital-only format?**

Marilyn McGaffin (MM): There are many reasons. Among the most important is timeliness. A digital version allows us to share perspectives and information as it unfolds, rather than the delay in delivering content that comes with the tri-annual print schedule.

Karen Shelton (KS): Part of the Health Section’s mission statement is to expand the marketplace relevance of health actuaries. A digital newsletter allows us to do just that. More people consume information digitally, and the new format allows our articles to be easily viewed and shared on mobile devices, expanding our reach.

***HW:* What are you looking forward to most about having a digital version of *Health Watch*?**

KS: I am excited about being able to bring content to our readers more quickly. With things in our industry changing so quickly, we can’t wait several months before sharing insights with our members.

MM: There have been times when a fellow actuary has wanted to publish an article, but because of our publication dates, the author has said that the date is too late and then pulled the article. It hurts as an editor to have a great article and not be able to publish. So, now, we will be able to publish these articles. As

Karen has said, we will be able to bring content to our readers more quickly.

***HW:* With the potential to reach far more readers, interest in having articles published in *Health Watch* may grow. How would someone go about expressing interest in writing an article for the newsletter?**

MM: We are always looking for relevant and leading-edge content. Anyone with an idea should reach out to our *Health Watch* editors, [Marilyn McGaffin](#) and [Rick Pawelski](#).

***HW:* Are there any guidelines for writing an article?**

MM: There are some basic guidelines, such as article length should be between 500 and 2,000 words. Authors should provide headshots and a very short biography. The articles should provide continuing education. The articles do go through a vigorous review by an editorial board and Society of Actuaries (SOA) editors. More details can be found on the [Health Section website](#).

***HW:* The *Health Watch* newsletter is just one of the benefits of being a Health Section member. What are some of the other benefits?**

KS: The Health Section does amazing work to benefit their members such as research, continuing education content and networking opportunities. There are member-only benefits such as free, unrestricted access to the journal *Health Affairs* and access to section-created webcasts over one year old. Discounts on section-developed webcasts are also available.

MM: I will take this a step further. I would like to focus on the volunteer activities. Volunteering with a section of the SOA has made me realize what a talented and varied group

of professionals we are. There are so many different forms of continuing education, and the SOA is open to trying them. The fact that the SOA depends upon its members for research and continuing education gives each of us a chance to have a voice. Being involved in a section, more than just belonging to a section, makes the volunteer a much stronger actuary, and one that has much more to offer in the workplace.

**HW: Marilyn and Karen's terms as *Health Watch* editor and Health Section chairperson, respectively, are ending. Marilyn and Karen, what has been the biggest highlight of your role?**

KS: Wow, that's a tough one to answer! Through the Health Section I've developed friendships with so many talented people and gained invaluable leadership skills. That said, the thing I'm most proud of is building our Initiative 18|11: What Can We Do About the Cost of Health Care? We embarked on this nearly two years ago with the Kaiser Family Foundation in an effort to insert health care actuaries into the discussion on the rising cost of health care. This is not a short-term project but a long-range initiative that continues to evolve and drive solutions. I am excited to see how the Health Section Council will continue to execute the vision of Initiative 18|11.

MM: Being editor of *Health Watch* has been an intense experience. It is very different from my daily employment! I have really enjoyed getting to work with the authors and the SOA editorial staff. I have also enjoyed reading all of the articles, finding the subject-matter experts and learning about areas that I would not even be exposed to in my daily work. This knowledge expansion has spurred me to read other articles about that topic. It has forced me to continually learn. Although this position is coming to a close, my term on the Health Section Council is not. I am looking forward to the other opportunities with the council. ■



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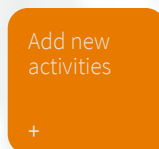
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