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MARCH 2021



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Every day, before I read any email or otherwise engage with the demands of leading HTAi, I remind myself that we exist to position HTA as a primary catalyst in transforming global health care – making it more accessible, more equitable, more impactful.

HTA is both our métier and our means to the greater end of moving the needle on global health care. With this in mind, I keep a close watch on how we are advancing the four key goals articulated in the HTAi strategic plan, namely: (1) grow the membership globally; (2) amplify knowledge sharing and information dissemination; (3) advance scientific knowledge and capacity development; and (4) ensure financial stability and good governance. I believe we are starting to make meaningful progress against each of these. Let me explain:

With respect to membership, the Secretariat has upgraded its internal systems to make it easier for members to renew. At the same time, we are stepping up our engagement and communication with members so that they feel seen, heard, and valued.

Most importantly, we are working to clarify our value proposition for current and prospective members – we want everyone to know where we are choosing to place our emphasis, why, and how this translates into unique value. On that note, our recent work on an interest group (IG) portal (see the IG section in this issue) delivers new functionality to each IG and enables greater communication within and between the groups – an important step in connecting the various players in the HTAi “ecosystem”.

As I write this, the 2021 Global Policy Forum has just wrapped up. This is a flagship event on the HTAi calendar, and while we all regret not being able to gather in person, the knowledge sharing and information dissemination at this year’s virtual Forum was remarkable. The theme for this year was managing input, throughout and output of uncertainty in HTA, and the discussions that unfolded over the three days of the Forum served as an important reminder of the unique value that HTAi is capable of delivering.

During the five months since I arrived as Executive Director, a conspicuous gap within the Secretariat has been the

Manager of Scientific Initiatives position. I am pleased to report that we posted this position in late 2020 and have been evaluating applications from all over the world. Very shortly, a shortlist of candidates will be further screened, and I am hopeful of filling this position very early in Q2. In the meantime, the Scientific Development and Capacity Building Committee have been hard at work clarifying priorities for 2021 that align with the strategic plan, and the Chairs of both the Latin America and Asia Policy Forums have been solidifying topics for the 2021 Fora, which will take place in October and November, respectively. And of course, the 2021 virtual Annual Meeting in June will showcase scientific knowledge and capacity building.

In the wake of dramatic changes to our operating environment caused by COVID-19, financial stability and good governance are even more of a priority than when the strategic plan was formally launched a year ago. To that end, Secretariat staff have been working closely with the Board of Directors to strengthen the governance structures that, while often invisible to our membership, are fundamental to day-to-day decision making. An important example is an update to our by-laws, which we will bring before the members at our Annual General Meeting in June. Equally, we have made decisions in every aspect of our operations to identify and mitigate financial risk.

Our actions are intended to protect the Society’s financial interests and ensure that we are in a strong position to continue our work as the leading global society for all stakeholders engaged in HTA.

As ever, I am grateful for the continued trust and support of our members, our Board; the support of our sponsors and stakeholders; and the efforts of the Secretariat staff.

My very best wishes to all members. Be well, be safe, and don’t hesitate to reach out to me to discuss the path HTAi is travelling rabbott@htai.org.

Rob Abbott
Executive Director

2021 BOARD ELECTIONS



Nominations

The call for nominations has now closed. We are pleased with the number and quality of nominations that we received and thank everyone who helped spread the word and took the time to put together their application.

Next Steps

On April 7, the Society's members will receive a ballot from [CIVICA](#), a third-party electoral service, to vote for one (1) candidate for Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Once you receive your ballot, you will be able to cast your vote 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, until the elections close on Friday, May 7 at 11:59 p.m. MDT.

Make sure to check your junk mail, as some ballots have mistakenly made their way into those inboxes in the past.

[More information about the 2021 Board of Directors Elections](#)

If you have any questions regarding Board Elections, please email Tatiana Hagerty at thagerty@htai.org.



POLICY FORUMS



Global Policy Forum

It's a wrap!

The 2021 Virtual Global Policy Forum attracted over 90 representatives from public and private sector organizations from all over the world who engaged in strategic discussions around the topic “Considering and Communicating Uncertainty in HTA” on February 22, 24 and 26. While we missed seeing everyone in person, it was great to see all the familiar and new faces.

Many thanks to Global Policy Forum Chair, Dan Ollendorf and Scientific Secretary, Rebecca Trowman for putting together a great virtual meeting and to all the speakers and attendees for their contributions.

The next Global Policy Forum will take place January 23 – 26, 2022, in The Hague, the Netherlands.

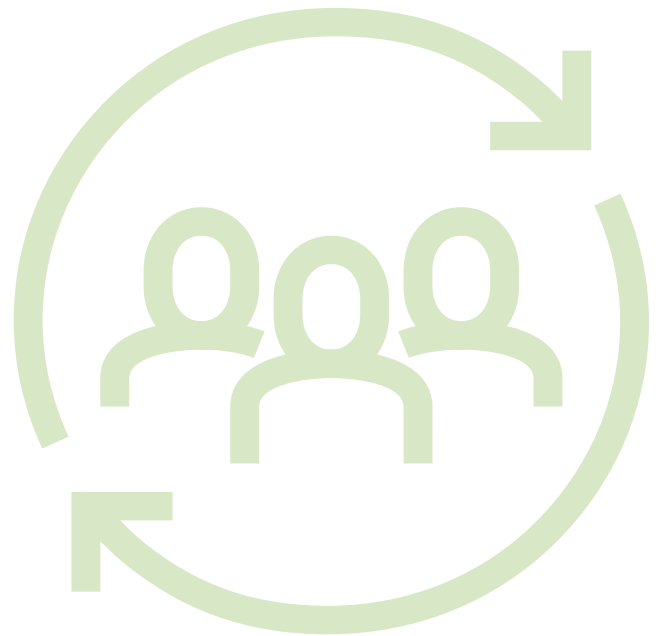
Latin America Policy Forum

As mentioned in the February newsletter, the 2021 Latin America Policy Forum that is scheduled to take place this year in Brasilia, Brazil has been postponed, and will now take place October 25 – 27, 2021 at the Royal Tulip Hotel. The topic for this years Forum is “Deliberative Processes for Informed Decision Making by Health Technology Assessment”.

Asia Policy Forum

The 2021 Asia Policy Forum will be held in November. The organizing committee is currently reviewing suggested topics and we hope to announce the meeting topic soon.

If you have any questions regarding Policy Forums, please email Ali Powers at apowers@htai.org.



ANNUAL MEETING



2021 Virtual Annual Meeting

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

[Registration](#) for the HTAi 2021 Annual Meeting, taking place Saturday, June 19 to Wednesday, June 23, 2021, is now open!

To register for the Annual Meeting and access detailed information please see the [2021 Virtual Annual Meeting website](#).

Innovation Through HTA

The Annual Meeting will focus on how adaptive approaches to HTA can continue to provide the cornerstone in leading health systems innovation particularly as technologies advance and novel interventions rapidly emerge. Collaboration in developing HTA in emerging regions and developing novel approaches to HTA in systems with established HTA, is essential to our goal of supporting patient access to evidence-based healthcare, particularly as diagnostic and treatment pathways become ever more complex. Through the three plenary themes we will explore opportunities presented across global health systems for sustained use of HTA.

Plenary Themes

We are delighted to announce this year's plenary speakers. A detailed theme description of each of the plenaries can be found by following the respective links.

Plenary One – Evidence for HTA: Innovative Methods for Challenging Times

Speakers:

Professor Phillipe Ravaud, University of Paris

Professor Martin Landray, University of Oxford

Dr Anna Gagliardi, Toronto General Hospital Research Institute

Professor Tracy Merlin, University of Adelaide

Plenary two – Patients at the Heart of Innovation

Speakers:

Professor Carole Longson, University of Manchester

Dr Mireille Goetghebeur, Institut National d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux (INESSS)

Professor Sophie Staniszewska, University of Warwick

Plenary Three – Innovating HTA to support Novel Interventions

Speakers:

Dr Richard Torbett, The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry

Sjaak Wijma, National Health Care Institute
Lise Alter, Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS)

Annual Meeting Contributors

We want to take this opportunity to raise awareness about the essential contributions our committees provide to the success of the Annual Meetings.

Our [International Scientific Program Committees \(ISPC\)](#) voluntarily dedicate their time and expertise to reflect the ever-changing global challenges associated with HTA within the Annual Meeting's scientific program. Opening the debate, keeping the momentum and supporting collaboration are leading factors in the ISPC aims and objectives.

We recently interviewed Janney Wale, an independent Patient Advocate, and member of our 2021 Annual Meeting ISPC and asked for her thoughts on being an ISPC member. Read the full story on our [HTAi Blog](#).

If you have any questions regarding the Annual Meeting, please email annualmeetings@htai.org.



www.htai.org

INTEREST GROUPS



HTAi-ISPOR Task Force

Call for Deliberative Process Examples

The following message was submitted by HTAi Vice-President, Wija Oortwijn (Radboud University Medical Centre, the Netherlands).

Wija is co-chairing the HTAi-ISPOR Task Force on Deliberative Processes for HTA together with Don Husereau (University of Ottawa, Canada). The Task Force's goal is to develop a consensus definition for a deliberative process from an HTA perspective and internationally recognized good practice recommendations on the use of deliberative processes in HTA. [For more information](#) (including its members).

The Task Force is currently preparing a manuscript that focuses on activities where deliberation can explicitly add value to an HTA process and credibility to the decision-making body it supports. Deliberation is defined as the informed and critical examination of an issue and the weighing of arguments and evidence to guide a subsequent decision and seems most apparent in the stage of contextualizing the evidence (appraisal). The Task Force focuses on providing guidance on deliberation in all HTA stages, including horizon scanning, prioritization and scoping of relevant topics, assessment, and synthesis of evidence, contextualizing the evidence, development and communication of a recommendation or decision and monitoring and evaluation of HTA process.

In preparing the manuscript, the Task Force would be very grateful if you could help identify real-world examples of deliberative processes for HTA in the stages listed above (except for contextualization of evidence (appraisal), as this was already addressed at the [2020 HTAi Global Policy Forum](#)

If you can provide any information from your own jurisdiction or elsewhere (literature, weblinks, policy documents, process guidelines, etc.), please email any information you may have to Wija at w.oortwijn@radboudumc.nl by **March 15**.

Thank you in advance for all your great support to the Task Force.

Community Portal Launch

Join our Grand Opening!

The Secretariat will be hosting a Grand Opening of the Interest Group Community Engagement Portal. During the session, there will be an address from our Executive Director, networking opportunities, and feature demonstrations.

Join us on either of the following dates:

Tuesday, March 16th at 9:00 a.m. MDT (4:00 p.m. GMT)

OR

Wednesday, March 17th at 3:00 a.m. MDT (10:00 a.m. GMT)

If you would like to know what time this is for your time zone, please use this [converter](#)

Keep an eye out for a message coming to your Interest Group's Listserv about how to register for the Portal to attend the launch and access all future events hosted on the platform.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please email Bryce Doherty at bdoherty@htai.org or Sydney Ruller at sruller@htai.org.



INTEREST GROUPS



Collecting Multi-Stakeholder Views of Impact

One of the most common questions asked of HTAi's Patient and Citizen Involvement Interest Group is does patient involvement in HTA make a difference.

Increasingly studies are published to evaluate and understand patient involvement practices and their potential impact, but it remains a complex question, in part due to differing definitions and perceptions of impact.

Inspired by INAHTA's sharing of stories to demonstrate the influence of HTA, PCIG has tested and developed a template to capture experiences or stories of the influence of patient involvement in an HTA from any stakeholders' perspective.

The PCIG project sub-committee is now lead by Aline Silva and Veronica Lopez Gousset. Those willing to share stories can download the template from the HTAi website.

If you'd rather contribute your story verbally or with assistance, members of the sub-committee are happy to help.

Collaborating to share good practice

There are parallels between involving patients in HTA and in clinical guideline development, so HTAi's Patient and Citizen Involvement Interest Group has always valued the opportunity to work with the Guidelines International Network (G-I-N).

In February, GIN released an updated toolkit for patient involvement (lead authors Jane Cowl, NICE, and Karen Graham, SIGN), which includes a chapter on tools from HTA which may be adapted for guideline work.

The original chapter - authored by Karen Facey and Tania Stafinski in 2015 - needed extensive work due to the large amount of progress over the past 5 years, including how patients participate in HTA and how patient-based evidence is used.

As always it was a group effort. Ann Single and Karen Facey authored the chapter with input and/or review from a variety of experts and people in HTA bodies including Sarah Berglas, Sabine Häfner, Heidi Livingstone, Alessandra Lo Scalzo, Camilla Palmhøj Nielsen, Aline Silva, and Sally Wortley.

The HTA chapter is one of four updated chapters in the GIN toolkit which also includes a brand-new chapter on patient involvement in systematic reviews written by Cochrane Consumers.

The toolkit now includes key messages within each chapter, top tips and some additional resources and examples.

2021 Funding Call

Interest Groups can apply for funding to support a range of activities:

- Preparation of educational courses
- Support for research projects (such as the development of new tools, methods, and materials)
- Open-access fees for publications written by Interest Group members
- Events, meetings, or workshops

[Find out more and apply for Interest Group Funding](#)

For any questions on Interest Groups and funding opportunities, please email Sydney Ruller sruller@htai.org.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We're spotlighting AQuAS!

AQuAS is a public agency of the Catalan Ministry of Health and the first HTA agency that was established in Spain (in 1994). For more than 25 years, AQuAS has been developing HTA products and other decision-support tools to promote and reinforce evidence-based and informed health policy decision-making.

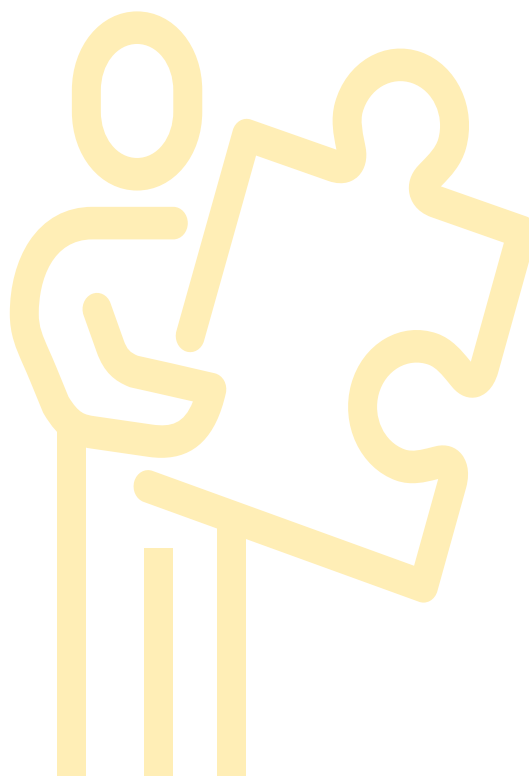
One of the AQuAS' current priorities is the use of real-world evidence for HTA. The agency is very well positioned, thanks to its direct access granted by the Government to all Catalan public healthcare system data.

AQuAS became an HTAi not-for-profit member in 2020, and their organizational representatives were eager to bring their expertise to the 2021 Virtual Global Policy Forum. They have also been a member of EUnetHTA and INAHTA since its foundation.

The agency is organizing several workshops to take place in 2021 within the framework of RedETS, the Spanish HTA network, whose chair AQuAS holds for this year.

Visit AQuAS [website](#) and [Twitter page](#) for more news regarding events and relevant information.

If you would like your organization to be featured in the member spotlight section of our newsletter, please email Naomi Suwinski nsuwinski@htai.org.





HTA and Value-Based Healthcare Webinar series

The Medical Devices and Hospital-Based HTA Interest Groups are hosting a two-part webinar series in March! Join the panelists as they discuss the methodological differences between HTA and Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC) and how they can be applied to Medical Devices and then delve into a series of case studies.

Part 1: Thursday, March 4 at 9:30 a.m. MST.

This session will provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of how HTA and VBHC methods can be used in practice.

[Register Now!](#)

Part 2: Thursday, March 25 at 9:00 a.m. MST

This session aims to give participants an understanding of how to implement the different practice methods and discuss how they complement each other in a rapidly evolving MedTech landscape.

[Register Now!](#)



ANNOUNCEMENT



Secretariat Update

We recently welcomed Elise Penny to the [Secretariat](#). Elise is joining us as an Events Coordinator for a maternity leave coverage until next year. We are certain that with over 10 years of experience in the Events and Hospitality industry that she will be a great asset to the team!

Job Opportunities

Interested in joining an exciting and creative workplace that encourages personal and professional growth? We are currently seeking two (2) passionate and ambitious team members to help influence the future of HTA through scientific initiatives and Annual Meeting coordination.

Sound like you or someone you know? Learn more about our current offerings and [apply](#).

Partner Update

We are pleased to announce that the [WHO](#) Executive Board, at its 148th session, decided to maintain HTAi in official relations with WHO.

Correction Notice

In the February newsletter, [INAHTA](#) was incorrectly identified as a member of HTAi when it is an MOU partner. We sincerely apologize for this error.

Social Media

We're on Instagram! Give us a follow [@htai_](#)

