



### **Focus on the Future**

**Guest Predictions: Kathleen McEwan Pelkofski, MSN, ANP**

*Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions a set of questions that affect us all.*

**Kathleen McEwan Pelkofski, MSN, ANP** is an adult nurse practitioner with Loudoun Internal Medicine Associates in Leesburg, Virginia. [www.loudouninternalmed.com](http://www.loudouninternalmed.com) Current areas of clinical practice include geriatrics, women's health and management of chronic disease as well as primary care. She has served as a clinical instructor in the George Washington and George Mason collaborative nurse practitioner program. Ms. Pelkofski has worked in critical care, community health and has been a part of an international volunteer program.

**Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?**

**A:** The implementation of the electronic medical record allows instant access to patient information. It has also allowed immediate access to online medical resources that are updated frequently. Patient care is improved at the time of the visit because patient history, lab tests and consultations for example, are available.

**Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?**

**A:** Working constantly within the Medicare guidelines is both impractical and time consuming. Patients often do not seek care because of financial constraints if they are under this program. The delay in care then may present with a more complex medical problem. The result is then increased cost due to perhaps a hospitalization or an accident.

**Q: How will globalization affect your professional area in the near term?**

**A:** Patients traveling internationally that present in the office of the primary care physician or in the emergency room may expose and transmit unusual diseases. Language barriers, cultural differences and economic status affect the quality of care delivered. Very often these patients do not seek care because they are unaware of how to access the health care system. Women and children are especially at risk.

**Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?**

**A:** With a large number of patients being uninsured, there will likely be some sort of government "master plan." This might mean health care will be rationed. There will be more government regulation and those of us delivering care will be unable to deliver the best care for the patient. Patient visits will be shorter and there will be less continuity of care.

**Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?**

**A:** There are virtually no individual practices. Young professionals must be part of a network or group. This can cause loss of flexibility and individuality. There is very little latitude in treatment. There is a tremendous shortage of nursing instructors and a limited number of primary care providers. Reimbursements have decreased and the demands for detailed documentation through government-regulated programs have increased.