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The Official Newsletter of The Bays Medical Society

2402 Lisenby Avenue

Panama City, FL 32405

850.784.2090 Office

850.784.0068 Fax

www.thebaysmedicalsociety.com



The Bays Beat

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The President's Pulse Points: FMA Annual Meeting 2010: by Jon Ward, M.D.



The 136th annual meeting of the Florida Medical Association (FMA) was held in Orlando, FL, from August 13th to August 15th. The Bays Medical Society was ably represented by delegates Kamel Elzawahry M.D., Debra Williams M.D., and Jim DeRuiter M.D.. It was a spirited meeting which for the second year in a row centered on the FMA's frustration with the actions of the American Medical Association.

After rejecting a motion to formally withdraw from the AMA, it was decided that the FMA Board of Governors would send a letter expressing "no confidence" in the Board of Trustees of the AMA. This could accelerate turnover in the leadership of the AMA and bring those who opposed health care reform into power faster. The AMA acted against many of its own policies in supporting both the health care reform legislation and supporting Dr. Donald Berwick to head CMS.

Another hot topic as a consequence of health care reform that passed the FMA House of Delegates was to bring back balance billing so that Medicare patients could see providers who opt out of Medicare and then just pay the difference.

Two resolutions sponsored by The Bays Medical Society passed the House of Delegates with only minor modifications. One was regarding the AMA being transparent about its streams of revenue and to make its financial statements available to members of the AMA, state societies, and specialty societies. The second was to have the Florida delegation at the next AMA meeting sponsor and pass a resolution that would commission a study that shows the strengths of the American health care system, unlike all currently available studies that highlight the lack of universal coverage. This resolution was strongly supported by the past President and the President-Elect of the FMA.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the AMA's Nathan Davis Award to State Senator Don Gaetz. Senator Gaetz received a standing ovation and several rounds of applause as he pledged that the state legislature would pass meaningful tort reform

MEMBERS MATTER:

Please Welcome New Members:

Physicians:

Kimberly Bain, M.D.
Emerald Coast OB/GYN

Merfat Hassan, M.D.
Bay County Health Department

Associate Members

Physician Assistants:

James Cary, PA-C
Panama City Urological Center

Kenneth Plumbley, PA-C
PrimeCare

Katherine Swan, MPA, PA-C
Baldwin Pediatric

Alfred Whittle, PA-C

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Yes, I'm also interested in a no cost "Lunch & Learn".

next year. He also supports a plan to give sovereign immunity to all Medicaid providers. For those of you who do not realize, the FMA *is* making our state the best place to practice medicine. The FMA PAC is making sure we elect pro-medicine legislators, identifying future House Speakers and Senate Presidents, and making sure pro-medicine agendas continue in Tallahassee. This goal has been the passion of our new FMA President Madelyn Butler M.D.. In her acceptance speech, she declared that her focus for the next year will be on the following issues:

- Health Care Reform: to influence changes that will be better for physicians *and* patients
- Membership: to include more women and minorities
- Political Advocacy: to influence policy to make it easier for you to focus on practicing medicine

We were also blessed to have Dr. Miguel Machado elected to the President-Elect position. As past chair of the Council on Legislation, Dr. Machado will continue to keep the FMA as the most influential voice regarding health care in Tallahassee.

The Elzawahry family would like to invite you to a mass in honor of Dr. Joan Elzawahry .



Your prayers and thoughts are much appreciated at the one year commemoration of her passing.

There will be two services:

Saturday, September 4, 2010 - 5:00 p.m.

St. Johns Catholic Church

1008 Fortune Avenue

Panama City, FL

Sunday, September 5, 2010 - 10:00 a.m.

St. Dominic's Catholic Church

3308 E. 15th Street

Panama City, FL

If you have any questions please contact Sheila Martin, Executive Assistant to Dr. Kamel Elzawahry: 763-0158.

The September Membership Meeting Agenda will include information about ACOs!

Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are the latest rage in the health policy world.



The development of ACOs may be a result of the new Health Care Reform bill and it *will* affect physicians and Medicare payments. Find out what you need to know at the September Membership Meeting!

Healthcare Reform and Baby Boomers - More Pressure for Physicians?



By Robert E. White, Jr., President First Professionals Insurance Company

With the passage of universal healthcare legislation, which will provide health insurance coverage to a significant part of the 47 million Americans who lack insurance, the need for more doctors will escalate. A shortage of physicians already exists and the anticipated addition of new patients will dramatically increase demands on providers.

The American Academy of Family Physicians predicts a shortfall of roughly 40,000 *primary care* physicians over the next decade as medical students are increasingly drawn to the higher pay and better hours of specialties such as surgery, cardiology, and radiology. In addition, the rate of physicians retiring is expected to rise dramatically in the next decade.

Impact of Healthcare Reform

Healthcare reform will only increase the physician shortage crisis, and it will create additional difficulties in the search for solutions to improve patient access to care. Some experts predict that by 2020, the United States could experience a shortage of between from 200,000 and 700,000 physicians depending upon the level of utilization.

The anticipated availability of health insurance for the majority of Americans as a result of the healthcare reform does not necessarily promise equal access. Without an adequate infrastructure in place, many former insured's will be forced back into costly emergency rooms for routine care. The changes to America's healthcare delivery system could affect physicians' ability to provide patient care. A shift in how it would be carried out while delivering the expected level of quality care must be proactively managed.

The U.S. has never faced the level of physician shortage that currently exists and which is further threatened by the new reform legislation. Without a solution for this dilemma, the healthcare system cannot function properly and may be impacted indefinitely.

In an effort to reduce the impact and in recognition of the growing need for patient access to physicians, legislators included in the new law bonus payments for primary care physicians as well as forgiveness of tuition loans as incentives to medical students to pursue primary care careers.

Although medical schools are projected to graduate 4,000 more physicians each year by 2020, this is fewer than half of the needed increase. During the overwhelming 25-year U.S. population increase between 1980 and 2007, there was *zero growth* in medical school enrollment for conventional medicine treatment.

Aging of America

Baby boomers are quickly outpacing all other age categories of Americans. At the same time, more and more doctors are approaching retirement age. The number of Americans age 65 and older will almost double between 2000 and 2030 (20 percent of the population) – an increase of 104%. With the rise of an aging population, the medical ailments of senior citizens also escalate, including millions with diabetes and obesity, sharply increasing doctor visits for those over 65. Regardless of the most common medical health risks inherent with aging, the next generation of retirees will be the healthiest, longest lived, best educated, and most affluent in history.

Aging Physicians

The physician workforce is aging at a faster pace than can be replaced by medical students entering the healthcare profession. Medical school graduates that may potentially bridge the gap are electing to reduce the number of hours they practice. More than 250,000 active physicians are over the age of 55 and thousands more are expected to retire in the next decade.

Population Growth

Along with the rise in baby boomers, there has also been growth in the general U.S. population. Experts estimate that such sustained population growth will require a minimum of 200,000 additional physicians by 2020. However, with the retirement of current physicians and a shortage of new physician replacements, it is likely that the United States will be 100,000 short of that goal.

Physician Shortage

- *Geriatrics*

Although the aging population is already a significant factor for the healthcare industry, perhaps one of the greatest concerns is the deficit of geriatricians that already exists. The number of geriatricians is roughly half of what is currently needed.

- *Family Practice*

The number of U.S. medical school students entering primary care has dropped more than 50% since 1997, already causing an increased demand for the specialty. Obviously, the demand for these physicians will become critical as the number of baby boomers continues to escalate.

- *Nurses*

Although allied healthcare workers are expected to play a greater role as physicians leave the workforce, a significant decline in the number of licensed nurses will also affect medical treatment for Americans. In Florida alone, more than 40% of Florida's nurses are approaching retirement age within the next 10 years and there are not enough younger nurses to replace them. The state's nursing shortage has the potential to cripple Florida's healthcare system.

Continued on page 7



Executive Director's Report

I am pictured with Karen Wendland, Executive Director of the Capital Medical Society, and Holly Strickland, Executive Director of Escambia County Medical Society, at the FMA annual meeting in Orlando last week. We talked at length about future opportunities to work together to better serve our membership. As members of the **Florida Council of Medical Society Executives**, we voted to spearhead a state-wide communications campaign to convey the value of

M.D.s and D.O.s. We are developing a marketing campaign to reach the general public that will convey the value a Medical degree holds and the high level of care that only you, our physician members, can provide.

- Annual Free School Athletic Physicals:** The new format of seeing students at the Bay County Health Dept. on three Saturdays started off slowly this year but ended successfully. We provided physicals for 118 student athletes. The feedback from the volunteer physicians was mostly positive-some physicians miss the large group experience, but most were happy to have a more clinical environment to complete the physical exam. A startling trend this year was the number of kids who had high blood sugar. This was an assessment that Doug Kent, Administrator of the Bay County Health Department, felt strongly should be added. We did make several referrals for blood work and further follow-up. **THANK YOU** to all who volunteered this year! We plan to cut back to two Saturdays next year, but if you have any feedback or suggestions please call me at 784-2090; I would love to hear from you!
- Election of Board of Directors:** I wanted to be sure everyone is aware of the slight change in our process for electing your physician leaders this year. The election will take place at our November meeting (at Capt. Anderson's), and the new Board and officers will be installed at our Annual Holiday Party on December 10th. Please let me know if you are interested in giving direction to our Bays Medical Society or in providing leadership by serving on our delegation. Again, I would love to hear from you!
- Medicaid & Medicare EHR Incentive Programs Information:** You probably have a lot of questions about electronic health records (EHR): Am I eligible to receive incentive payments under the Medicare & Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs? When do the programs begin? How much are the incentive payments? What do I need to participate? It's important that you have a reliable resource to turn to for accurate information. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is the federal agency establishing these incentive programs. The CMS website is the official federal source for facts about the Medicare & Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. The site contains up-to-date resources that will give you the insight you need to make educated decisions. Get the facts from the federal source - the [CMS Medicare & Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs website](http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/): <http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/>.
- Need help with something?:** Call or email me! Did I mention that I would love to hear from you? Your Bays Medical Society is here for you, but I need to know what your top priorities are. My e-mail is michelle@medone.org. I am hoping to use this newsletter as a communication tool among members so please let me know if you have something valuable to share, or better yet, support this publication through advertisement to your peers! **Warm Regards~ Michelle**

- *Projected sector growth*

With the decrease in physician specialties, expanded roles and the use of ancillary personnel will be necessary. To relieve pressure from doctors, substantial increases are projected for physician extenders, including physician assistants, medical assistants, and licensed nurses. However, these healthcare professionals don't have the level of diagnostic skill of physicians. In the event of a medical error, patients may incorrectly assume the lack of an available physician is a reason for the error.



An Increase in Claims?

As physicians become understaffed and overworked, the risk of medical errors rises. The stress and fatigue experienced by doctors may increase the likelihood of clinical accidents. Because of the patient load and the need to evaluate as many patients as possible, physicians may rush an examination and fail to make proper diagnoses.

“National healthcare reform further diminishes the core of care: the physician-patient relationship,” said Cliff Rapp, Vice President of Risk Management at First Professionals. “A significant reduction in the quality of care is arguably a motivating factor for a claim.”

Looking ahead 10 years when there are fewer doctors treating a greater number of patients – aging patients who generally have more medical problems – we could see an increased number of medical incidents. That does not mean that malpractice will be the root cause; rather that the projected imbalance of practitioners to patients, who because of their age will require more medical encounters, will adversely impact patient safety.

As Congress implements the requirements of the new law, it is essential that all efforts are taken to preserve the physician-patient relationship. Special liability factors impact this era of healthcare reform and the aging population. The partnership between First Professionals and its policyholders includes proactive risk management services to help reduce potential claims. The challenge will be to maintain the high standard of patient safety in a way that does not impact the standard of care for patients.

“Regardless of the impact of the passage of healthcare reform legislation, we will continue our dedicated efforts to protect our policyholders,” said Bob White, President of First Professionals. “We will maintain our commitment to our insureds and focus on remedies to further reduce the victimization of physicians during an already challenging malpractice climate.”

First Professionals is aware that the implications of the healthcare reform and aging population issues will place even more pressure on physicians. Regardless of the threat to physicians of these unique challenges, our goal is to help physicians reduce the potential to incur additional liability expense. We will remain cognizant of these new emerging trends and exposures and continue to monitor them accordingly.

Save the Date:

April 8-10, 2011

Sandestin Golf &
Beach Resort

Destin, Florida

2011 CME Spring Break Symposium

8

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2010 Upcoming Events

General Membership Meeting: **September 7th: 6:00 p.m.**

Dinner Meeting: **St. Andrews Bay Yacht Club**

Topic: **Political Panel Discussion**~ Members will have the opportunity to question the candidates themselves regarding issues that matter to you and your practice.

Guests include~ **Steve Southerland for Congress District 2**

Marti Coley State Representative District 7

Sponsored by: Summit Bank & HealthSouth Rehabilitation Center

General Membership Meeting: **November 9th: 6:00 p.m.**

Dinner Meeting: **Capt. Anderson's Restaurant**

Topic: TBMS Election of Board and officers, Meet the FMA Leaders that will impact the future of Medicine; share your ideas and concerns.

Sponsored by: The Brain & Spine Center & Northwest Florida Surgery Center

Holiday Party~ December 10th: 6:30 p.m.

Food, Music and Fun! **Installation of 2011 Board of Directors**

Location TBA~ it will be fun and you don't want to be left out, so watch your mail for the invitation!

Meetings for 2011: We are in the process of planning for next years meetings. If you have a special request, please let us know. The January 2011 meeting is slated to be a CME event covering all the Florida Mandated topics for D.O.s and M. D.s.



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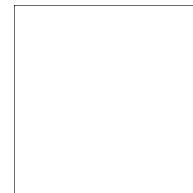
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**Jolean Boutwell,
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