



## EDITORIAL

Cynthia M.A. Geppert, MD, *Editor-in-Chief*

# Our Sacred Trust

It is my great pleasure and privilege to have been chosen to serve as editor-in-chief of *Federal Practitioner*, where I have long been a member of the Editorial Advisory Association, a reviewer, and a contributor. I want to thank James Felicetta, MD, my predecessor, for his many years of excellent stewardship of an increasingly informative and interesting monthly journal that also saw expansive growth especially online and in special issues.

As long as I can remember, the military and medicine have been inextricably linked in my life. My father was a career U.S. Army doctor who won a Bronze Star Medal for valor in World War II and was one of the founders of military pediatrics. My mother was a U.S. Army nurse. In my first career in theology, I worked as a religious educator and lay minister at a military base.

When I entered medicine as a second career, it was my good fortune to receive much of my medical and psychiatric training at VA hospitals. Inspired by the physicians who taught me, I joined the VA straight out of residency and have been there ever

since, during both the good and bad times, and never wanted to be anywhere else.

I have spent my nearly 15 years in the VA not in behavioral health care but at the interface of medicine and psychiatry. My professional interest has always been training and consulting to physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals in primary care, medicine, and surgery who are providing vital medical care for patients also struggling with psychiatric, addictive, and pain conditions. *Federal Practitioner* has done excellent work in this area in the past, and it is one we hope to expand considerably in the future.

Suicide and the treatment of patients with posttraumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, and addiction are among the greatest challenges that our clinician readers face, and it is our obligation to offer timely, targeted news coverage and clinical articles to aid them in their noble efforts.

My other passion is bioethics, and it has been my honor to teach ethics at the university level and to serve as an ethics consultant on many levels of the VA. Ethics also is an increas-

ingly visible and salient domain we hope to spotlight in coming journal issues.

I am also fortunate to have an outstanding editorial staff as collaborators: Reid Paul, Joyce Brody, Robert Fee, and Teraya Smith. We also have a talented and dedicated Editorial Advisory Association of health care professionals from the DoD, VA, and PHS, and we intend to actively engage them in expanding our contributors and readers. And we invite each of you to join us in improving the scholarly quality and clinical relevance of this journal. In coming editorials, I will outline some of our primary goals for the journal, and I invite you to write me with suggestions for the future direction of *Federal Practitioner*.

This journal fills a unique role in health care, because no other publication is dedicated to the service of the servants of the public in DoD, VA, and PHS. We want to feature the clinical innovations, research advances, and organizational initiatives of the men and women who carry out this sacred trust to care for the health of the military, veterans, and the public. ●