

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

## Creating Value for Patients

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*Although some people may object to emphasizing “value” if it is interpreted as focusing only on costs, the word “value” has many potential meanings in health care—and good tag lines can have more than one meaning.*



**D**o you have any trouble identifying the business entities associated with the following tag lines? Just do it!<sup>1</sup> The ultimate driving machine.<sup>2</sup> Because so much is riding on your tires.<sup>3</sup> Don't leave home without it.<sup>4</sup> We try harder.<sup>5</sup> The most trusted name in news.<sup>6</sup> Solutions for a small planet.<sup>7</sup> When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight.<sup>8</sup> If you have any doubt, see the end of the article for the answers.

How difficult is it to identify the professional organizations associated with these tag lines? Doctors for adults.<sup>9</sup> Strong medicine for America.<sup>10</sup> Dedicated to the health of all children.<sup>11</sup> Hospitalists transforming health care, revolutionizing patient care.<sup>12</sup> Better health through better decisions.<sup>13</sup> Working for a healthier world.<sup>14</sup> Advancing research, policy, and practice.<sup>15</sup> Physicians dedicated to the health of America.<sup>16</sup>

When Ann Nattinger and David Karlson asked me to serve on a committee charged with selecting a tag line for SGIM, I thought it would be an easy task. How hard could it be to come up with a short catchy phrase to accompany SGIM's new logo? I soon discovered that capturing the diverse interests and ambitious mission of SGIM is nearly impossible to do in just a few words. The committee decided to try anyway, looking for a creative tag line that speaks to the core mission and values of the organization. We solicited ideas from Council members and a few colleagues known for their creativity. When the initial list failed to produce an obvious winner, we solicited suggestions from the entire membership.

Many of the suggestions attempted to briefly describe who we are: leaders in academic medicine transforming primary care, the medical home for the general internist, doctors for the whole you, and generalism is our specialty. Other ideas focused on what we value: committed to caring or keeping care primary. The greatest number of phrases emphasized what we do: leading education and research for better care; improving education, research, and practice to improve health; advancing the science and practice of adult medicine; advancing care for all, one patient at a time; and teaching, learning, caring.

The Council ultimately chose “Creating Value for Patients” as a simple tag line for SGIM. The idea came from the plenary presentation at the SGIM Annual Meeting in Denver by Richard J. Baron, MD, MACP, the former group director of Seamless Care Models for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the new president and CEO of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM). Dr. Baron highlighted the initiatives that CMS has launched to promote health, improve care, and reduce costs. He also pointed out how new payment models create a fabulous opportunity for general internists to be leaders in providing health care of greater value to our patients.

Why did the Council choose this tag line? First of all, the tag line affirms that the heart of our mission, and everything we do, is “for patients.” Clearly, we value social responsibility and equity in health and health care for the benefit of all the

patients we serve. Secondly, by including the word “creating” in the tag line, we emphasize that innovation is a core value of the organization. According to SGIM's mission statement, we value excellence in creative and innovative approaches to clinical care, teaching, and research. Lastly, the tag line positions the notion of “value” squarely in the middle of our mission. Although some people may object to emphasizing “value” if it is interpreted as focusing only on costs, the word “value” has many potential meanings in health care—and good tag lines can have more than one meaning. The more I thought about it, the more I realized how well the tag line fits with many of SGIM's recent initiatives that seek to improve the value of health care in one way or another.

One example is the Choosing Wisely campaign. SGIM is participating in this campaign that was launched by the ABIM. Thanks to the leadership of Larry McMahon, SGIM will soon be releasing recommendations on “five things physicians and patients should question” because they add no value and could potentially cause harm. Larry's group shrewdly selected topics that illustrate the range of opportunities that general internists have to improve health care in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

SGIM also has agreed to work with the American College of Physicians (ACP) and the Council of Subspecialty Societies on a new High Value Coordination of Care initiative. The initiative builds on the ACP's work on the patient-centered med-

continued on page 2

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

continued from page 1

ical home neighborhood model, focusing on how to improve coordination of care between medical specialists and generalists and thereby improve the value of care provided.

Another way to enhance the value of health care is to advocate for better payment for valuable primary care services. Under Harry Selker's leadership, SGIM addressed this issue by creating the National Commission on Physician Payment Reform. Now, SGIM's Health Policy Committee is working hard to follow up on the specific recommendations of the Commission.

SGIM's Education Committee and Clinical Practice Committee have been giving increasing attention to activities that will help physicians deliver health care of high value. For example, the Education Committee has launched an initiative to create maintenance of certification (MOC) modules that could help general internists learn how to deliver more effective and efficient health care. In addition, the Clinical Practice Committee is developing new resources for helping members improve practice management in terms of quality, efficiency, service, and financial stability. The Clinical Practice Committee is also developing scholarly activities in quality improvement and patient safety that will foster delivery of high-value care.

With these examples in mind, my sense is that the tag line captures important elements of SGIM's mission. That mission is to lead excellence, change, and innovation in clinical care, education, and research in general internal medicine. As indicated in our mission statement, the goal is to achieve health care delivery that:

- Is comprehensive, technologically advanced, and individualized;
- Instills trust within a culture of respect;
- Is efficient in the use of time, people, and resources;
- Is organized and financed to achieve optimal health outcomes;
- Maximizes equity; and
- Continually adapts and learns.

The tag line fits with the Council's desire to communicate more effectively about our mission. Effective communication will require thinking carefully about our main messages while taking advantage of modern communication technology. If the tag line prompts criticism, the resulting discussion could lead to better ways of acting on our mission. Ultimately, the tag line will be most useful if it reminds us to be creative in efforts to improve the value of health care for our patients.

### Answers

1. Nike
2. BMW
3. Michelin
4. American Express
5. Avis
6. CNN
7. IBM
8. FedEx
9. American College of Physicians
10. American Academy of Family Physicians
11. American Academy of Pediatrics
12. Society of Hospital Medicine
13. Society for Medical Decision Making
14. American Public Health Association
15. AcademyHealth
16. American Medical Association



### *Creating Value for Patients*

Many thanks to all of the SGIM members who suggested ideas for the Society's new tagline, "Creating Value for Patients." The idea for the tagline ultimately came from Robert Baron's speech at the 2013 annual meeting plenary session. Look for the new logo and tagline on future SGIM publications.

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