

FROM THE EDITOR

Dr. Welby, Dr. Hank, and the Changing Vision of GIM

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Iconic TV doctors then and now—I'm amused when I think of the physician heroes of my childhood and those of the current era. We live in a less innocent time but still care deeply for our patients. We are still buoyed by optimism and an unbridled faith in technology. We live in a time when our faith in scientific discovery, our insistence on using it for the public good, and our confidence that more scientific breakthroughs can lead to better health for our patients and our community are as strong as ever. So how has this affected the physicians we have become? Who are we? How do we define ourselves, and how can we set new goals for our future as a community of healers?

It seems that it must have been simpler for Dr. Welby*: self-employed, working from his home office (behind a white picket fence), caring for an affluent community in suburban Santa Monica, California. He had one-on-one nursing support! He kept his own schedule! He did not have to answer to an EMR or text messages, and he always had time to sit and delve into the psychosocial dilemmas of his patients. A general practitioner with an office and a community hospital affiliation, he scrubbed in on surgeries and had a wide network of highly skilled colleagues with whom to collaborate. And there were no prior authorizations needed before necessary procedures were performed. Ahh... the good old days! And yet, Dr. Welby's greatest tools were his intellect and his kindness.

Dr. Hank,[†] on the other hand, a "medical MacGyver," epitomizes the hospitalist as primary care physician. Exiled from the academic medical

center through a series of ethically charged coincidences, he delivers an idealized form of concierge medicine in the Hamptons (Long Island, NY), complete with living room MRIs and beach blanket resuscitations. He seems well versed in every facet of medicine, surgery, neurology, and everything in between. When it comes to the genre of nerd as superhero, this is as good as it gets. He is truly Batman with a stethoscope! Hank's dedication to his patients and family is central to his being and has a prominent role in his approach to healing. In this, he is not so different from Dr. Welby after all.

But now, let's take it down a notch and get closer to home....

Who is the generalist of the future? What can we learn about him or her? How have the disruptions of technology, politics, medical liability, and health care reform changed us as a community? These are vital questions for our medical community and especially for an organization such as SGIM. It is imperative for us to understand our current strengths and challenges in order to respond to the evolving needs of our profession. Who are we now, and where are we going?

It's time for us to take a family portrait and find out.

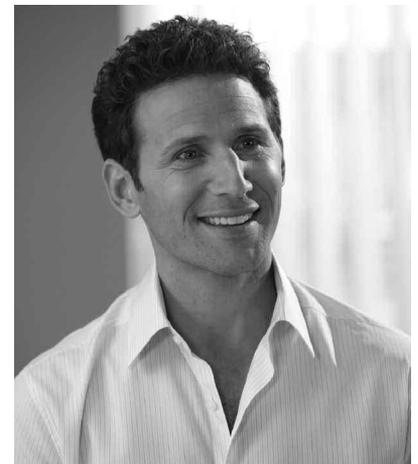
The 2014 SGIM membership survey is waiting for you! It has been emailed to every SGIM member. If you have not received one, please contact Jillian Gann at gannj@sgim.org. As SGIM strives to support, inspire, and facilitate advances in general internal medicine, it is vital for the organization to understand the needs and aspirations of its members. Please complete the 2014 SGIM membership survey today.

Write in with questions. Make suggestions for change. You are the future of general internal medicine, and SGIM is here to support you.

SGIM



* *Marcus Welby, MD*, a medical drama starring Robert Young, aired on ABC TV from 1969 to 1976.



[†] Dr. Hank Lawson, played by Mark Feuerstein, is the lead character on *Royal Pains*, a USA Network television series now in its sixth season.