

You are invited to the CMS Holiday/Legislative Reception -- p. 4

chicago medicine

CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY
THE MEDICAL SOCIETY
OF COOK COUNTY



Newsletter, October 2005, Vol. 108, No. 13

YOUR WORDS HAVE MEANING!

Dr. Malkin to colleagues: get on board to ensure reform

"No organization can do for physicians what they must do for themselves"

"THE RECENT SIGNING OF MEDICAL liability reform legislation in Illinois was made possible by many groups and individual physicians participating in the political process. And though we have much to be thankful for, all of us must remain vigilant and on the offensive," said CMS President Steven M. Malkin, MD, as he addressed the MacNeal Hospital medical staff on Sept. 28. "CMS—renewed and reenergized—worked harder than ever to advocate for you—but to secure lasting reform, we *must* have the support of all doctors."

And we could take a lesson from the trial attorneys, too, he said.

"Every trial attorney contacts their representatives and contributes money to fund their efforts. We have already heard that the trial attorneys expect to make sizable contributions to try to overturn the new medical liability law," Dr. Malkin told his audience.

"They are looking for the right case to take all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court. And I assure you that the case will be headline shocking. We hear it will most likely be in Cook County and may take three or more years to reach the Court," he continued.

Dr. Malkin said it's imperative that all doctors continue talking to patients, friends and relatives, and tell them that until the Supreme Court rules on the law, the problem has not been fixed.

Dr. Malkin also announced that CMS is holding a holiday/legislative reception on Dec. 14th sponsored in part by the new CMS Insurance Agency, which in addition to serving physicians' insurance needs, sponsors educational and advocacy activities. Physicians and representatives from Springfield are invited to meet in an informal setting and talk about the issues affecting medical practice. "We urge you come and bring a legislator with you," Dr. Malkin said. (*See page 4 for information.*)

CMS goes one-on-one with gubernatorial candidates



Gidwitz



Oberweis



Brady

Scott Warner, CMS

AS PART OF OUR COMMITMENT TO connecting with legislators, CMS recently hosted a Sunday morning meeting with three Republican gubernatorial candidates and asked their views on the state's health care agenda. (CMS plans to host the remaining candidates; we will publish their comments as well.) State Senator Bill Brady of Bloomington, a legislator over the last 12 years and

continued on p. 2

ONE-ON-ONE (continued from page 1)

small business leader, Jim Oberweis of Aurora, a former candidate for the U.S. Senate and chairman of Oberweis Asset Management and Oberweis Dairy, and Ron Gidwitz of Chicago, a former CEO of Helene Curtis and founder of the Illinois Coal-

tion for Jobs, Growth & Prosperity, took questions from Herbert Sohn, MD, Ann Marie Dunlap, MD, and Virendra S. Bisla, MD. A summary of the candidates' professional backgrounds and remarks will appear in the fall issue of *Chicago Medicine*.

CMS legislative breakfasts take off, more to come

AS PART OF CMS' NEW ADVOCACY AGENDA, the Society recently organized several legislative breakfasts bringing physicians face-to-face with their legislators in Springfield. The first, held at Rush University Medical Center, featured Illinois House Majority Leader Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, who spoke on Illinois' legislative health care plan. CMS' 6th District, which includes the old West Side and Wood Street Branches, collaborated with Rush to host the Oct. 14 breakfast. Also on that date, District 2 (North Shore and Northwest Branches) hosted State Senator Jeffrey M. Schoenberg and State Representative Elizabeth Coulson at Evanston Hospital; they both took questions and discussed issues affecting the medical community; on Oct. 18, District 1 (North Suburban Branch) welcomed State Senator John Cullerton and State Representative Sara Feigenholtz at Weiss Memorial Hospital; they also spoke on issues in the medical community.

These programs are part of an ongoing series of breakfasts that introduce federal, state, county and city government representatives to our members.

For information on hosting an event at your hospital, contact Ted Kanellakes at CMS (312) 670-2550, ext. 342.



Ill. House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie, right, speaks to physicians at Rush.

Hospital liaisons needed

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE AS A POINT of contact between CMS and your hospital or if you have suggestions for District activities and projects, please give us a call. You may want to serve as a Member Liaison. As such, you'll be responsible for planning programs, arranging for CMS hospital visits, and encouraging your colleagues to be more politically involved.

For more information, contact Ted Kanellakes (312) 670-2550, ext. 342.



State Representative Elizabeth Coulson at Evanston Hospital.



CMS President-elect Shastri Swaminathan, MD, (left) with State Senator Jeffrey Schoenberg, Jesse Petersen Hall, executive vice-president of Evanston Hospital, and James Tarrant, CMS executive director.

'TIS THE SEASON TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Host a politician at this year's Holiday Reception

BEFORE SENDING IN YOUR RSVP FOR THE CMS Holiday Reception (see notice below), be sure to **write your State Senator and Representative and Congressman and invite them to come as your personal guest.**

Your elected officials need to hear about the "medical miracles" that happen every day but never appear on the 6 pm news; about the difficulties of staying in practice without adequate reimbursement and timely payments; why medicine was your

calling and how access to care is being threatened.

The Holiday Reception will be an opportunity to thank representatives for their support on past health issues and ask for their support on the many yet to be addressed.

Ask your elected officials to put the CMS Holiday Reception on their schedule. And call several times to confirm their attendance.

To obtain addresses of your elected officials, go to www.cmsdocs.org.

*The Officers and Trustees of the Chicago Medical Society
request the pleasure of your company at our*

Annual Holiday Reception Wednesday, December 14, 2005

From

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*Le Meridien Hotel
Cerise Restaurant
(Lobby Level)
521 N. Rush St.
Chicago, IL*

*Celebrate the season with your friends, colleagues and legislators. *
Complimentary hours d'oeuvres will be served*

I (and a guest) will attend the Chicago Medical Society Holiday Reception

Number of Persons: _____

Name: _____

Please print name of each attending

Address: _____

*** Hosting Legislator:** _____

Please reply no later than December 12, 2005. Call Cathy Faedtke at (312) 670-2550.

Fax your response to (312) 670-3646 or email cfaedtke@cmsdocs.org.

Mail your reply to: Chicago Medical Society 515 N. Dearborn St. Chicago, IL 60610

GULF COAST COLLEAGUES NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Foundations help physicians rebuild after Katrina

MEDICAL SOCIETIES IN THE GULF COAST region have set up several foundations to help physicians displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita get back on their feet.

For instance, the Louisiana State Medical Society Foundation is helping doctors set up practices in new locations or back in their original home areas. The Orleans Parish Medical Society is working to rebuild doctors' offices in New Orleans, providing programs, educational services and grants while also improving the information technology beyond pre-Katrina levels.

"We have to quickly move to ensure that we have the funding available to physicians whose practices were either significantly harmed or destroyed, and make it easy for them to remain in New Orleans," said Susan D'Antoni, executive director of the Orleans Parish Medical Society.

The AMA Foundation has also established a Health Care Recovery Fund to award grants of up to \$2500 to physicians who need assistance rebuilding their infrastructure following a FEMA-declared natural or man-made disaster. Seed money of \$100,000 is being dis-

tributed to various medical societies.

"The contributions are a token of the bond between the American Medical Association and the affected local medical societies and represent the solidarity we feel and share as medical professionals in times of need," said Michael D. Maves, MD, AMA executive vice-president.

The medical societies themselves have taken a gigantic hit as well, anticipating a year without any dues dollars coming in.

HOW TO DONATE:

The CMS Board of Trustees recently established a CMS Disaster Relief Fund, which will forward donations to organizations helping physicians in the hurricane-affected states of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. If interested in making a contribution to aid your colleagues in rebuilding their practices, make your check payable to the CMS Disaster Relief Fund, and send to the Chicago Medical Society, 515 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610-4679. To donate over the phone, call (312) 670-2550, and ask for Cathy Faedtke.

CMS sponsors foreign tours, cruises, fine dining

The Chicago Medical Society has joined with ChicaGourmets, a fine-dining organization, Global Holidays, and Beverly Hills Travel & Cruises Inc., to offer our members a variety of exceptional leisure and social activities, all at excellent pricing.

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Includes all-suite outside cabins, gourmet meals, shore excursion. Earn 4 hours CME on Travel Medicine.

William Werner, MD, course director/speaker

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● Paris: \$1,599 -- April 1-9, April 8-16

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– April 27-May 9, May 25-June 6, June 1-13, June 8-20

● Greek Isles Cruise and Venice: \$2,995 -- May 5-16, May 12-23, May 19-30

● Baltic & Russia Cruise and Copenhagen: \$2,995 -- May 18-29, June 1-12

ChicaGourmets Fine Dining

FOR UPCOMING EVENTS, CALL: (708) 383-7543 WWW.CHICAGOURMETS.ORG

GUIDELINES

Deadline approaching for making the Medicare decision

ALL PHYSICIANS MUST MAKE THEIR CALENDAR year (CY) 2006 Medicare participation decision between Nov. 16 and Dec. 31, 2005, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Here are the rules

If you choose to participate in CY 2006:

- Do nothing if you are currently participating.
- Or, if you are not currently a Medicare participant, complete the agreement and mail it to each carrier to which you participate.

If you decide not to participate in CY 2006:

- Do nothing if you are currently not participating.
- Or, if you are currently a participant, write to each carrier to which you submit claims, advising of your termination effective Jan. 1, 2006. This written notice must be postmarked prior to Jan. 1, 2006.

Every physician should consider the pros and cons of participation; to learn more go to www.wpsic.com or contact Debbie Reddy, provider enrollment analyst, WPS/Medicare Part B, P.O. Box 8248, Madison, WI 53708-8248; or call (877) 869-6504. Physicians may also go to www.cms.hhs.gov for information.

CMS members: Do we have your e-mail address?

We want to keep you updated on the latest news concerning legislation, public health and bioterrorism.

*Please send us your address by e-mailing:
askcms@cmsdocs.org
or by faxing: (312) 670-3646.*

PREVENT MEDICARE CUTS

SGR campaign: it's crunch time

NOW IS THE TIME FOR A CRITICAL GRASSroots physician blitz to prevent cuts in Medicare reimbursement rates.

As of press time, the House and Senate were drafting budget reconciliation proposals that were likely to be the vehicles for an SGR fix to prevent cuts of 4.4 percent effective on Jan. 1, 2006. Committee action in Congress was expected the week of Oct. 19.

Senate Finance Committee staff are proposing a one-year freeze. The AMA reports that its contacts in the House are considering a modest increase for two years, but have not specified what the percentage will be. In response, the House of Medicine must deliver a unified and loud message: *A freeze is a cut!*

Over the last four years, physicians have received

only about half of the Medicare program's conservative measure of annual practice cost inflation.

Yet health plans, hospitals and home health agencies are getting positive updates between 2.5 and 4.8 percent.

Physicians will not be able to invest in information technology or take on new Medicare patients if the Medicare program does not provide positive updates to reflect increases in practice overhead costs.

Face-to-face meetings between physicians and members of Congress are critical to blocking projected cuts and securing a positive update. In addition, CMS urges doctors to call their members of Congress.

For congressional contact info, visit www.cmsdocs.org or [www.ama-assn.org\go\grassroots](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/grassroots)

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THE CMS INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

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(312) 329-7346

NEWS FOR CHICAGO PHYSICIANS

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Newsletter, October 2005, Vol. 108, No. 13



515 N. Dearborn St.
Chicago IL 60610
James R. Tarrant, CAE, Executive Director
Liz Sidney, Co-Editor/Editorial
Scott Warner, Co-Editor/Production

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Chicago Medicine (ISSN 0009-3637) is published monthly with one additional issue published each winter, spring, summer and fall for \$20 per year for members; \$30 per year for nonmembers, by the Chicago Medical Society, 515 N. Dearborn St. Chicago, Ill. 60610. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Ill. and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Chicago Medicine*, 515 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610. Telephone: (312) 670-2550. Copyright 2005, *Chicago Medicine*. All rights reserved.

QUESTIONS LINGER

All Kids program generates support -- along with lots of concern

Plan would make Illinois the first state in the nation to offer coverage to all uninsured children

ALL KIDS, A NEW INSURANCE PLAN PROPOSAL announced by Gov. Blagojevich this month would offer children's health insurance to middle-class working families who make too much to qualify for Public Aid or KidCare but nonetheless struggle with meeting their children's medical needs.

The governor's proposal has received the support of at least 200 organizations—including unions, churches, community groups and a handful of health-care providers. The state's medical and hospital associations, however, have yet to take a position, largely because they don't have enough information about the plan or understand precisely how it would work. While CMS favors the concept of health insurance for all children, our organization also is waiting to see the actual legislation before taking a position.

According to the governor, the program would be financed by shifting 1.7 million Medicaid members into managed health care next year, resulting in savings of as much as \$57 million in 2006.

During the first year, the plan would cost the state \$45 million and would increase in cost as more children sign up. However, as federal contributions and other offsets are factored in, the cost is expected to decline, according to an All Kids plan overview courtesy of the Illinois Department of Public Health and available for viewing on the Chicago Medical Society Web site.

The governor said he hopes to get the plan passed in the legislature's veto session, which begins Oct. 25, in time to be up and running by next July.

While the governor has the support of the top two Chicago Democrats—Senate President Emil Jones and House Speaker Michael Madigan, Republicans have called the obligation unaffordable and say it will result in higher taxes on those families it attempts to help. They cite the

state comptroller's request for \$1.1 billion in short-term borrowing to help pay current Medicaid bills.

Physicians who practice in inner-city areas rely on Medicaid payments to stay in practice, and some already worry that delayed payments will force them to curtail their services.

Some serious questions linger: Would the new program compound the problem by asking doctors who are pinched for time and resources to act as Medicaid managed care gatekeepers without a guarantee of compensation?

And just how much input has the medical community had in the All Kids planning? According to one executive of a state specialty association, when similar programs were crafted in the past, state officials consulted physicians earlier in the process. "We were on board for months before those became legislative options," he said.

Other provisions of All Kids:

- Payment and billing would work like private insurance, with the family paying the co-pay at the time of service and then the health provider billing the state for service.
- Families with an estimated income of \$40,000 to \$59,000 would pay \$40 per child; those with an income between \$60,000 and \$79,000 would pay \$70 per child; those earning \$80,000 to \$99,000 would pay \$100 per child; and those with incomes above \$100,000 would pay \$150.
- Co-pays would be charged for drugs and visits to doctors, emergency rooms and hospitals.
- Families would be able to apply in several ways: by sending in an application, going online, or by getting help from a KidCare Application agent (community-based organizations such as churches, health centers, other local groups that help people sign up). When the child's application is approved, the family would be sent an insurance card within six weeks.
- To qualify, children would have to have been uninsured for 12 months.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Office/building for sale/rent

TWO LARGE OFFICE RENTALS FOR sub-lease, available Monday through Saturday, all hours. 1) 1000 W. Lake Street, Oak Park, IL 60301 (corner of Forest and Lake; entrance from Forest Ave.); 2) 1585 N. Barrington Rd., Suite 606—Doctors Building II, Hoffman Estates, IL 60194. Please call Robert (708) 848-3393 or Susan (847) 310-8844 for more information.

PRIME DOWNTOWN NAPERVILLE location. Office/medical space available immediately in newly constructed building. Easy access to interstates and Metra train station. On-site restaurants, banking, shopping. Near Edward Hospital. Call (630) 554-3408.

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