

FROM THE EDITOR

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

Joseph Conigliaro, MD, MPH, Editor in Chief, *SGIM Forum*

"Go back?" he thought. "No good at all! Go sideways? Impossible! Go forward? Only thing to do! On we go!"

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

Last week, I received feedback from my Advanced Clinical Experience (ACE) student who spent every Wednesday afternoon with me over 12 weeks as I saw patients in my practice. At the Zucker School of Medicine, ACE students are not there to simply shadow medical attendings but to have meaningful interactions with patients over the period of 12 weeks. This particular student provided a very detailed narrative in his feedback describing his experience. There was something that caught my eye in the narrative of his review that resonated with me. He wrote:

....it was a unique experience to see how he thoughtfully took complicated, distressed patients with numerous issues and directed them to get control of one problem at a time. I was able to see patients at various stages in this process. I was also able to pick up over the weeks how he subtly changed his behavior to suit each patient encounter.

Naturally, I was gratified to hear his description of what he observed and experience what I do for a living. I also recognized his comment as an apt description of one of the roles that we as internists fulfill. We are generalists so we take care of "complicated, distressed patients with numerous issues." At the same time, we also, in partnership with the patient, "get control of one problem at a time." It may sound more reductionist than it is, but that description better than any other that I have heard may help me to explain to non-medical people and colleagues what it is I do and why I enjoy it.

This month's *SGIM Forum* celebrates the SGIM2018 National meeting with a recap and collection of photos. Last August, I wrote about the meeting as a vehicle for renewal and an anchor point to spring forward with renewed energy in the work that we do and love. We

again dedicate the August issue of *Forum* to commemorate our time in Denver with a review by Meeting chairs, Dr. Lipika Samal and Dr. Saul Blecker, of the highlights of our four days together. Communications Director, Francine Jetton, commemorates the awards and accolades received by SGIM members.

Also in this month's issue, Drs. Leung, Rodriguez, and Morgan keep the spirit of the Annual Meeting on Health Information Technology alive in this and subsequent issues by highlighting relevant literature on six key themes in clinical informatics. Dr. Lisa Kern gives a compelling case about how we may need to choose between two seemingly unrelated but competing priorities: precision medicine and music teachers. Finally, Dr. Bruce Rollman brings us back to the practical advice of Ben Franklin.

Of course, the meeting is over and we can't go back there again. The new program committee, chaired by Drs. Brita Roy and Lenny Lopez, are already busy planning for next year's meeting in Washington, DC. SGIM President, Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith, gives a nice example of an innovative community partnership and prepares us for SGIM19 by looking forward to partnering with learners, patients, community members and other stakeholders.

Over the last few months, since SGIM2018, so much has happened in health care, immigration, government, and society as a whole, the implications of which will likely not be fully realized for years to come. Regardless of where you reside on the political spectrum, you can hardly describe the public discourse on many of these issues as a partnership. We as general internists need to take these numerous complicated and distressing issues as they relate to our patients and health care and get control of them one problem at a time.

It's the only thing to do! On we go!

SGIM