

Jeff Susman, MD
Editor-in-Chief



The challenges we face in the new decade

As I sit down to write this editorial in mid-December, I look forward to the coming decade and consider this an apt time to review the events of 2009 and the columns I've written.

My December editorial expressing my disappointment with the new partnership between the AAFP and The Coca-Cola Company moved many of you to write. As you will remember, this plan is part of the Academy's Consumer Alliance program. Recently, the Academy's board reaffirmed that this venture is "consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the AAFP." I strongly disagree and, judging from my mail, many of you do, too.

What of some of my other editorial topics?

Last January, I wrote about the Robert Wood Johnson Aligning Forces for Quality initiative in Cincinnati, a pilot measurement program that nearly 250 physicians have participated in thus far. To date, about 14% of patients with diabetes—the focus of the program—have achieved "perfect control."

I strongly disagree with AAFP's partnership with Coca-Cola, and apparently many of you do, too.

While these results are sobering, they are consistent with other communities' efforts and help motivate us to improve care.

In April, I wrote about the limitations of the medical home. Since then, the concept has continued to grow in a positive direction. The AAFP recently asked the NCQA, the organization most widely used to assess practices' readiness to be medical homes, to revise its assessment criteria to better incorporate measures of continuity and comprehensive patient care.

On more than 1 occasion, my 2009 editorials dealt with health care reform. After my initial elation at watching the House pass a reform package and glimpsing the possibility of an end to SGR (sustained growth rate), I've been disappointed to see the prospects for substantial health reform and the demise of SGR grow increasingly dim.

Finally, I wrote about my mother, and as I write she has been transferred to a long-term acute care facility; we are hoping for a gradual recovery. Thanks to all of you who asked me about her—and indeed, to all of you who take the time to comment on anything I write. Much of the joy of sharing my perspective each month comes from receiving your e-mails, phone calls, letters—and even an occasional tweet.

I look forward to the year ahead with great excitement and hope, and wish all of you a Happy New Year.

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