

A New Beginning

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With all of the actual changes that have occurred and those that are planned for 2016, and given the current Star Wars craze, I thought I would borrow one of their subtitles to set off this update. This is not meant to be a formal editorial in the usual sense but is intended to serve as a vehicle to communicate where we are as we set off into 2016. Much of what will be presented relates to the Society as well as the Journal, but it is increasingly difficult to divide these entities into separate or distinct categories, which is a natural and mutually beneficially evolution.

To date 2015 has been our most successful year. The number of original manuscripts received increased from 240 in 2014 to 336 in 2015, an increase of 40%. In addition to the increase in manuscripts overall, we have successfully published the following special sections to fairly wide acclaim: Ebola, Health Communications Strategies, and Health Care Coalitions.

This success has forced us to reevaluate our editorial processes and structure and many changes are underway to accommodate the increased workload and to maintain timeliness and quality in the review process. Most significantly we will be transitioning from an Associate Editor driven process to one in which the Associate Editor functions as a Section Editor. This will provide the structure to, in essence, take on more Associate Editors and at the same time give them a more rewarding professional experience. Much more will follow on this but to date we can announce the appointment of several new editors: Sandra Bibb, Rita Burke, Betty Duggan, Shinichi Egawa, Anat Gesser-Edelsburg, and Dan Hanfling.

As to the Society, we held the inaugural meeting of SDMPH this past summer, a 3-day event held at the Hope Hotel and Conference Center in Dayton, Ohio, and at the Calamityville area of Wright State

University. The meeting was a tremendous success and we are actively involved in planning for the 2nd annual meeting, tentatively scheduled for next July. Again, much more to follow. Prior to closing 2015, the Society held a small strategic working meeting in Hawaii with Dr. Skip Burkle in attendance and was able to solidify several important thrusts going forward. Dr. Burkle will be preparing an in-depth editorial to address these matters but the 3 broad objectives, or missions, defined for the SDMPH were as follows: (1) to create a general membership level that would stress awareness and basic education and training for potential health responders from all disciplines of health and public health, (2) to define the cross-discipline of disaster medicine and public health that would recognize and document the attainments and experiences of those who are involved in preparing for and responding to events, and (3) to provide a cadre of expertise in all areas of preparedness and response that would be available as subject matter experts to better inform the translation of science and knowledge into effective public policy. Again, Dr. Burkle will elaborate on this in the near future.

Finally, the strength of the Journal in terms of both scope and depth is clearly demonstrated in the present issue, which clearly reflects the increasingly global nature of our enterprise as well as the multidisciplinary nature of our contributors. In achieving this we owe, and herein express, a debt of genuine gratitude to all involved in our peer-reviewed scientific publication from submitting authors through our editors and reviewers, and, most importantly, our readers. Together we will ensure a successful future for SDMPH. In closing, a note of farewell to Dr. Kenneth Schor, who, as head of the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health helped to ensure the continuance of our journal by providing critical support services when most needed. He moves on to the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine; we of course wish him well in his new undertaking.