

EDITOR'S NOTE

I have a soft spot in my heart for small-town cookbooks, especially if it's from a community I lived in or covered as a news reporter, because I personally know some of the contributors. I love if the recipes have notes, little asides from whoever submitted them about where in town to procure an ingredient, or even a memory tied to when they first tried the recipe and who shared it with them.



**BETSY
TAYLOR**

I also like local cookbooks because unlike the classic weighty tomes — like the *Joy of Cooking*, or the glossy celebrity chef best-sellers (yes, Ina Garten's recipes really do hold up) — you can tell a lot of the recipes are submitted by busy home cooks. The recipes usually don't have a million ingredients; they're not afraid to include some Campbell's Soup in that casserole recipe; and the instructions tend to be clear and to the point. If you need to get dinner on the table, these recipes show you how to make that happen. The home chefs know. They're giving you their "tried and trues" because they need to get dinner on the table, too.

Essentially, those cookbooks are strategy-driven, right? What's the need? A meal. How are you going to achieve it? Well, here's the recipe.

I won't pretend health care strategy is as straightforward, but I might argue that a little bit of a small-town cookbook approach went into this issue of *Health Progress*. What specifically is the need? What information is needed to plan, and how are you going to execute it? The issue includes a detailed article about U.S. demographics, projections and some health care forecasting questions to consider based on that data. It includes a thoughtful article by a senior executive outlining the method he uses to make strategic decisions, and he clearly explains the process in

hopes it may be of use to others. Just like those community cookbooks, he even credits the original mentor who helped him learn leadership strategy along the way.

There are also several articles that examine some current issues related to staffing, workflow and patient care, and how health care organizations are taking new approaches for short-term fixes and for improved systems over time. If those local cookbooks are fun because they give you a glimpse into what your neighbors are doing, consider *Health Progress* an insider's view into what your neighbors are doing on a national scale.

And we approach authors and ask for articles on topics with just that in mind. We are only as good as our contributors, and we value the insight that you bring. At its best, *Health Progress* provides a way for those in health care to learn from one another, though I hope my folksy analogy doesn't mask my respect for the complexities of health care strategy and the publication's goal of presenting those complexities in a useful and understandable format.

But you can consider me the equivalent of your small-town cookbook author. If you have an idea for an article we should be including, a thought on a colleague who may make an excellent contributor (and won't they thank you for the nod?) or want CHA to connect you with an author for more information on something they describe, we're here to help. After all, that dinner isn't going to cook itself.

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