With the publication of this December 2011 issue of Mayo Clinic Proceedings, the journal marks the end of an era in its model of publication. Within the next month, there will be a transition to a new publisher, a new print journal, and a new Web site. Soon thereafter, readers will be treated to new mobile applications and other tools to enrich their education through the journal and their enjoyment of the learning experience.

The controlled circulation model will, however, be retained. That is, readers in the targeted demographic will continue to receive their subscriptions complimentary, although the makeup of the demographic will be periodically refined.

This redirection of journal activities represents a once-per-generation opportunity for the journal to enhance its contributions to the medical community. To understand the importance of the changes, it is instructive to review the journal’s history leading up to their inception.

Mayo Clinic Proceedings began operations as Bulletin of the Mayo Clinic and the Mayo Foundation on April 21, 1926. In the journal’s early years, it experienced a number of name changes, including introduction of proceedings to the title on August 4, 1926. From 1927 to 1963, inclusive, the journal was published as Proceedings of the Staff Meetings of the Mayo Clinic, and—from its inception through the end of 1963—the Mayo Clinic Section of Scientific Publications published the journal. Before 1964, the journal had attained very wide extramural distribution, but its principal focus was unabashedly provincial in scope, as proclaimed by taglines that appeared under the title of each issue beginning in January 1927: “Published…for the Information of the Members of the Staff and the Fellows of the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research.” Although in October 1958 the tagline morphed into “Published…for Members of the Staff of the Mayo Clinic, for Fellows of the Mayo Foundation…and for Other Interested Physicians” (and was published in this form through December 1963), and by the 1960s the journal boasted a total circulation in the tens of thousands (with approximately 15% of the circulation sent to international subscribers), the early provincial identity stuck with the journal long after it was appropriate.

In January 1964, journal operations were reorganized, placing the leadership of the journal for the first time under the direction of an editor-in-chief and editorial board. January 1964 also marked the introduction of a new, shorter name for the journal, Mayo Clinic Proceedings, and publication became monthly. (A representation of the journal’s new 1964 cover appears on the face page of this month’s issue.) In July 1977, the journal introduced the brilliant orange cover (also represented on the cover of this month’s issue), which has continued through the current issue. Originally published and distributed exclusively by Mayo Clinic, beginning September 1996, the journal engaged a publisher, Dowden Health Media, to assist with journal sales, circulation, market research, and related issues, although many of the key features of journal publishing (eg, manuscript processing, copy editing, layout of the monthly issues) were retained in the journal’s Rochester, MN, office. This pattern of publication has continued to the present, with the journal being represented by Quadrant HealthCom Inc since January 2010.

As late as the 1990s, Mayo Clinic Proceedings’ operations could be characterized as very much “all Mayo Clinic all the time.” Journal content focused on the writings of Mayo Clinic faculty members and trainees, despite the fact that the editorial board had in 1992 decided to accept manuscripts from non-Mayo Clinic authors. An enhanced effort to make authorship more diverse, and to expand the scope and importance of the journal, began in January 2000, with the announcement of a new journal initiative, “The Evolution of Mayo Clinic Proceedings.”
During this “Evolution” era, January 2000 to the present, the journal has reached innumerable milestones that have allowed it to better address the needs of readers and the patients they serve. Critical features of this era have included the following: (1) expanded print circulation, (2) improved journal readership (as quantified by PERQ/HCI, later acquired by Kantar Media, New York, NY), (3) an increase in journal impact factor (quantified by Thompson Reuters, New York, NY) from 2.0 to 5.71, (4) expanded media coverage worldwide, (5) and enhanced diversity of editorial board members, reviewers, and authors. For example, in 2010, more than 70% of manuscripts submitted to the *Proceedings* originated from authors having no affiliation with Mayo Clinic. Clearly, the journal was living up to its current tagline (or a variation of it), reproduced on the print journal cover since January 2005: “A Peer-Reviewed Medical Journal Sponsored by Mayo Clinic and Authored by Physicians Worldwide.”

The journal’s prosperity in virtually all metrics from January 2000 through December 2007 was threatened by downturns in the global economy and a superimposed downturn in the finances of print media, including many categories of medical journals. These issues were shared with *Proceedings*’ readers in editorials. From 2007-2008, the College of Medicine, Mayo Clinic, which has oversight of *Proceedings*’ operations, began a financial assessment of the well-being of all educational activities at Mayo Clinic, and this operation was followed by an additional, focused analysis of Mayo Clinic *Proceedings*. During 3 years of focused study, from 2009 to the present, Mayo Clinic, the sponsor of the *Proceedings*, reaffirmed the value of the journal and—operating on the assumption that times of adversity (ie, in the financial environment) are also times of opportunity—began initiatives to ensure that the *Proceedings* would be fiscally viable and a world force in medical publishing, in perpetuity.

These actions, in turn, led, in 2011, to a formal request for proposals for a new publisher of the *Proceedings*. The selection of the new publisher, Elsevier, announced in July 2011, has led to a restructuring of all aspects of the *Proceedings*’ operation. The details of the changes will be revealed in next month’s issue. Briefly, the restructured home office in Rochester, MN, will continue to oversee the peer review of manuscripts and act as a portal of entry for most interactions with the journal. However, the new publisher will assume other activities formerly handled in the Rochester office. In the immediate future, the overall scope of the journal’s mission will dramatically expand, and the journal will partner with the Elsevier’s global publishing team to make the expansion successful.

As a part of the aforementioned changes, the publication of this December 2011 issue of *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* represents the end of an era—actually the end of many eras—in journal publishing. Primary preparation of the print journal in Rochester, a core portion of journal operations since April 1926, will end. The brilliant orange journal cover and corresponding journal layout—features of the journal since July 1977—will be supplanted by a new journal facade and more functional and attractive internal journal layout. The line art on the cover of the journal, a feature since June 2005, will be replaced. The Web site, which has been evolving for most of the past decade, will be restructured. And the “Evolution of Mayo Clinic *Proceedings*” initiative, begun in January 2000, will be supplanted by a new initiative.

Together, the reorganization and redistribution of labor should allow the editorial board to accelerate its efforts to provide readers with high-quality information from authoritative authors, directed primarily toward improving patient care. Further, the publisher’s application of best practices for the dissemination of information should allow the journal to reach an expanded audience, with the information available in multiple formats (eg, print, electronic) that accommodate a wide variety of reader preferences.

The decision to make this bold step in journal operations would not have been possible without the progress made during the “Evolution of Mayo Clinic *Proceedings*” initiative. Specifically, this progress made it apparent that the journal had a bright future as one of the world’s leading indexed medical journals. The leadership of Mayo Clinic proper, the College of Medicine, and the *Proceedings* editorial board embraced this opportunity to make historic improvements in the journal.

Behind these changes were innumerable individuals who daily gave more than the expected effort to journal activities, working diligently to enhance the journal’s long-term quality and reputation. The number of names is too great to mention individually, but includes first and foremost the members of the office staff and editorial board who worked tirelessly under the belief that the journal was becoming a special instrument to better serve humankind. Additionally, there were members of the Mayo Clinic leadership and the leadership of the College of Medicine, along with energetic contributors from our publisher, printer, and others, who labored to make the upcoming changes possible. To these many unnamed individuals, I offer a sincere and heartfelt thank you for your labors and insights. The new *Proceedings* that we will introduce next month will be a lasting testament to your hard work and faith in the journal.

To the readers of *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, I also want to thank you for your loyalty and support during this period of evolution in the journal’s identity and mission. Additionally, I ask your patience and understanding as we transition...
from one model of publishing to another. Although the journal’s leadership desires that the transition will be invisible to the casual observer, the many alterations may bring with them hiccups in our operations. I invite you to bring any shortcomings to our attention, so that we may remediate any problems and move forward in an effort to better serve you.

In next month’s issue, I will share with you the vision of a new era in publishing Mayo Clinic Proceedings. Until then, I want to thank all who have made this transition in Mayo Clinic Proceedings possible. Your input and faithfulness to the journal have been inspiring.

William L. Lanier, MD
Editor-in-Chief