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Commentary

Reflecting on the past and looking toward the future

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If we needed a reminder of the importance of the infection prevention and control, healthcare epidemiology and antimicrobial stewardship communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided it. After almost 2 years, it continues to strain our healthcare systems and our society. In addition to the toll it has taken on human life and wellness, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed vulnerabilities and unsolved problems within healthcare, has highlighted longstanding disparities impacting health and safety, and has created new challenges in the prevention of healthcare-associated infections.

During these trying times, however, we have learned that we can do more than we ever thought possible and more than we thought would ever be needed. We have trained countless healthcare personnel to protect themselves. We have conducted critical research under difficult circumstances and with competing demands for our time. Most importantly, we have helped to save lives: the lives of patients in our hospitals and clinics, the lives of residents in our long-term care facilities, and the lives of our colleagues and coworkers.

With this in mind, I feel particularly honored to have been given the opportunity to serve as the sixth editor of *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology* (ICHE). I remember the excitement I experienced when my first manuscript was accepted for publication in ICHE. Now, more than 20 years later, I still feel that same excitement when I am able to publish my work, always hoping that it will be beneficial to other healthcare facilities and to the people seeking care there. As ICHE's editor, I look forward to helping others disseminate their work and learn from the work of others to improve the quality and safety of healthcare.

It is humbling to succeed Dr. Suzanne (Sue) Bradley, who served in this role with extraordinary dedication and commitment for the past 15 years. Under her leadership, the journal grew substantially and achieved increased recognition and respect. In addition to being appreciative of all Dr. Bradley has done for ICHE, I am personally grateful to her for the support and guidance she has provided during my years as an associate editor and during the transition of editorial responsibility over the past 6 months. With an immediate goal of keeping the journal moving in its current upward trajectory, my long-term vision is for ICHE to be broadly recognized as the premier source for high-impact research, reviews, and guidance documents in the fields of infection prevention, healthcare epidemiology, and antimicrobial stewardship.

The scope and mission of ICHE will remain constant, but you will see some changes that are being made to continue ICHE's growth, maintain its relevance, and enhance engagement with our readers and contributors. One of the most obvious changes is the journal cover. Beginning with this issue, the ICHE cover will feature art inspired by or reflective of topics within the scope of the journal. We will feature original artwork created by individuals who have a personal connection to these topics through their clinical work, research, or experience as a patient, family member, friend, or advocate. This new cover art initiative aims to remind everyone who sees the journal of the human impact of the topics addressed within. It also highlights the importance of the work being done by ICHE's readers and contributors, who share a commitment to making health care safer. I encourage you not only to read about the art that graces the cover of this issue but also to submit your own artwork for consideration for a future cover.

In addition, you will notice some new names on the masthead listing of associate editors and the editorial advisory board members. I am pleased to welcome each of them as they join our existing group of dedicated members. They will bring new perspective, expertise, and fresh ideas to the team. I am committed to ensuring that ICHE's editorial advisory board is inclusive and that it reflects the diversity of SHEA members and ICHE contributors, reviewers, and readers. We have also committed to becoming a fully open-access journal in the coming years. This will allow more people to have access to ICHE content, a crucial step toward greater inclusivity and achieving SHEA's vision of safe healthcare for all.

As the ways in which people access and use medical literature evolve, we will expand ICHE's social media presence. We are adding a social media editor whose role will be to increase awareness of and engagement with ICHE via social media platforms. To help authors of accepted manuscripts expand the reach of their work, we are now encouraging them to develop visual abstracts that can be shared on social media, and we are providing them with tools and templates to do so. Beginning this month, new episodes of the ICHE podcast will be released. In the first new episode, the authors of several articles published in this issue of the journal discuss the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on healthcare-associated infections. They will explore some potential causes of these effects and discuss what we can learn from this experience to emerge with stronger and more resilient infection prevention programs.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us, our community's work is as important as ever. ICHE is, and will continue to be, a forum in which we can learn, share, grow, and challenge ourselves to get better at what we do. I look forward to continuing the journey with you.

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