



FROM THE EDITOR

TALK AMONGST YOURSELVES

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As I write this month's *Forum* editorial, the details and unfortunate controversy surrounding Senator John McCain's memorial service, and his legacy, are just two days old. When I heard of his passing, I was reminded of his "nay" vote rejecting a scaled-down Republican plan to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act, after returning to the Senate following a recent diagnosis of brain cancer.¹ Certainly, it was only one of many votes and actions in his remarkable life and career but the one that I, as a general internist, will always remember. The struggle to provide a workable plan that provides every American with affordable healthcare has been long with a profound gap among policy makers and stakeholders as to how it should be accomplished.

This month's *Forum* highlights a related debate that many of us have joined in in our work institutions, our homes, and, for some of us, in the public arena—the United States adopting a single payer system and whether or not SGIM should advocate for it. Drs. Mark Earnest and Daniel McCormick each respectively make cogent and compelling arguments reflecting their points of view and of those they represent. To be sure, there are many in the organization who would love to see the Society take a definitive stand on this, one way or another. Many in the Society also stress caution, arguing that the Society should continue to take a broader view in this debate and focus our efforts in incremental ways in the discussion of how best to improve the health, and health care of our nation such that it is of the highest quality, and of the greatest value yet fairly and equitably distributed. The debate can be made on moral grounds, economic outlooks, or societal beneficence. Read the articles and make your own conclusion. I welcome reader

comments in upcoming issues to keep the discourse going.

Further in this issue, Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith, in her President's Column, continues the conversation around SGIM's sabbatical year. The word *sabbatical* literally means a rest from work, or a break. Many of us in academic medicine know it as any extended absence in your career whereby you achieve something. Dr. Corbie-Smith explains the rationale and the process of our sabbatical year to ensure that SGIM's organizational structure and focus align with our mission, vision, and values. The long-term effects from this sabbatical year will enable SGIM to play a role in the health care debate by supporting member development, informing the membership and continued advocacy.

The rest of this issue is a great example of what and who we are and what we stand for. Dr. Tom Kingsley describes the history around and the role that AHRQ plays in the funding of health services research. Drs. Annie Massart, Theresa Vettese, and Julie Hollberg educate us on the best practices regarding the difficult topic of providing adequate pain relief to patients that are opioid dependent. Finally, Drs. Tiffany Leung, Jorge Rodriguez, and Stephen Morgan provide us with the second part of their Clinical Update in Clinical Informatics taken from the 2018 Annual Meeting.

References

1. Pear R, and Kaplan T. G.O.P. in Senate trims ambitions to start voting. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/>. Published July 28, 2017. (Subscription needed to download article.)