

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

cms news



December 2002 Vol. 4, No. 12 NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY
The Voice of Cook County Physicians

RED FLAG

Illinois on the verge of a medical liability crisis

By Theodore D. Kanellakes, CMS staff

- **Fifty-seven percent** of medical malpractice premiums go toward **attorneys' fees**
Knight Ridder/Tribune, 1/21/02
- The mere threat of a lawsuit--a lawyer requesting medical files--can drive up insurance premiums even if a case is never filed against a doctor. *Tampa Tribune, 12/19/01*
- Between 1985-1998, an estimated \$4.7 billion was spent in the U.S. on claims that were closed without an indemnity payment, according to data compiled by the Physician Insurers Association of America. In the same time period, PIAA estimates that defending against meritless medical malpractice claims--those that were dropped, withdrawn or dismissed--cost over \$3 billion nationally. Data compiled by the PIAA shows that nearly 70 percent of all medical malpractice claims result in no payment to plaintiffs. However, in 2000 it cost on average \$23,211 to defend each of these claims. PIAA, *Claim Trend Analysis*, 2000 Edition.

If these facts aren't enough to make you sit up and take notice, here is one more:

YOUR PROFESSION IS IN DANGER OF BECOMING A STATISTIC!

Physicians in Illinois may soon find it difficult to acquire professional liability insurance, and those who are able to may find the premiums unaffordable. During the past 12 months the number of insurance companies that provide professional liability insurance for physicians has declined significantly. Two years ago, approximately 40 companies provided professional liability insurance in Illinois; today, it is estimated that number has dropped to eight. The decrease in the number of professional liability carriers is not unique to Illinois; insurance companies in several states have pulled out of the professional liability market. The decline in carriers and the skyrocketing premiums are the result of frivolous lawsuits and "jackpot" jury awards. This problem is common in states that don't have tort reform.

Illinois is now beginning to experience growing symptoms of a medical liability crisis. Frivolous lawsuits and extreme jury awards have forced some physicians in Illinois to file for bankruptcy, move to other states, cease high-risk procedures, or even retire early. Without tort reform, Illinois may soon see an exodus of physicians. The resulting loss will be detrimental to patient care.

In 1985 and 1995 the Illinois State Medical Society successfully supported tort reform legislation that passed in the state legislature, only to be struck down as unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court. Today, Washington, D.C., provides the most promising politi-

cal venue for physicians to lobby for tort reform. Since organized medicine is a powerful vehicle for making the physicians' case,

all physicians must support their medical societies in their endeavors. We need to be heard and we need change now.

Tales from the front--

CMS member prepares to quit practice and renew her pharmacist's license

"In our next life, if all is fair, all trial attorneys will come back as ob/gyns, and all ob/gyns will come back as trial attorneys."

--A CMS member who asked to remain anonymous

SHE WAS A PHARMACIST BEFORE SHE became an ob/gyn. And she may be a pharmacist again. "I'll try to stay a physician as long as I can, but when my income as a physician becomes less than I can make as a pharmacist, I will go back," says the CMS member, who asked that her name not be used. "I'm a very private person," she says. "It's painful for me to have to talk about this. I used to be so excited about my work. But now I am miserable."

The source of her distress is the too-familiar combination of skyrocketing malpractice insurance costs, and the hassles from managed care and insurance companies.

"A newer member of our group made \$65,000 this year. And next year, the increase in her malpractice premiums will lop off another \$20,000. She has medical school loans to pay. Most ob/gyns who are nearing re-

tirement are planning to quit because of the stresses they face today. That means that the rest of us will have more patients to care for. But we're not allowed the time to give patients the best care. We don't get enough of a chance to talk to them, to get to know them.

"I'm studying to renew my pharmacist's license now," the physician continued. "There's a shortage of pharmacists. They work 40 hours a week, and don't have to worry about being sued all the time. I care so much for my patients, but I don't know how much longer I can afford to stay in practice."

Physician rally to highlight access to care

IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, HUNDREDS of Illinois physicians have rallied in Joliet and Kankakee to draw attention to the lack of care their patients will face unless something is done to rein in an out-of-control legal system.

Soon it will be Chicago's turn.

As reported in the November issue of *CM-Snews*, CMS is organizing a physician rally at Chicago's Daley Center next spring to focus local attention on access to care. Stay tuned to future issues for more details.

Find us online at CMS Internet address www.cmsdocs.org

NEWS FOR CHICAGO PHYSICIANS

cmsnews

December 2002 Vol. 4, No. 12

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY
The Voice of Cook County Physicians



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Chicago IL 60610

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CMSNEWS is published monthly for \$10 per year for members by the Chicago Medical Society, 515 N. Dearborn St. Chicago, Ill. 60610. Application to mail at periodicals postage rates is pending at Chicago, Ill. Postmaster: Send address changes to CMSNEWS, 515 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 60610. Telephone: (312) 670-2550. Copyright 2002, CMSNEWS. All rights reserved.

Printed by IPC, Saint Joseph, Mich.

LABOR RELATIONS

Oak Forest physicians to make case for a union

AS OF PRESS TIME, THE ILLINOIS LABOR Relations Board was set to hear oral arguments Dec. 17 on behalf of about 50 physicians at Cook County's Oak Forest Hospital.

The hearings came in the wake of an administrative law judge's ruling last August, stating that the hospital's physicians were eligible to hold an election to establish a collective bargaining unit.

If successful, the doctors will have overcome an Illinois Labor Relations Board roadblock to past efforts at unionization at Cook County Hospital: That physicians are ineligible to unionize because they supervise residents.

While Oak Forest Hospital has considerably fewer residents than Cook County Hospital, ad-

ministrators there maintain that attending physicians are not eligible to unionize because they direct patient care and perform management duties.

In 1998 the Illinois Appellate Court upheld the state labor board's ruling that the physicians were supervisors.

CMS has been watching the situation closely, and was asked for its reaction in a *Chicago Tribune* news story. Staff member Theodore D. Kanelakes, executive vice president of the Society's Physicians' Collective Bargaining Association, says that physicians need to feel they have a voice. "There's a breakdown in communication and that's what the catalyst is for these organizations," he told the newspaper.

James H. Andersen, MD, 1928-2002



Andersen

DR. JAMES H. ANDERSEN, A past president of CMS (1988-1989) and ISMS (1991-1992), died Dec. 3, in Boise, Idaho. He was 74.

A board-certified thoracic surgeon, Dr. Andersen was active in CMS leadership and on many committees for a number of years. He also served in the Illinois State Medical Society as a trustee and as a delegate from ISMS to the AMA House of Delegates.

In addition to serving his medical societies, Dr. Andersen volunteered on the City of Chicago/Cook County Tuberculosis Committee,

and on the Chicago Health Department's Committee on AIDS.

A graduate of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Dr. Andersen completed his internship at the Illinois Research and Educational Hospital and his residencies at Hines VA Hospital and West Side VA Hospital. He completed a fellowship in cardiac surgery at Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital.

Dr. Andersen was formerly a member of the medical staffs of Westlake Community Hospital, West Suburban Hospital, and Martha Washington Hospital. He was an adept sailor, a pastime he and his wife, Nina, enjoyed for many years. In addition to his wife, Dr. Andersen is survived by his four children: sons Dr. Bruce, Chris, Eric, and daughter, Laurel; and five grandchildren.

2003 membership renewal time is here. Are you on board yet?

Have you paid your dues?

If so, we thank you for your continued support.

If not, we urge you to renew your membership with the Chicago Medical Society, Illinois State Medical Society, and American Medical Association for the 2003 year today.

Renew before Jan. 31, 2003, and receive a special discounted rate. Membership is a valuable tool for your practice and professional life. Without it, you are one voice among many. With it, we stand as a united front against outside forces.

PREPAREDNESS

MCC 2003: Bioterrorism training slated for physicians

Register by Jan. 31 to save on the MCC conference

AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UPCOMING Midwest Clinical Conference is a program on "Bioterrorism: A Guide for Physicians (G-02)." This new course, sponsored by the Chicago Department of Public Health and the Chicago Medical Society, will focus on the six biologic agents of highest concern (smallpox, plague, anthrax, tularemia, botulism and the viral hemorrhagic fevers). In addition, the course will offer a brief

overview of treatment and post-exposure prophylaxis.

The program is part of a joint effort by CDPH and CMS to educate Chicago physicians in the event of a bioterrorist emergency. Participating physicians can earn one hour of category 1 CME credit for this course and up to 25 hours CME credit for the full MCC.

The MCC will be held March 20-22 at Navy Pier. To register, go to www.cmsdocs.org or call (312) 670-2550, ext. 338 or 341.

Infectious disease specialists wanted

CMS IS PARTNERING WITH THE CHICAGO Department of Public Health (CDPH) in a vital effort to train 3,000 Cook County physicians to recognize and respond to a bioterrorist emergency. The first step of this program is to recruit physicians with expertise in infectious diseases to act as

trainers. The trainers will give presentations developed by CDPH in order to ensure consistency in the information disseminated. Trainers will receive a small stipend and CME credits for their work.

If you feel you can assist in this important program, please contact Dan Pashman at CMS, (312) 329-7324 for more information.

HERE'S HOW TO BE HEARD

Click on CMS for political empowerment

THE CMS WEBSITE NOW HAS DIRECT LINKS to the State Board of Elections website, allowing users to find districts and officials, obtain voter data files, and check accessibility to polling places. Working hand in glove with ISMS, CMS is linking you to government officials as a first step in our initiative to empower you politically. Over the coming months, we will post sample letters you may send to legislators. We will also provide you with information and tips on effectively communicating your message.

To look up your federal and state representatives, go to www.cmsdocs.org or www.isms.org.

A friendly word of advice: A letter should be addressed to a government official personally. Your letter should be persuasive and to the point—a regular, typed business letter no longer than two pages. (Handwritten letters on your own letterhead are even more effective.) Always choose personal letters over form letters.

1st paragraph

- Identify yourself and your connection to the elected official's constituents.
- Identify the reason for writing and the issue(s) you wish to address.
- Highlight any relevant expertise you have on the particular subject you are writing about.

2nd paragraph

- State your views on the issue in your own words.
- Include a statement about the impact a particular bill or proposal has had or will have on you and your community.

3rd paragraph

- Clearly state what you would like the official to do.

Closing paragraph

- Thank the official for his or her attention to this matter and offer to be available for any questions.

Key points for your letter can be found on the CMS, ISMS and AMA websites.

*Since the anthrax scare last year, all mail sent to congressmen is redirected to Ohio for irradiation. To avoid this delay, please fax or e-mail your congressman.

(Adapted from: National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates.)

YOUR RESPONSE IS WELCOME

From employee to private practitioner

OVER THE PAST YEAR, CMS HAS HEARD from a number of physicians who are leaving employed positions for private practice. Many would like to see more CMS services targeted to meet their particular needs. So we are asking those of you who are making this shift to let us know how we can best serve you.

If you have information or ideas to share, please call Theodore D. Kanellakes at (312) 670-2550, or e-mail tkanellakes@cmsdocs.org

Physicians classify their employment

FIFTY-NINE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS to an AMA survey tracking distribution of physicians by employment status describe themselves as self-employed. Another 38 percent refer to themselves as employees and a remaining three percent as independent contractors. According to the AMA's *Physician Socioeconomic Statistics 2000-2002*, out of 3,341 respondents, 25.5 percent described themselves as self-employed solo and 33.2 percent as self-employed group.

DePaul University seeks patients with chronic fatigue syndrome for study

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR community research is seeking people who have been diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome to participate in an ongoing study. The study will evaluate different forms of cognitive-behavioral therapies. Participants would receive 13 therapy sessions over 26 weeks.

Those persons who complete the study are expected to improve their ability to cope with CFS, lessen the frequency and severity of symptoms and gain a greater sense of well-being. Participants receive a full medical examination, free of charge, and a payment of \$150 upon completion of the study.

DePaul's Center for Community Research is directed by Leonard Jason, PhD, one of the country's leading experts in the field of chronic fatigue syndrome.

For more information about this study, please call Susan Torres, PhD, at (773) 325-4628.

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Any member having information affecting the membership of the candidates listed here should communicate at once with Membership Committee Chairman Irene Panayotou, MD, at (312) 670-2550.

Aux Plaines

(Regular)
Limperis, Makis, MD
Neri, Gene, MD

Irving Park

(Regular)
Karande, Vishvanath, MD

North Shore

(Resident)
Adelman, Angela, MD

North Side

(Regular)
Burke, Allan, MD

North Suburban

(Regular)

Karande, Swarup, MD
Mitchell, Jason, MD

Southern Cook County

(Regular)
Hunter, James, MD

Southwest

(Regular)
Klepac, Steven, MD

Wood Street

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Horwitz, Allen, MD
Jaffe, Howard, MD
Joe, Stephanie, MD
John, Eunice, MD
Kraus, Marilyn, MD
Lai, Wico, MD

Lee, Peter, MD
Nayler, Michael, MD
Peace, David, MD
Ramasastry, Sai, MD
Rich, Kenneth, MD
Sankary, Howard, MD
Solhkhah, Cyrus, MD

(Fourth Year)
Daw, Joseph, MD

(Third Year)
Hurteau, Jean, MD
Martis, Brian, MD

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ACTIVE PEDIATRIC PRACTICE IN A VERY desirable area on south side of Chicago. Excellent potential for expansion. Terms negotiable. Reply to Box #2059, c/o *Chicago Medicine*, 515 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610.

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Medical practice wanted

EXPERIENCED PEDIATRICIAN WILL BUY pediatric practice in Chicago area. E-mail: peditricus@charter.net, Call: (314) 973-2325.

Personnel wanted

HOME PHYSICIANS, A MEDICAL GROUP in Chicago specializing in house calls, is seeking physicians. Looking for individuals with training in primary care/surgical debridement. Full-time and part-time positions. Fax C.V. to Scott Schneider at (773) 486-3548; or mail to Home Physicians, 1735 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60622; phone (773) 292-4800; www.homephysicians.com

SPANISH-SPEAKING INTERNAL MEDICINE or family practice physician for large group practice. Call (773) 895-9695. Terms negotiable.

PHYSICIANS NEEDED—ALL SURGICAL and medical specialties, full-time or part-time. Suburban Chicago location, northwestern and western suburbs. Family physician, ob/gyn,

internal medicine, gyn, general surgery, urology, GI, orthopedics, ophthalmology, radiology, dermatology, ENT, plastic surgery, peds, family practice with peds, anesthesiology, cardiology, and other specialties. Malpractice insurance available. Hourly or salaried positions available. Clinical and administrative duties required. Mail C.V. to: Administrator, 1640 N. Arlington Heights Rd., Suite 110, Arlington Heights, IL 60004, or fax to (847) 398-4585.

CHICAGO—PHYSICIANS NEEDED, ob-gyn, full-time or part-time. Pregnancy terminations, tubal sterilization, infertility, and other services. Suburban Chicago location, northwest and western suburbs. Full-time or part-time, hourly and salaried positions available. Mail C.V. to: Administrator, 1640 N. Arlington Heights Rd., Suite 110, Arlington Heights, IL 60004, or fax to (847) 398-4585.

THE CENTER FOR HOLISTIC MEDICINE is inviting a board-certified, board-eligible internist or family practitioner with hospital privileges who would like to combine their practice or bring in their practice with a dedicated group of holistic health-care physicians and practitioners while learning, sharing and being part of a healing team. We are located in Riverwoods/Deerfield in a beautiful facility on a peaceful acre close to the Lake Cook exit of 294. Call Barrie (847) 236-1701.

PART-TIME/FULL-TIME PEDIATRICIAN wanted for busy suburban practice. Only 45 minutes from downtown Chicago. Please reply to Box #2061, c/o *Chicago Medicine*, 515 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610.

Personnel available

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