

## From the Guest Editors: About this Special Issue Honoring Louis C. Gapenski

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This Special Issue of the *Journal of Health Care Finance* honors Dr. Louis C. Gapenski for his contributions to the fields of health care finance, public health finance and health administration. In his writing, teaching and mentoring, he served as a role model for all of us.

## Introduction

On April 20, 2016, the health care finance, public health finance and health administration, communities were saddened with the news of the passing of Louis C. Gapenski, PhD, MBA, MS.<sup>1</sup> Among our reactions were to remember what Dr. Gapenski meant to so many of us and to think about ways these memories could be shared and his legacy could be preserved.<sup>2</sup> Upon obtaining very generous support from James Unland, Executive Editor and Publisher of the *Journal of Healthcare Finance*,<sup>3</sup> we issued a call for papers for a Special Issue in Honor of Dr. Gapenski.

We welcomed proposals for papers on any health care finance or public health finance-related topic, with the proviso that the work states how it was motivated by, or related to, the work of Dr. Gapenski. Proposals included commentaries, research articles and teaching tools and tips. Upon receipt of some thirty proposals, we conducted an internal review of each proposal, provided suggestions to authors and offered invitations to many authors to submit full manuscripts. Completed manuscripts were sent out for peer review. Thank you to the twenty-plus members of the academic health care finance and public health finance community who so generously agreed to provide reviews on a very short time-line. The reviews were very helpful to the authors and editors.

Due to the desire to offer this Special Issue on a timely basis, some of the proposals and manuscripts could not be prepared in publication-ready form. We hope that the authors of these papers will continue with their work and publish them at a later date.

## Contributions

An interesting array of papers are included in this Special Issue. It opens with remembrances. Kristen Reiter and George Pink (2016) were co-authors with Lou on sixth edition of *Healthcare Finance: An Introduction to Accounting & Financial Management*, (Gapenski and Reiter, 2015) and the seventh edition of *Understanding Healthcare Financial Management* (Gapenski and Pink, 2015), respectively. Their thoughts are focused on their very recent working relationships. Tom Getzen (2016) discusses the foundations Lou provided to enable our work.

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<sup>1</sup> UF mourns passing of Louis Gapenski, <http://hsrmp.phhp.ufl.edu/people/faculty/louis-c-gapenski-phd-mba-ms-bs/>

<sup>2</sup> As noted in more than one source: For those who wish to honor Louis Gapenski's memory financially, contributions can be made to one of the following endowments created by the Gapenskis: the Gapenski Healthcare Finance Scholarship Fund #17925; the Louis C. and Jane Gapenski Term Professorship for Health Services Administration #7304; the Jane Gapenski Oncology Nurses' Professional Development Fund; and the Louis C. and Jane Gapenski Florida Museum of National History Endowed Fellowship #19549. All funds are administered by the University of Florida Foundation, P.O. Box 14425, Gainesville, FL 32607-2425.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.healthfinancejournal.com/index.php/johcf>

The first set of research papers examine organizational and environmental factors associated with hospital profitability. Oner et al. (2016) take their inspiration from an earlier version of *Understanding Healthcare Financial Management* (Gapenski, 2007). They provide quite a comprehensive literature review on the many factors potentially associated with hospital financial performance. Nevola et al. (2016) update Gapenski, Vogel and Languard-Orban (1993) on the determinants of hospital profitability through the analysis of recent data in Florida. Upadhyay and Smith (2016b) update Languard-Orban, Gapenski and Vogel (1996) on the determinants of hospitals that sustain high and low profitability through the analysis of recent data in Washington Hospitals. In each case the authors note consistent and inconsistent findings owing to differing states and differing time periods, and point towards areas for future research.

The second set of research papers examine specific characteristics of organizations or phenomena associated with hospital financial performance. Nikpay et al. (2016) examine the influence of uncompensated care on profitability and relate that to Medicaid expansion. Hospitals are paid the highest effective rates by private insurance, and then Medicaid patients, with only a couple of circumstances in which uninsured patients pay more than Medicaid. Beauvais et al. (2016) examine the influence of hospitalist staffing, patient centered medical home and accountable care organizational development, finding positive results associated with hospitalists and medical homes, but not accountable care organizations. Dong (2016) analyzes the strategic use of wage dispersion among Maryland hospitals, finding a positive effect among and a negative effect among high-skilled health care workers.

Ramamonjivarivelo et al. (2016) examine a panel of public hospitals, some of which became privately held over time, an action that was associated with increased productivity. Carroll examine a panel of private hospitals, some of which became members of systems over time, an action that was not associated with substantial changes in cash holdings. Upadhyay and Smith (2016a) study a panel of Washington hospitals' cash conversion cycles and liquidity measures, finding positive relationships between cash conversion and current and quick ratios and a negative relationship for cash holdings.

The third set of research papers consider accounting strategies for hospitals. Kane (2016) examines the impact of reported profits under fair value accounting, finding that it challenges our ability to make consistent comparisons over time and among hospitals. The findings of some of the second set of papers may require a caveat associated with accounting for performance measures. Carroll and Lord (2016) review the literature on hospital cost accounting methods and note both the lack of depth in the literature and the generally low investments that have been made in hospital cost accounting.

The fourth set of research papers are concerned with public health finance. Honoré et al. (2016) examine public health financial management system accreditation standards. Relative to the standards used for the higher education system, there may be many opportunities to improve rigor and quality in the public health accreditation process. Leider et al. (2016) examine our accounting for governmental public health spending. A recoding of data over more than the past decade suggests that prior reports overstate spending by twice actual values.

It is only fitting that in final contribution to this Special Issue McKee (2016) offers teaching tools and tips on using health care finance cases. Teaching was central to Lou's role as a professor and cases were important to his teaching and his text books.

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