

SAVE THE DATE!
Midwest Clinical Conference (MCC) 2003
March 20-22 - Navy Pier, Chicago

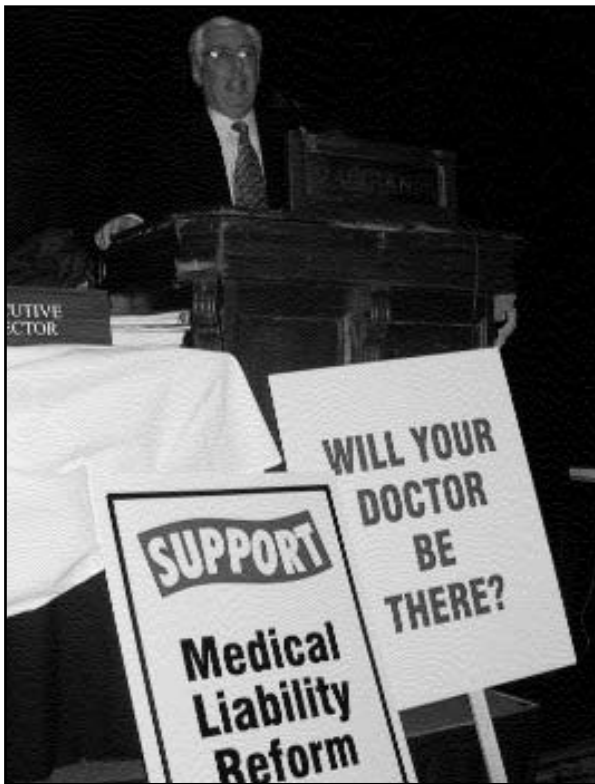
cms news



November 2002 Vol. 4, No. 11 NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY
The Voice of Cook County Physicians

PHYSICIAN ADVOCACY

Council backs march on Daley Center



Scott Warner

Theodore M. Kanellakes, MD, second district trustee of ISMS, rallies the CMS Council on Nov. 12 as he discusses strategies for a successful physician march.

DISPLAYING SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR EM battled colleagues, CMS Council members unanimously approved a landmark emergency resolution on Nov. 12 to hold a medical liability protest outside Chicago's Daley Center. Slated for next spring, the event would focus public attention on the seriousness of the medical liability crisis, particularly in obstetrics and trauma surgery, and could also serve as a dress rehearsal for marches in Springfield and Washington, D.C.

The resolution was sponsored by Thomas J. Chorba, MD, president of the North Suburban Branch, whose successful motion to suspend the rules allowed the resolution to be brought to the floor. In calling for its emergency passage, Dr. Chorba introduced CMS member Gina Wehrmann, MD, who said that skyrocketing malpractice insurance rates were forcing her to abandon her ob gyn practice and return to her previous occupation as a pharmacist. Many other members also spoke about the severity of the current situation and encouraged emergency action.

Before reaching the historic decision, the Council heard from guest speaker Theodore M. Kanellakes, MD, second district trustee of ISMS, a veteran of past physician marches. He most recently helped the Will Grundy County Medical Society lead over 450 physicians and supporters in a demonstration for medical liability reform at the Will County Courthouse. Held this October, the Will Grundy County Medical Society's rally was the first of its kind in Illinois, and organizers say it was designed to serve as a catalyst for other county medical society marches.

Dr. Kanellakes described how his group enlisted the help of patients, hospital staff and other health care workers to generate media

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coverage. He said the physicians mission was to educate the public about access to care and likened their job to stopping a disaster before it happens.

CMS staff are now at work preparing a fiscal note for the march; the Executive Committee discussed the matter at its Nov. 20 meeting, and more information on this rally will be forthcoming.

Members: We ask for your assistance in making the march a success. Please fax or e mail names, titles, addresses, phone numbers and e mail addresses of hospital medical staff presidents and leadership who we may contact for further support. Please send your information to James Tarrant at jtar rant@cmsdocs.org or call (312) 670 2550, ext. 322.

Change in tax status gets go-ahead

CAPPING OFF A WATER shed evening on Nov. 12, the CMS Council also approved the bylaws for the new 501(c)(6) organization, the Chicago Medical Society Association. In setting up both a professional society and an educational and scientific foundation, CMS will both resolve a tax issue and meet its members growing need for political advocacy.



Scott Warner

CMS legal counsel Paula Goedert tells the Council about the advantages of the new Chicago Medical Society Association 501(c)(6) organization.

Would the physicians at your hospital participate in a medical liability reform march at the Daley Center?

During the Nov. 12 Council meeting, CMSnews asked physicians for their comments on the above question. Here's what your colleagues had to say.

Yes, I believe they would. The medical liability crisis has affected us all, and is already having an effect on patient access to medical care, which is very upsetting. We recognize that probably one of the only ways that we will be able to create change is to bring it to the people for whom we provide care. We need to make them aware of the problem at hand, and how they will be adversely affected if measures are not taken to correct this problem.

John Kirklakis, MD
Internal Medicine

I believe physicians will show up. I think it will take a grassroots effort like a march on the Daley Center to bring awareness to the public that malpractice insurance is skyrocketing, and that doctors cannot effectively practice medicine because of this. A march like this is a wonderful beginning. It's small scale, but it helps set the stage for a national physician march on Washington.

Mitra Kalelkar, MD
Forensic Pathology

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NEWS FOR CHICAGO PHYSICIANS

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CMS establishes dialogue with Advocate Health Partners

Imbalance of power in health care marketplace remains a problem

IN SEPTEMBER, ADVOCATE HEALTH PARTNERS approached CMS for advice in its much publicized standoff with Blue Cross Blue Shield. CMS President Richard A. Geline, MD, told Advocate President Lee B. Sacks, MD, that CMS supports collective physician action.

The Society's policy is that negotiations are a valuable method for maintaining control over the practice of medicine, assuring quality care to patients and fair reimbursement for physicians.

While the dispute between the two organizations over payment issues was just resolved, their battle makes a good case for supporting laws that offer physicians a level playing field, Dr. Geline says. For example, the ISMS authored Fairness in Health Care Services Contracting Act would address the imbalance of power in the health care marketplace, but that bill is now stalled in the Illinois legislature.

The Campbell anti trust bill, which was passed

in the U.S. House but never gained sufficient votes in the U.S. Senate, would have given self employed physicians the option of forming negotiating groups. "If those two pieces of legislation were in place, the Advocate position would be stronger today," Dr. Geline states.

Dr. Sacks, a CMS member, agrees that physicians need a unified voice in speaking out on issues that affect patient care. Dr. Geline emphasizes that CMS' success in speaking on behalf of physicians will be much greater when more physicians are members of organized medicine. He says, "This is why we need physicians to support CMS as we promote physician friendly legislation to improve the practice of medicine."

Call for membership: Dr. Geline asks that you consider recruiting colleagues who are not yet members of CMS, or who have let their membership lapse. "In unity there is strength was never more true than it is today," he says. For information on recruiting new members, contact Tessa Quinlan at (312) 670 2550, ext. 325 or e mail trebmann@cmsdocs.org.

Ratification of CMS bylaws

The revised Chicago Medical Society bylaws will be presented for ratification to the CMS Council on Jan. 14, 2003.

To review the new 501(c)(3) foundation's bylaws, please check the CMS website, www.cmsdocs.org, or call Cathy Faedtke at (312) 329-7322 to request that a copy be mailed to you.

Call for Tort Reform Write your legislators

CMS is urging all members to send letters to Illinois Senators Richard Durbin (D) and Peter Fitzgerald (R) voicing the need for tort reform, and the need to fix Medicare reductions. No one can be more effective than you in presenting your case!

Because time is running short, we suggest that you fax or e mail them your concerns.

- *Senator Durbin:* Fax (202) 228 0400 or (312) 353 0150 or e mail dick@durbin.senate.gov.
- *Senator Fitzgerald:* Fax (202) 228 1372 or (312) 886 3514, or e mail via website: <http://www.fitzgerald.senate.gov>.

Include your mailing address with all correspondence.

Please, send your message to them today.

WANTED: BREATH OF FRESH AIR

CMS endorses amendments to Chicago's Clean Indoor Air Act

THE CMS COUNCIL ENTHUSIASTICALLY endorsed efforts by Chicago aldermen Ed Smith (D 28) and Edward Burke (D 14) to toughen Chicago's Clean Indoor Air Act. In supporting a resolution sponsored by Kenneth G. Busch, MD, the Society threw its weight behind proposed legislation to ban smoking in all Chicago restaurants.

Support for the resolution and action by the City Council is consistent with CMS own policy, which endorses the findings of the Surgeon General's Report on the effects of smoking and health and recommends that the rights of nonsmokers be protected.

An amendment to Chicago's Clean Indoor Act in 1994 required Chicago's 6,500 restaurants to set aside 30 to 50 percent of active dining areas for non smokers. Two years ago, Alderman Burke tried unsuccessfully to ban smoking throughout the dining areas of most Chicago restaurants, within five feet of entrances to all public buildings, and in outdoor sports arenas.

Stating that This kind of legislation doesn't get passed unless legislators perceive that it's a popu-

lar issue with the voters, Alderman Burke said the timing is right for strengthening the Clean Indoor Air Act. Now that New York City has gone to a much more strict policy with respect to smoking in public places, Chicago should follow suit, he said.

Chicago City Council hearings are expected to begin in December. *(If you live in the city, we ask that you promptly write your alderman in support of the proposed ban on smoking in restaurants.)*

CMS leaders get thanks for their support

ALDERMEN ED SMITH AND EDWARD BURKE, sponsors of legislation that would strengthen Chicago's Clean Indoor Air Act, recognized CMS leadership during a recent news conference hosted by the Campaign for a Healthy Smoke Free Chicago. Attending the event were CMS President Richard A. Geline, MD, and Executive Director James R. Tarrant.

New York mayor pushes for ban

NEW YORK CITY MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG is pushing for a complete ban on smoking in indoor public spaces. New York's current law is similar to Chicago's, but the proposed ban would go further than the one being discussed here, banning smoking not only in all restaurants, but also in stand alone bars and clubs. As is the case in Chicago, a majority of people favor the ban, but restaurateurs and some City Council leaders have opposed it. Mayor Bloomberg may make the bill a public referendum next year if city councilors don't approve it. This comes on the heels of a Florida referendum to ban all smoking in restaurants, which voters overwhelmingly approved on Nov. 5.

COVERAGE

AMA site offers recommendations on changing Medicare contractual options

ALTHOUGH MEDICARE OFFICIALS HAVE projected an additional payment cut of 4.4 percent in 2003, the AMA recommends deferring a decision until late December about whether to sign a Medicare participation agreement for the coming year. Strong bipartisan support exists in Congress and in the Bush Administration for getting the problem fixed during the lame duck session that began Nov. 12. The AMA has been leading an aggressive campaign to get legislation enacted before Jan. 1, 2003, that would avert any additional payment cuts and provide an increase in Medicare rates for 2003.

To learn more or review the details associated with changing your Medicare participation status, go to www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/9202.

Oregon voters reject universal health care

ON ELECTION DAY, OREGON VOTERS REJECTED a sweeping proposal to create a system of state financed universal health care. The vote was viewed by many analysts across the country as a potential

measure of public opinion toward a centrally managed system of health care similar to those in Canada and Europe. Oregon's initiative would have raised the state's top income tax rate to 17 percent, almost twice the current rate, in order to finance a \$20 billion fund providing medical coverage for all residents.

Members needed for Physician Referral Service

The CMS Physician Referral Service urgently needs members who accept Public Aid. We are looking especially for ob gyns, dermatologists, pediatricians, orthopedic surgeons, geriatricians, otolaryngologists, vascular surgeons, and psychiatrists located on the South Side, Palos Heights, Palos Park, Evergreen Park, Orland Park, Olympia Fields and Harvey.

Any member who is interested in being included in the Physician Referral Service is asked to call Chris Sienko at (312) 329-7334 or e mail csienko@cmsdocs.org

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

CMS Student Branch Social draws peers from all Chicagoland



Chicago area medical students enjoyed CMS sponsored networking and socializing at the Rock Bottom Brewery on Oct. 30.

MORE THAN 300 STUDENTS FROM THE SEVEN Chicago area medical schools came to enjoy the fourth annual CMS Medical Student Social at the Rock Bottom Brewery on Oct. 30. Student Branch President Jesse Ehrenfeld (U of C) and Council Whip Taruna Madhav (NU) welcomed their peers for an evening of socializing, eating, and raffle prizes, including PDAs and stethoscopes. Also on hand were CMS President Richard A. Geline, MD, and President elect Neil E. Winston, MD, who spoke to the students about the importance of joining organized medicine.

The CMS Student Branch is planning a variety of professional and social events for the upcoming academic year, including a series of workshops on career planning, residency application and financial management. In addition, Student Branch members are eligible to participate in the annual Midwest Clinical Conference, March 20-22, at Navy Pier.

For more information on the CMS Student Branch, please contact Jen Troyer at (312) 670 2550, ext. 326, or e mail jtroyer@cmsdocs.org.



Scott Warner

On hand to welcome students and discuss the merits of joining organized medicine were (from left): CMS President Richard A. Geline, MD; CMS student officers Taruna Madhav, council whip, and Jesse Ehrenfeld, president; and CMS President elect Neil E. Winston, MD.

MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO CMS COUNCIL MEETINGS

WE REMIND YOU THAT ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY COUNCIL MEETINGS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN OBSERVING THE CMS POLICY MAKING BODY IN ACTION, CALL (312) 670 2550, EXT. 322, TO RESERVE AN AGENDA PACKET. CMS MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT COUNCIL MEMBERS MUST OBTAIN PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR TO SPEAK AT COUNCIL MEETINGS BEFORE THE MEETING CONVENES. WHEN THE CHAIR GRANTS THIS PERMISSION, IT WILL BE FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF TIME.

*The next Council meetings are scheduled for 7 p.m.
on the following Tuesdays:*

Jan. 14, March 11, May 6, June 3, 2003.

Location to be announced.

NEWS ROUNDUP

NU Project seeks 100,000 gene donors

RESEARCHERS AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY hope to get as many as 100,000 people to donate their genes in an effort to build a massive gene bank that could pave the way for a variety of new treatments. The school plans to collect DNA from a wide range of subjects, including different ethnic groups, age groups, the sick and the healthy.

The project, called NUgene, will begin with a pilot program seeking 2,000 donors. If all goes well, researchers will then recruit up to 100,000 patients from Northwestern Memorial Hospital and clinics and Evanston Northwestern Healthcare. For more information, call (312) 503 4395.

U.S. physicians use handhelds but not e-mail, survey says

ACCORDING TO A SURVEY BY THE HEALTH care Information and Management Systems Soci-

ety, physicians have been quick to incorporate certain forms of new technology into their practices, but slow to begin using others.

Nearly 72 percent of physician offices have doctors who use some type of handheld computer, like a Palm Pilot, and virtually all offices have at least one desktop or laptop computer. However, only about 20 percent of offices use e mail to communicate with patients about medical concerns.

Reasons cited for the lack of e mail included the belief that patients do not use e mail, legal and privacy concerns, reimbursement issues, and lack

Physicians, keep track of your stress

MEMBERS OF THE CMS PHYSICIAN STRESS Study Committee are available to make presentations to groups of doctors without charge. Discussions on physicians stress have in the past been given at hospital medical staff meetings, CMS Branch events, medical school groups, residency training programs, and specialty society sessions, as well as the Midwest Clinical Conference. Subject materials can be adapted to the needs of the group seeking the presentation. Mary Jane Jensen, MD, chairs the committee.

For further information, please contact Scott Warner at CMS (312) 670 2550, ext. 336, or e mail swarner@cmsdocs.org.