The Gateway to Journal Improvements

A year ago we heralded the start of a new Congress and the 65th anniversary of Pediatrics with an enormous amount of optimism for continued improvement in health care reform and care for children and families. Although many would question our optimism regarding the work of our federal government as it ground to a halt for a few weeks last fall, we hope no one would say the same is true for our journal. Not only did we initiate a number of changes in our publication last year—we are again implementing some changes this upcoming year as part of our process of ongoing quality improvement to make our journal as responsive to the needs of our readers and the children and families who benefit from what we publish every month. As we look toward 2014, our Editorial Board and Managing Editorial Staff wish to share with you what you can expect in terms of those additional changes that should get you excited not just about the journal, but about the field of pediatrics and where it’s going.

The number of American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) members using mobile devices to discover and read scholarly articles is growing rapidly. In fact, 60% of our readers are now using a tablet or smartphone to access the journal. Whether quickly looking up information, reviewing abstracts, or reading full-text content, readers know that our journal is easily accessible whenever and wherever they need it.

As a result of increased use of Web-based devices, Pediatrics will launch its full-text mobile app, which will be available in the iTunes and Google Play stores very soon. Readers will have the ability to navigate full-text articles, watch videos, listen to podcasts, view content online or off-line, and even share content with colleagues. Additionally, our Pediatrics Web site (www.pediatrics.org) provides a streamlined Web-browsing experience for a range of smartphone devices.

This upcoming year, building on new mobile and digital technology, readers will be introduced to “Gateway,” the AAP Journals and Publications network. Gateway is an intuitive tool that enables you to easily search, sort, and curate all AAP journals and publications content. With its comprehensive searching capabilities and personalized suggested content, Gateway delivers the relevant information our readers will need based on topics and key words of interest. It is our hope that Gateway will become the one-stop shop to AAP content.

A recent reader survey also told us that most readers now read the journal online. All articles published in Pediatrics appear online, and the online version is the official version of the journal. This raises a critical question: should we do away with the print version or perhaps just have it contain the first-page information for every study we publish (eg, the abstract, What’s Known on This Subject and What This Study Adds)? We want to hear from you in upcoming surveys about moving to a new print model for Pediatrics.

We have also learned through reader surveys that our readership is active in social media, so Pediatrics has “gone social.” To generate
conversation about journal articles, whether the print model should change, and other topics in the field or in our journal, we now use a variety of social media so we can facilitate a conversation about what you read in the journal. For example, our “First Read” blog (http://pediatricsblog.blogspot.com or accessible via the journal Web site) now has a comments section on the page for you to respond to the postings from various editors. We also are now more active on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/aappeds), alerting followers of the journal to new First Read blog posts and identifying new trends in the care of children. In addition, we now tweet under the AAP Journals umbrella (@AAPJournals). Editor-in-Chief Lewis First also is tweeting about articles, his blog posts, and other topical issues or experiences he has relevant to our field. Follow him at @lewis_first. We hope you will converse with our editors and each other in your preferred social media format.

We could not discuss publication changes without mentioning some of the people who make the journal what it is. After 4 years of dedicated editorial service to our journal, Deputy Editor Dr Virginia (“Ginny”) Moyer has needed to move on for a good reason—to become the American Board of Pediatrics new Vice President for Maintenance of Certification and Quality. To focus exclusively on that role, she stepped down last spring. We thank Dr Moyer for her outstanding work helping to oversee our journal so we can advance its mission through the changes we have described in this annual commentary and those of past years. Fortunately, stepping into the Deputy Editor role is Dr Alex Kemper, Professor of Pediatrics at Duke. Previously our Associate Editor for Quality Reports in the journal, Dr Kemper will continue to oversee Quality Reports until a successor is selected in the upcoming year. We welcome him as the new Deputy Editor and look forward to our journal benefitting even more from his expertise in the years ahead.

We strive to improve our processes to better serve our readership, authors, and peer reviewers, and we hope the changes we have described will do just that. We continually evaluate our work to ensure we are managing the journal in the most efficient and effective manner. Most important, our journal is about its people. It is dedicated editors like Drs Moyer and Kemper along with the rest of our editorial board, our staff, and the thousands of reviewers and authors who make each issue of the journal well worth reading. Most of all, we could not be the journal that we are without the input and support from you, our readers, who allow us to move our publication forward with changes like Gateway that will play to your needs and in turn improve the way you practice. Here’s to another terrific year of Pediatrics and to having our journal further the overall mission of the AAP—namely, to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.