

# Happy New Year!

By H. Bruce Vogt, MD  
Co-Editor

With our January 2008 issue, we start our third year of the revised format of *South Dakota Medicine*. From comments received, the new look and expanded content of the journal continue to meet with the approval of our membership.

As we begin the 61st year of our publication, I am very happy to announce that Dr. Keith Hansen, who has served as one of our assistant editors the past two years, has agreed to join me as co-editor of the journal. Keith has been fully engaged in our publication. He has suggested content, recruited authors and manuscript reviewers, and reviewed and edited a number of articles. He has guided a number of manuscripts through the review and editorial process, including communicating with authors and offering advice about revisions. In addition, Keith agreed to take on the task of serving as editor of our upcoming special edition of the journal on end-of-life care. I am pleased he is willing to take on this new role with *South Dakota Medicine* and look forward to working even more closely with him. You will hear from Keith regularly on our editorial page.

I am also very pleased to report that Dr. John Ryan will continue serving as an assistant editor. John has taken the lead in directing the review and advising on revisions of manuscripts that address surgical subject matter. I appreciate the counsel he has provided me over the last two years. He will remain an important part of our team.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank Mark East, Vice President of the SDSMA, and Andrew Johnson, our staff editor for *South Dakota Medicine*. Shortly after Mark's arrival, our former staff editor moved on to new challenges with another organization, and Mark was suddenly given additional responsibilities involving the day-to-day operations required to publish the journal. Among his jobs was to recruit a new staff editor. He directed the process, which resulted in the hiring of Andrew, while assuring production of our journal. Although Andrew came to us with considerable experience in editing, his learning curve was steep when it came to our publication as everything was, of course, new to him. And,

the SDSMA staff member most knowledgeable about the history of South Dakota Medicine and most intimately associated with its publication was no longer with the organization. Despite the odds, he has done an excellent job. I believe the three of us have developed an excellent working relationship, and together we kept the process moving along fairly smoothly. We know there were some missteps during a rather chaotic few months, and we apologize for these and thank you for your patience.

Changing the subject, I want to close by writing briefly about New Years' Resolutions. I learned that this oldest of celebrations was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4,000 years ago. Originally, it was celebrated after the first visible crescent moon following the vernal equinox, the first day of spring. A spring observance of the new year was certainly rational from both astronomical and agricultural perspectives, unlike the modern day date of January 1. This is due to a declaration by the Roman senate in 153 B.C. and became firmly established by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. with the introduction of the "Julian" calendar.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the resolutions people make relate to personal health – lose weight (apparently, most common<sup>2</sup>), eat healthier, exercise more, stop smoking, etc. As I considered resolutions for myself for 2008, I decided to focus on issues relative to the practice of medicine. So, for what they are worth, I give you my "Top 10 New Years' Resolutions" for 2008. I suspect you may be able to identify with my rationale for, at least, a few of them. They are:

## Top 10 New Years' Resolutions

1. See the extra patient (rather than appearing irritated) when asked to by the nursing staff.
2. Be more "patient" with so-called "problem" patients.
3. Ask if there is something I can do for the nursing staff – like making a few more phone calls myself during particularly busy times.
4. Get charts done and charges submitted in a timely manner.

5. Switch a call day for a colleague.
6. Thank the technologist for the quality of his or her work.
7. Tell receptionists I appreciate how difficult their job is (rather than complaining about my schedule).
8. Continuously remind myself it is important to care “about” as well as “for” my patients.
9. Work on being less grumpy on call days (to everyone: partners, staff, spouse, family).
10. Do a better job educating patients (confirm they understand what I have told them).

P.S. Oh, and yes, eat healthier and exercise more.

The staff of *South Dakota Medicine* wishes you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and safe 2008.

## REFERENCES

1. It's another new year – but for what reason? Available from <http://wilstar.com/holidays/newyear.htm> (Accessed 11/19/07).
2. New year's resolution. Available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Year's\\_resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year's_resolution) (Accessed 11/19/07).



## When we speak as one, patients win.

Doctors from all specialties need to unite more than ever before. Why? Because when we do, America's patients benefit. Our role is to give you and those you treat a voice that will not be ignored. From stopping Medicare physician payment cuts to increasing access to care, we work together on behalf of patients. Join the South Dakota State Medical Association, your district and the American Medical Association today. Visit [www.sdsma.org](http://www.sdsma.org) or call (605) 336-1965.



Helping doctors help patients.