



FROM THE EDITOR

AN APPRECIATION OF
THOSE WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

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*"No empire lasts forever, no dynasty continues
unbroken. Some day, you and I will be mere legends.
All that matters is whether we did what we could
with the life that was given to us."*

—Krishna Udayasankar, *Three*

We have all lost people in our lives, and we each find our own personal ways to manage their loss and remember them. Over the last year, four of my friends and colleagues passed away: three, from my medical school class, and one with whom I was currently working. I am still of an age where my contemporaries dying is not at all usual and, therefore, not at all easy to take. All three were internists. I was friendly with each to varying degrees. Each was involved in academia, be it research or education, and each was an outstanding clinician. Each embodied what SGIM stands for although none of the three were members of the Society. Each was taken from us much sooner than they or anyone else could have expected. In the following months, a memorial was held for each of them. If I couldn't make it in person, I read the transcript or watched a video of the friends or family who were asked to speak. In each case, I was moved by the totality of their lives. The work that they did, the people they touched, and the legacy that they left behind as wives and husbands, mothers and fathers. They were also physicians. They made a difference. I bring them up here in this column to pay homage to each and as a reminder that we are only here for a short time and we may not get to do all that we want in the amount of time that we think we have.

We are fortunate to have vocations that inherently allow us to make a difference on an individual or even larger level with our patients, students, and trainees and through our research. My colleagues had careers and relationships that went beyond that and so many of us are better for it. I appreciate all of you who contribute to the Society, your home institutions, and your families.

There has been a lot of discussion with regards to next year's annual meeting in Birmingham, Alabama. At the time of this writing, the state of Alabama just passed

a measure limiting abortions in the state without exceptions. Other states have or are following suit. Shortly after the measure was passed, there was a lively discussion on GIM Connect about what we should as a Society do, given that the National Meeting next year will be in Birmingham. How should the Society respond? How should individual members respond? There is no simple or single answer. Each potential approach varies in its effectiveness in sending the message of where SGIM and its members stand on the issue and also the related costs and consequences to the Society. So what do internists have to do with abortions beyond our personal opinions? In this month's issue, *Forum* associate editor Dr. Avital O'Glasser reminds us how general internists can play an important role in the care of women seeking to terminate a pregnancy. The Alabama situation is controversial and the options are not as straightforward as one would hope. Over the next year, I expect that the dialogue within and outside the Society will allow us to respond in the most effective and reasonable way possible.

Also in this issue, SGIM President Dr. Karen DeSalvo continues her reflections on social determinants of health, and she cautions that the current enthusiasm for screening needs to be informed by the accumulation of evidence based care. Drs. Mark Earnest, Jennifer Bracey, and Tom Staiger of the Health Policy Committee report on a framework for SGIM's approach to policy and advocacy related activities. Dr. Latonya Riddle-Jones shares how physicians and medical students are working to reduce the threat of gun violence, Dr. Savannah Duckworth and her colleagues present a primer on podcasts, and some faculty from the University of Pittsburgh describe a novel way to teach nutrition through culinary medicine.

Thank you all for making a difference!