When Dr Ende approached me about editing an issue of the Medical Clinics of North America on pulmonary diseases, I was skeptical. The last issue dealing with respiratory problems had come out in May 2019, fewer than three years earlier. My initial inclination was to say that it was too soon, and there were not enough “new things” worth bringing to the attention of the internal medicine community.

However, it’s hard to say no to Jack, so I did a little due diligence. I read through the issues of the major respiratory journals of the preceding several years, looking for ideas for topics, and I spoke with a number of my very fine colleagues in the pulmonary division at Washington University for their thoughts. Both my review and their recommendations allowed identification of a group of highly qualified subject matter experts on topics that have little overlap with the preceding issue. The organizing principle was to bring forward information that would represent an update on respiratory diseases that are important in adults, are very likely to manifest themselves in an internist’s office, and about which there is important new information on diagnosis, therapy, and/or decision on referral. We were also mindful regarding the increasing importance of changes in the medicolegal and social environment around substance use, and on health care disparities.

One of the pleasures of undertaking an editorial role is the opportunity to be educated by experts, and that certainly happened here. I am confident that you will have a similarly enjoyable experience. I am grateful to the authors, who have given freely of their time and expertise to produce this issue, and the editorial staff at Elsevier for their skill and patience.