

VALUE & OUTCOMES SPOTLIGHT

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Managing Editor: Stephen L. Priori
email: spriori@ispor.org

Advertising Coordinator: Lyn Beamesderfer
email: lbeamesderfer@ispor.org

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



This issue of *Value & Outcomes Spotlight* will land in your inbox just prior to ISPOR's 21st Annual International Meeting. As its name implies, our Annual International Meeting is designed to have a global focus and attract members from all over the world. Along with the Annual European Congress and bi-annual Asia Pacific and Latin American Conferences, these meetings represent our Society's centrally-administered, top-down program of events.

But ISPOR is anything but a top-down organization—there are amazing things going on at the grass-roots level, yielding bottom-up contributions that benefit us all. Regional chapters and student chapters were a novel concept before the first ones were established in 1998 (when the Russian Regional Chapter and University of Texas at Austin Student Chapter were founded). Since then, there has been a dramatic proliferation of ISPOR regional and student chapters, with nearly 90 of each spread all over the world. Indeed, in the last few years, ISPOR's growth has been kicked into overdrive by these chapters, with nearly half of our current 18,000 affiliates coming to us in this way.

The regional and student chapters stage their own meetings that allow for a geographic focus for targeted debate and problem solving at the local level, with breakthroughs and learnings that no doubt bear implications for other regions. Increasingly, the regional chapters are bringing their insights back to the wider ISPOR membership, either directly via participation in the larger multinational meetings or through contributions to ISPOR's various journals, including *Value in Health Regional Issues*. The student chapters are similarly taking their act to the global level, using the ISPOR Student Network initiatives to bring more students to the larger meetings where they are staging their own events and injecting a youthful vibe to the overall atmosphere.

If you look at the maps of ISPOR's regional (<http://www.ispor.org/RegionalChapters>) and student chapters (<http://www.ispor.org/student/Chapters>), the geographic coverage is pretty impressive. But what's most striking about the regional chapter map is the lack of representation of North America, as there is only one ISPOR chapter there: the Chicago chapter, founded in 2006. To be honest, I used to wonder why Chicago needed an ISPOR chapter of its own—after all, it's just a short flight to any of the Annual International Meeting locations and most European Congresses are nonstop destinations. What makes them so special they need their own forum?

But for a couple of reasons I've made an about-face on this thinking. (*Hear that sound? It's the entire city of Chicago heaving an immense sigh of relief.* 😊) First, I was graciously invited to present a webinar to the Chicago chapter and found the experience rewarding. More recently, I've been following the efforts of a group of ISPOR members who are working diligently to launch a regional chapter for the greater Boston area. This group has already convened a few unofficial events that have included networking over light refreshments and hors d'oeuvres prior to an invited speaker and panel discussion featuring ISPOR members from the area. Each event has drawn about a hundred attendees and we've really enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the issues, catch up with one another, and just fill in the space until we meet again at one of ISPOR's larger events.

So, I'm now "all in" (in the poker sense of the term) on the ISPOR regional and student chapters, and I encourage each of you to get involved at the local level wherever and whenever the opportunity arises. And if no such opportunities exist, do like so many other ISPOR members have done and gather your colleagues to get something going on your own—it won't just benefit you, it will benefit us all.

That's not to suggest you lose sight of ISPOR's main events...we certainly look forward to seeing you in May at the 21st Annual International Meeting in Washington, DC.

David Thompson, PhD
Editor-in-Chief, *Value & Outcomes Spotlight*

Tell us what you think of the new *Value & Outcomes Spotlight*! Send feedback to vos@ispor.org or use the comments form at <http://www.ispor.org/ValueOutcomesSpotlight/CommentForm>