

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Report from the Executive Director

As we begin the second quarter of 2021 – how quickly the time goes! – I want to speak to some important strategic decisions that the Secretariat and Board have recently taken, and to situate those decisions in a broader context.

As all of you know, for much of the past year HTAi was confronting two simultaneous challenges: the impact to our work caused by COVID-19 and its variants, and a significant turnover in staff within the Secretariat. The latter challenge has, I am pleased to report, been overcome; there is real stability at a staff level and we have been working together to fine-tune the organizational structure of the Secretariat to be both efficient and effective. The former challenge, while perhaps not as acutely felt, is still with us and brings me to some of the bigger decisions we have recently made.

The Annual Scientific Meeting of the Society in 2022 will no longer be convened in Colombia. The HTAi Board made this decision on March 31 after extensive consultation and review, both internally with the Secretariat and key committees, and with representatives from Colombia. To suggest that this was a difficult decision is to perfect the art of understatement. Our Society is a global one and we aspire to grow our presence in all regions of the world and in doing so, to bring health technology assessment to a wider audience. Our Society is also one in which the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion matter; these are not just elegant words, they speak to the need to bridge the gap that too often separates the northern and southern hemispheres. Our Society is also one that is emerging from a very difficult financial period, one that has considerably reduced our operational flexibility and capacity to take on risk. For this reason, and the fact that the 2022 Annual Scientific Meeting is just 15 months away, we have chosen The Netherlands as the host country. Logistically this makes good sense, and it also reduces the financial exposure we would have taken on in attempting to convene the meeting in Colombia. More details on the 2022 meeting will be shared in upcoming issues of this newsletter and on the HTAi website ([www.htai.org](http://www.htai.org)).

The review of the 2022 Annual Scientific Meeting location has underscored the importance of looking at our meetings and policy fora not as discrete events, but as part of an integrated whole – and to look at them across multiple years. In this way, there is greater opportunity to leverage a regional meeting or policy forum, for example, and build support for something like the Annual Scientific Meeting. I will be working with the HTAi Board to further articulate this idea and I invite input from the membership as well. As we begin to emerge from the long shadow cast by COVID-19, how can the regional policy forums in Latin America and Asia, in particular, be positioned not simply as interesting and important events in themselves, but as the nucleus around which satellite or “side events” might be organized? And can the successful hosting of a policy forum be viewed as a proxy for success at hosting the much larger Annual Scientific Meeting? These and other questions are very much on my mind as we begin to co-create a roadmap that shows our members – and prospective members – how we see the next several years unfolding.

I am, as ever, grateful for the efforts of my staff at the Secretariat; for the commitment and strategic foresight of my Board; and especially, for the support of the HTAi membership. Please don't hesitate to contact me at any time to discuss how we can do things differently and better.

Very best regards,

Rob Abbott

[rabbott@htai.org](mailto:rabbott@htai.org)

## POLICY FORUM



### Latin America Policy Forum

A reminder that the 2021 Latin America Policy Forum has been postponed and will now take place October 25 – 27, 2021, at the Royal Tulip Hotel. The topic for this year's Forum is “Deliberative Processes for Informed Decision Making by Health Technology Assessment.”

Latin America Policy Forum Chair, Hector Castro, and Scientific Secretary Andrés Pichón-Rivière (IECS) are hard at work finalizing the background paper on “Deliberative Processes for Informed Decision Making by Health Technology Assessment” and developing an exciting agenda for this year's meeting.

### Asia Policy Forum

February 4 Digital Session

Asia Policy Forum Chair, Brendon Kearney welcomed 51 attendees to an online session titled “COVID – 19 in Asia – Tackling the 3rd Wave & Vaccines” on February 4, 2021. Two fascinating presentations were given by Dr. Norhizan Ismail, Deputy Director (Medical) of the Malaysian Ministry of Health, and Professor Terry Nolan, a vaccine specialist from the Peter Doherty Institute, Australia that shared some of the lessons learned along the SARS-CoV-2 journey.

[VIEW THE RECORDING](#)

### March 25 Digital Session

A 90-minute digital event titled “COVID-19: Thinking on your feet: development of FAST real-world diagnostics and the role horizon scanning plays in identifying new developments” was hosted on March 25, 2021. 36 attendees logged in and viewed fantastic presentations from Dr. Dapo Ogunbayo and Dr. Anne Oyewole from the NIHR Innovation Observatory, and Dr. Geoff Higgins from South Australia Pathology.

[VIEW THE RECORDING](#)

A big thank you to Asia Policy Forum Chair, Brendon Kearney, Asia Policy Forum Scientific Secretary, Linda Mundy, and all session speakers who contributed to making the 3-part session series from Nov 2020 – March 2021 a success.

### 2021 Asia Policy Forum

The 2021 Asia Policy Forum will be held in November. The organizing committee is currently reviewing suggested topics, and we look forward to announcing the topic in May!

### Scientific Secretary

We are happy to announce that Linda Mundy has agreed to serve as the Scientific Secretary for a 2-year term supporting the 2022 and 2023 Asia Policy Forums.

## Global Policy Forum

### IJTAHC Article

Global Policy Forum Scientific Secretary, Rebecca Trowman and Global Policy Forum Chair, Dan Ollendorf are hard at work drafting the 2021 Global Policy Forum article to be published in the [International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care](#) (IJTAHC). This article will include reflections from the Forum that took place via Zoom, February 2021. The topic of the 2021 meeting was “Considering and Communicating Uncertainty in Health Technology Assessment.”

### 2022 Global Policy Forum

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

If you have any questions regarding Policy Forums, please email Ali Powers at [apowers@htai.org](mailto:apowers@htai.org).



## Pre-Annual Meeting Workshops

As we look forward to #HTAi2021VirtualAM, we are happy to share workshop registration is OPEN!

The virtual workshop program, taking place June 19 & 20, offers a unique opportunity to enrich your skills and knowledge in a range of HTA related topics. Given the unique circumstances of this year’s #HTAi2021VirtualAM, we aim to provide a virtual space that provides the settings and tools required for a barrier-free, interactive learning environment. Live broadcasting will enable attendees to turn on their webcam and microphone and join in the discussions, ask questions, watch presentations, and access handouts and learning materials.

The Annual Meeting workshops are aimed and suited for the global and diverse HTA community. We are confident that everyone will find something to spark their interest. Check out the [workshop schedule](#).

## Registration

Early bird registration rates are available until Friday, April 30, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. MDT.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

## Plenary Speakers

The plenary program will bring international perspectives and thoughts from HTA experts and participants.

[Read more about our speakers](#)

## Annual Meeting Contributors

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

The Patient Focus Group, who are a sub-group of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) convened not just for the 2021 Annual Meeting, but with an ongoing focus on how we can inspire participation and enhance the experience of patients and patient representatives at the Annual Meetings.

[READ MORE](#)

If you have any questions regarding the Annual Meeting, please email [annualmeetings@htai.org](mailto:annualmeetings@htai.org)



## Accreditation

The Scientific Development and Capacity Building Committee (SDCB) serves the purpose of streamlining the scientific direction of the Society, providing guidance, and developing the capacity of HTAi regarding overall training and breadth of HTA capacity.

The terms of reference for the SDCB Committee can be found [here](#). One of the main tasks of the SDCB is the Accreditation program. The Chair, Jani Mueller, would like to remind you of this program and its availability to HTAi members. For accreditation of workshops, webinars, and other material, please visit our website to [apply](#)! There is a minimum of 6 weeks advance notice needed to complete the accreditation process prior to implementing activities or their presentation.

## 2021 Funding

The first call for Interest Group funding proposals has now closed. Thank you to everyone that submitted proposals. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by June 2021.

For any questions about Interest Groups and funding opportunities, please email Sydney Ruller at [sruller@htai.org](mailto:sruller@htai.org).

## Community Portal

Thank you to the 100+ people who registered for the Portal and Grand Opening event on March 16 and March 17!

[For more information and to access the Interest Group Community Portal](#)

## Ethics Interest Group Publication

There is no consensus on who might be qualified to conduct ethical analysis in the field of HTA. Is there a specific expertise or skill set for doing this work? This article aims to clarify the concept of ethics expertise and, based on this, describe and specify the characteristics of ethics expertise in HTA. The application of Collins and Evans' sociological theory of expertise proved to be very useful in order to understand the nature of ethics expertise as well as ethics expertise in the context of HTA. By using this theory, a list of core competencies of the ethics expert in HTA was developed.

[Refolo P, Bond K, Bloemen B, Autti-Rämö I, Hofmann B, Mischke C, Mueller D, Nabukenya S, Ortwin W, Sandman L, Stanak M, Steele D, van der Wilt GJ, Sacchini D. Core competencies for ethics experts in health technology assessment. Int J Technol Assess Health Care. 2020 Dec;36\(6\):534-539. doi: 10.1017/S0266462320001968. Epub 2020 Dec 9. PMID: 33292881.](#)

## MDIG Post Meeting Report

### HTA and Value-Based Healthcare Webinar series

The Medical Devices and Hospital-Based HTA Interest Groups hosted a two-part webinar series titled "HTA and Value-Based Healthcare: Methods" on March 4 & 25 that discussed the methodological differences between HTA and Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC) and how they can be applied to Medical Devices.

[View the Pt. 1 Recording](#)

[View the Pt. 2 Recording](#)

Thank you to all the panelists for volunteering their time to these digital sessions that attracted over 120 attendees from all over the world!

If you have any questions regarding Interest Groups, please email Sydney Ruller at [sruller@htai.org](mailto:sruller@htai.org).



**We're spotlighting individual member, Pooyeh Graili, Principal Consultant of Quality HTA**

[Quality HTA](#) is a health care consulting business that serves governments, not-for-profit, research, and educational organizations worldwide. Its mission is to help improve health outcomes and promote access to value-based health technologies. Quality HTA's creative and insightful solutions help HTA agencies, regulatory bodies, and governments to make informed decisions. Quality HTA employs the best available evidence to deliver high-quality results in outcomes research, evidence synthesis, RWE, and health economics in a timely manner.

Pooyeh has been an active HTAi member since January 2021 and really values the Real-World Evidence and Artificial Intelligence, Medical Devices, Disinvestment & Early Awareness, and HTA in Developing Countries Interest Groups.

**We love to showcase our members!**

If you or your organization would like to be featured in the "Member Spotlight" section of our newsletter, please email Naomi Suwinski at [nsuwinski@htai.org](mailto:nsuwinski@htai.org).



**Job Opportunities**

**We're hiring!**

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:

Manager, Scientific Initiatives

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

**Every vote counts!**

The Board election is taking place April 7 – May 7. You will receive an electronic ballot in your email from a third-party electoral service, CIVICA. *Make sure to check your junk mail! Ballots have mistakenly made their way into those inboxes in the past.*

In accordance with the Society Bylaw 3.9, you will be able to vote for one candidate for each of the open positions – Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

PLEASE do not forget to cast your vote. The Election will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week!

[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](mailto:thagerty@htai.org).