

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

# Back to the Future



James H. Youngblood

“Our members.”

That is invariably my answer when I am asked the secret to our society’s success.

From the moment I joined HRS many years ago to the present day, what inspires me most is our members’ passion for the field and their dedication to our organization. Each succeeding generation of emerging leaders has brought their own unique contributions to the table, but all have shared a commitment to our mission and a deep appreciation for the closeness of our community. Those relationships, which bind us together in common purpose, have been at the core of our success. As we approach our next strategic planning cycle, we must find ways to ensure that the sense of community that created, challenged, and sustained us in the past will continue to be a vibrant part of our future.

In a real sense, we must go back to the future. We must capture and build on what made us successful in the past in order to move forward with confidence as we lay the groundwork for a vital and vibrant society in the years ahead.

When HRS was smaller, communication was more personal. Peer-to-peer access was easier. Today, with more than 6000 members around the world, promoting and enabling one-on-one communication is an ongoing challenge. It is vitally important that we find ways to sustain a sense of community and to ensure that all our members feel connected to each other, and to our mission and core values, in real and tangible ways. Our online communities have been a successful initiative in this regard, but they are only the beginning.

In today’s world, consumers increasingly demand more personalization, transparency, and options in the way they receive information. In health care, providers and professionals, patients, and other stakeholders are all affected by these changing expectations. Exciting advances in artificial intelligence and communication technology are already making it possible to disseminate information and knowledge in highly personalized, targeted ways. In the future, we will be

able to discern members’ specific interests and directly communicate to them with individually customized information, delivered in their medium of choice.

Such technology is impressive, even wondrous, and it is worth our pursuing. But we need to be mindful that technology is just a tool. It can both help and hinder the building and nurturing of relationships. Years ago, the futurist John Naisbitt wrote in his seminal book *High Tech/High Touch* that we must be careful to embrace technology that preserves our humanness, but reject technology that intrudes upon or undermines our humanity.

That message resonates today and is a crucial reminder to all of us that when it comes to the HRS community, we need to remember the human side of what we do and who we are. As we work to envision our future, our challenge is to find a balance between our use of technology and our enduring commitment as a society to personal interaction and human connection. In achieving the right combination of technology and humanity, we will remain dedicated to the member experience, where HRS will continue to be your EP home to connect, learn, and grow.



James H. Youngblood



James H. Youngblood  
CEO, Heart Rhythm Society

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**Address reprint requests and correspondence:** Mr Shane R. Osborne, Heart Rhythm Society, 1325 G St, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005. E-mail address: [sosborne@hrsonline.org](mailto:sosborne@hrsonline.org).