

AJO and “Topics of the Day”

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For over 35 years, the primary goal of *The American Journal of Orthopedics* has been to provide the orthopedic community with timely, practical, and readable technical information of the highest caliber. Over the years, we have sought to achieve this goal by publishing unbiased, comprehensive, and clinically relevant review articles, original clinical studies, and case reports peer reviewed for relevance, accuracy, and clarity by our outstanding editorial board and staff.

One of my goals when I became editor in chief of the journal last year was to expand its scope beyond that of clinical papers and to embrace the wider scope of issues that affect our professional lives and practice—that is, “topics of the day” as described by my friend and colleague, Frederick A. Matsen, III, MD, Chair, Department of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, University of Washington. One of these initiatives introducing a broader arena that related to our practice is Legal Updates, launched this past spring with a 2-part article from Austin Byrd and Melissa Tearney, who so concisely and clearly reviewed the legal, ethical, and practical relationships between orthopedic surgeons and the implant device industry.

Another initiative to broaden the scope of issues presented was the recent launch of a quarterly series on practice management, written by the team from Karen Zupko and Associates, a nationally recognized leader in the development and monitoring of office practice management. The inaugural

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paper appeared in our September 2006 issue and was an excellent summary of reimbursement essentials for the orthopedic practice. The December article followed up on this theme with specific advice on the office automation tools, including currently available software, that can be used to optimize revenues and profitability. The series will continue in March and June with, respectively, outsourcing your billing and practical guidelines in hiring and managing office staff.

Future topics in the larger area of nonclinical issues influencing orthopedic practice will include a review of the history and jurisdiction of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as well as the legal issues and implications of the “off-label” use of orthopedic devices and pharmaceuticals.

It is my hope that you will find the inclusion of these topics with our usual clinical fare helpful, since political, industrial, and financial issues have become ever so more influential in our professional practice—be it a purely private practice in the community setting or practice as a member of the full-time staff at an academic medical center.

These days, given our current professional environment, practicing orthopedic surgeons simply cannot ignore the factors beyond the delivery of care in the examining room or surgical suite that influence how we provide our patients with that care. I hope you agree with me that such topics are worthy of review in *The American Journal of Orthopedics*. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions (PeterDMcCann@Qhc.com). ■