

# The Pursuit of Progress

Tine Hansen-Turton 05 January 2010

Healthcare (insurance) reform has passed in the Senate and final negotiations are happening before it moves on to the President's desk for signature. While the legislation is not perfect - in fact some would say far from perfect - it is a piece of legislation that is very much in keeping with our American philosophy, our constant pursuit of progress and change. As the late Senator Kennedy's career on Capitol Hill demonstrated, change is usually incremental, usually negotiated and usually compromised. But at the end of the day, change usually amounts to progress.

I see tremendous progress, too, as I look back on a decade's worth of work to promote access to affordable quality health care using nurse practitioners in the role as primary care providers, thereby alleviating the burden on a strained primary care system. We've come a long way regionally and nationally. The fact that we as a country are always striving to improve our path is what most invigorates me as a relatively new American. Our pursuit of progress is never ending, but it is what sets us apart from most countries in the world. We know our work is never done.

As we enter a new year and decade, we always should remember that what makes us different from most people and countries in the world is that we have the freedom to

purse progress and make change. This health insurance reform bill is not the end all or be all, but it will help make affordable health insurance available to more than 30 million Americans who have been without it. Furthermore, the legislation contains many provisions for others who fall through the cracks and will need additional care and support. That's progress for individuals, families and America, as Walt Disney would have said. And not until you take a ride on the Magic Kingdom's *The Wheel of Progress* will you truly appreciate how important it can be to take even a small step in the right direction.

Happy New Year! *And a toast to our new Pursuits of Progress for individuals, families, our region and country in 2010.*