



chicago medicine

CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY
THE MEDICAL SOCIETY
OF COOK COUNTY

Newsletter, May 2008, Vol. 111, No. 6

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

We are heartened and here to help Cook County Bureau of Health Services

A majority of Cook County commissioners have now endorsed County Board President Todd Stroger's final four nominees to the new independent panel that will assume control of the county public health system. We applaud Mr. Stroger for selecting individuals, including two physicians, with experience in running large health-care systems.

The Chicago Medical Society (CMS) had a hand in the screening of potential candidates. CMS Secretary, William N. Werner, MD, acted as the Society's representative to the Nominating Committee, which was responsible for recommending candidates to Mr. Stroger.

Ever since Mr. Stroger first announced the massive and debilitating budget cuts, CMS has monitored the developing crisis at the Cook County Bureau of Health Services (CCBHS). In early 2007, CMS adopted a resolution urging Mr. Stroger and the Cook County Board of Commissioners to immediately reinstate financing for all vital medical services, and to maintain financing for health-care personnel who provide those services.

In a letter to Mr. Stroger, then-CMS President Shastri Swaminathan, MD, urged "great care" in carrying out budget and staff cuts within the

CCBHS. A month later, CMS' Sixth District teamed up with Mr. Stroger's executive medical staff to host a highly successful job fair for physicians and physician assistants facing actual or potential job layoffs. The event drew 100 attendees.

Last summer, then-ISMS Chairman William E. Kobler, MD, and I authored a letter to Mr. Stroger, cautioning "county government to act with the utmost care and concern" so that patients' health is not put at further risk." We expressed our willingness to help the County Board if it requested our assistance.

At my invitation, Mr. Stroger attended our September Council meeting to discuss the imperiled CCBHS. And, at my request, Larry Goodman, MD, President and CEO of Rush University Medical Center, and Chairman of the CCBHS Review Committee, addressed the Council in November.

Through another resolution, CMS supported the Review Committee's recommendations, which were outlined in an October 2007 report. This report, commissioned by Mr. Stroger, concluded that the primary problem was one of governance and recommended independent governance for the CCBHS.

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

(continued from first page)

CMS strongly agrees, and we will work with the ISMS to review a CCBHS governance model from the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems Institute.

We are heartened to see the process moving along, albeit slowly. We stand ready to assist the new board while continuing to advocate on behalf of patients and physicians in Cook County.

Sincerely,



Saroja Bharati, MD
President, Chicago Medical Society

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

AMA Trustee, ISMS President and Senatorial candidate keynote



Shown before the May 6 Council meeting are, from left: Drs. Robert Wah, AMA Trustee; Saroja Bharati, CMS President; Steve Sauerberg, MD, IL Republican senatorial candidate; Drs. Richard Geline and Sandra Olson, CMS Past Presidents; James Galloway, MD, Assistant U.S. Surgeon General; and Michael Maves, MD, AMA Executive Vice-President and CEO.

CMS PRESIDENT SAROJA BHARATI, MD, presided over the final Council meeting of her presidential year (2007-2008) on May 6, concluding with a warm thanks to leadership, councilors, and CMS/ISMS staff for their support. Key among her initiatives on behalf of the Society was increasing membership, and the Council recognized Dr. Bharati for the greatest membership increase in all categories in over 10 years.

Featured speakers, who came as guests of Dr. Bharati, were Robert M. Wah, MD, AMA Trustee, who substituted for AMA President Ron Davis, MD, and Illinois Republican Senatorial Candidate Steve Sauerberg, MD. Both physicians addressed the Council.

Among the highlights of Dr. Wah's talk:

- **Medicare payment cut.** Dr. Wah predicted a last-minute fix to forestall the impending 10.6% cut effective July 1, but not without a fight. Instead of the customary 12-month fix, Congress appears to be revisiting the issue every six months. The AMA

is fighting for an 18-month reprieve, which is especially important given the changing political climate. A longer reprieve would give everyone involved a chance to develop a better payment system, like reform of the flawed SGR. Dr. Wah urged councilors to support S. 2785, the *Save Medicare Act of 2008*, introduced by Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), which would enact a 1.8% increase for 2009.

- **Medical liability reform.** The AMA is focusing on the state level given the diminishing chance of passing federal legislation. Dr. Wah highlighted Illinois as an example of success at the state level. Current activities are focused on educating Illinoisians on the need to uphold the 2005 medical liability reform legislation. (continued on page 4)



Dr. Wah

Photos by Scott Warner, CMS



CMS President-elect William A. McDade, MD, left, and David A. Loiterman, MD, Chairman of the Council, address the Council.



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Now, trial lawyers want to overturn this fair, sensible—and *necessary*—reform and take us back to the dark days of excessive jury awards, higher medical liability premiums, escalating health care costs, and reduced access to care for patients.

Don't let trial lawyers destroy the progress we've made on medical lawsuit reform. Let's continue working to close the wounds, provide patients with the care they deserve, and keep physicians in Illinois.

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Clockwise, from bottom: Drs: Saroja Bharati; Peter Eupierre, Chairman of the ISMS Board; Howard Axe, Vice-Chairman of the CMS Council; Shastri Swaminathan, ISMS President, and Robert Wah, AMA Trustee.

- **National Provider Identifier.** Dr. Wah urged doctors to speak with their billing departments and IT people to ensure their machinery is ready for the new system.
- **Campaign to Cover the Uninsured.** The AMA seeks to engage political candidates on the problem of the uninsured and place the organization at the center of finding a solution. Dr. Wah urged councilors to discuss the AMA campaign with colleagues and to review AMA materials on its Web site.
- **AMA President Ron Davis, MD.** Dr. Davis was diagnosed to be in the early stages of pancreatic cancer, and is undergoing aggressive therapy. He is very open about his condition and continues to attend major meetings. (See letter from Dr. Davis's son, Jared, on p. 15.)

CANDIDATE SAUERBERG URGES DOCTORS TO CONSIDER RUN FOR OFFICE

Dr. Steve Sauerberg, a family physician who practices in LaGrange, delivered a "sober" message to his colleagues. Legislators, he said, have little regard for physicians, and because of this, craft legislation that doesn't take doctors' needs into account. "An 18-month freeze on Medicare payment cuts is



Dr. Sauerberg not a bonus," he said referring to the annual stopgap measure enacted in Washington, DC. "When you're functioning well, patients get timely, efficient care," he stated. Dr. Sauerberg emphasized that physicians absolutely must consider running for political office to get the respect of politicians in Springfield and Washington, DC. This is something every CMS member must think about, he stressed.

ISMS PRESIDENT GIVES PERSPECTIVE

Among the highlights of Dr. Shastri Swaminathan's address:

- The CMS delegation to the ISMS House of Delegates brought high energy to the April HOD meeting, which featured programs on many topics, including covering the uninsured.
- Two bills in Springfield would increase Medicaid's abysmally low payments to physicians. The

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NEWS FOR CHICAGO PHYSICIANS

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Dr. Swaminathan

Senate has approved one version and a House bill is on hold until the state's fiscal condition becomes clearer. When the budget is passed, physicians may see some relief.

- UIC Medical Center leaders have made public the need for increased funding. Joseph Flaherty, MD, Dean of the College of Medicine, and Kenneth Schmidt, MD, UIC

Trustee, are lobbying hard for higher state subsidies.

- ISMS' Reality Medicine is leading the fight to uphold the 2005 medical liability reform legislation. ISMS is urging members to help educate patients and citizens about the importance of an improved medical liability climate.

- ISMS and ISMIE Mutual have arranged with IDFPR to renew medical licenses and controlled substance licenses for members and policyholders. Physicians may call (800) 632-7478 during business hours. Physicians may also call that number to have their profiling or license renewal questions answered. The license renewal deadline is July 31. (For more information, see the ISMS Update section on p. 13.)

MEMBERSHIP SURGES

Since June 2007, CMS has welcomed a total of 970 new physicians, thanks to aggressive ongoing membership recruitment campaigns. A winter letter campaign brought in 184 physicians, and the campaign is continuing through selected CMS leaders. In the future, new members will be welcomed into the Society by the Executive Committee via telephone or in person, and will also receive a welcome folder. District presidents will contact individuals when membership is initiated. In the past year, both CMS and ISMS staff have collaborated on numerous joint marketing campaigns and membership recruitment/retention activities. Both organizations plan to have membership tables at all meetings where doctors are present.

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WOMEN PHYSICIANS FORUM SEEKS MEMBERS

A membership recruitment letter campaign from Drs. Mary Jo Fidler and Linda Gruenberg is underway, highlighting the benefits of the new CMS and ISMS Women Physicians Forums. For more information or to join, contact Jennifer Cox at CMS (312) 670-2550, ext. 324.

CMS TO DEVELOP CME ON HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Dr. Bharati is working with Margaret Gadon, MD, Director of the AMA's Health Disparities Medicine & Public Health Program, to develop a CME program on her healthy lifestyles initiative. Dr. Bharati appointed Hugo Alvarez, MD, to represent the Society on this project.



Senatorial Candidate Dr. Steve Sauerberg chats with Veeral Oza, Vice-Chair of CMS Student District.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS *(continued)*

CMS APPROVES ESTABLISHING LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL REHABILITATION IN CHICAGO

The Center for International Rehabilitation (CIR), a volunteer program in which medical specialists tele-consult with health professionals in remote medically underserved areas, has established a local chapter through CMS. The collaboration is made possible by CIR's software and social networking web site. CIR has presented three programs with CMS.

EHR DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The ISMS Board of Trustees passed a resolution to work with Medicare and Medicaid on an electronic health record (EHR) demonstration project. The goal is to demonstrate that EHRs will improve the quality of care to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. This is an incentive program, and members will hear about it from ISMS in the near future.

TOP MEDICAL CENTERS REPRESENTED AT MIDWEST CLINICAL CONFERENCE

Nearly 200 physicians attended the 2008 Midwest Clinical Conference held at the Double Tree

Hotel in Oak Brook. A healthy percentage (24%) were nonmembers and 41% registered online. The annual conference featured prominent keynote speakers: Nobel Prize Laureate Louis Ignarro, PhD, Assistant U.S. Surgeon General James M. Galloway, MD, U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis, and then-ISMS President Rodney Osborn, MD, and course presenters from the area's top medical centers. CMS bestowed honorary membership on Dr. Ignarro for his outstanding contribution to medicine, which includes work that was instrumental in the development of Viagra.

CMS also recognized Rep. Davis for his sponsorship of the *Second Chance Act*, which provides transitional assistance to ex-offenders. CMS awarded pediatric cardiologist Rabi F. Sulayman, MD, with its Henrietta Herbolzheimer, MD, Public Service Award, for his volunteer efforts in the southwest side community, and leadership in building the Hope Children's Hospital in Oak Lawn. In informal surveys, attendees gave the Oak Brook location high marks and praised the quality of the courses. Twenty-three MCC presentations were recorded and formatted for online CME through the Society's Web site.



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Prominent heart specialists head CMS-sponsored course



CMS President and cardiac pathologist Saroja Bharati, MD, with Professor Robert Bonow, MD, who helped organize the Cardiovascular Disease in the Elderly program at Northwestern Memorial Hospital on May 10.

PHYSICIANS ENJOYED A FIRST-CLASS PROGRAM on cardiovascular disease in the elderly thanks to the organizational efforts of world-renowned specialist Robert Bonow, MD, Goldberg Distinguished Professor at Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine.

Dr. Bonow, who is also Chief of the Division of Cardiology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, and Co-Director of the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute, introduced the speakers for this half-day seminar held at Northwestern University, jointly sponsored by the Chicago Medical Society and featuring a panel of experts from Northwestern Memorial and the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute.

CMS President Saroja Bharati, MD, welcomed the participants, while emphasizing the significance of this timely program. She stated that 78 million Baby Boomers will be turning 65 shortly, and that the U.S. health-care workforce is not ready to care for the aging population. One out of five Americans will be 65 years or older by 2030, she said. Currently, there are 7,100 U.S. doctors certified in geriatrics, or one per 2,500 older Amer-

icans, but by the year 2030, this country will need 36,000 geriatricians, and there will not be enough to care for the elderly population. The U.S. health-care workforce is unprepared to serve the growing number of older adults because our society places little value on geriatricians, Dr. Bharati explained.

Other reasons include decreasing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements and increasing costs of patient care. In addition, 71% of nurses' aids change jobs every year and 90% of home health aides quit their jobs every two years. Dr. Bharati believes it is time to train more physicians in geriatrics and to encourage younger physicians to go into geriatrics.

The well-attended program, which included a heart-healthy lunch, drew praise for the speakers' expertise and presentations. The seminar will be available shortly as online CME at cmsdocs.org.

More coverage of the cardiovascular disease program will appear in the spring issue of Chicago Medicine magazine.



Dr. Bharati with Northwestern program presenters Drs. Neil Stone and Dan Fintel.



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ISMS House of Delegates Report



CMS president Saroja Bharati gives testimony on behalf of the Society to Reference Committee D, chaired by CMS Trustee Kuhn Hong, MD, center. Dr. Bharati is shown discussing the resolution "To Restore Checks and Balances in Federal and State Government." Also shown is committee member Hugo Alvarez, MD.

CMS PHYSICIANS JOINED THEIR COLLEAGUES from across Illinois to debate and establish policy at the ISMS House of Delegates this spring. Topics of concern included public health, physician advocacy and patient education. Members of the CMS District contributed 22 resolutions out nearly 80, with eight of them coming directly from the CMS Council. Eighteen of the CMS resolutions were adopted in some fashion. CMS Immediate Past President Shastri Swaminathan, MD, was installed as ISMS President. Peter E. Eupierre, MD, past president of both CMS and ISMS, was named Chairman of the ISMS Board. Educational programs, legislative updates, and networking opportunities, including a Women Physicians Forum, rounded out the offering of events.

The House of Delegates met April 11-13 in Oak Brook.

Extensive coverage of the HOD meeting and all CMS resolutions will appear in the spring issue of the Chicago Medicine magazine.

CMS RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE HOD

The following resolutions, adopted by the CMS Council, were brought before the ISMS House. Seven were adopted and one was referred for decision.

Study of Universal Healthcare Systems

Adopted as Amended

Noise Pollution

Adopted

Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner's Act

Adopted as Amended

To Restore Checks and Balances in Federal and State Government

Substitute Adopted

Inconsistent Insurance Coverage for Children, Habilitative Services for Children

Adopted

Internet Prescribing

Substitute Adopted

Encouraging "Green" Initiatives

Adopted as Amended

Support for Independent Governance for the Cook County Bureau of Health Services

Referred for Decision



Medical students at the CMS Third District luncheon, clockwise from left: Wen Chen, Neal Patel, Akash Garg and Nicole Patino.

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Option 2. Renew through the Internet (credit card payments only). Visit www.idfpr.com to renew online. You will need your medical license number and PIN to renew. Without your PIN, you will need to provide your Social Security number or date of birth to access your information and renew. If you renew online, make sure that you renew your controlled substance license(s) by clicking on the

"view subordinate license" link on the IDFPR license renewal page. This link will provide you with your controlled substance number and an additional PIN to renew. IDFPR charges an extra few dollars for credit card renewals via the Internet.

Option 3. Submit check or money order renewal through the mail. Renewal forms are scheduled to be mailed in June. Once you receive your renewal form, you can submit payment by check or money order only. Credit cards are not accepted through the mail.

**Reality Medicine:
Communicating to the public why
medical liability reform is crucial**

THE REALITY MEDICINE: KEEP DOCTORS IN Illinois initiative recently entered a new phase of educating the public on the importance of medical liability reform. In April, ISMS joined with our partner, ISMIE Mutual, to begin airing radio ads that highlight important health issues and discuss how these issues relate to medical litigation reform. Listeners are directed to RealityMedicine.com for more information about the liability crisis and our reform law.

In Chicago, the ads will run on news/talk format stations through the summer. The radio ads will soon be supplemented by *Keep Doctors in Illinois* billboards that will launch this summer in Cook County and around the state.

High profile messaging tools, such as billboards and advertisements, are only one way Illinois physicians can effectively communicate the importance of medical liability reform to patients.

You can play a role in advocating for the importance of our reforms. Many patients already understand the reforms were enacted to maintain access to medical care, but do not understand threats facing the law.

Talk to your patients about why they should be concerned about medical liability. Direct them to RealityMedicine.com for information, or display posters in your office to help explain the issue. To obtain free posters for your office call (312) 580-6440 or e-mail maszinski@isms.org. Every little bit helps in maintaining the momentum for reform. Do your part!

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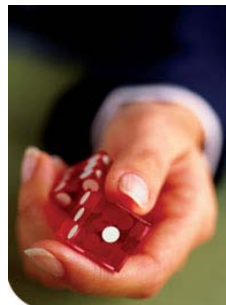
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Letter from Jared Davis, son of Ron Davis, MD, AMA President

Raising funds to support Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

Dear Members of the Chicago Medical Society:

I just wanted to say thank you to CMS President Dr. Saroja Bharati, who expressed the desire of the the Society to encourage donations to PanCAN on behalf of my father, Dr. Ron Davis, who as most of you know has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Funds raised through this initiative will support the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, or PanCAN (<http://www.pancan.com>).

Below is information from my father's CarePage with instructions on how and where to donate, and yes we are still accepting donations until the end of July.

The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network is the national leader in the fight to defeat pancreatic cancer. We are the only national organization creating hope in a comprehensive way. We accomplish our mission by directly funding research, and demanding that the federal government increase research dollars for pancreatic cancer, by providing patients and caregivers with reliable information to make informed decisions with their healthcare teams, and by helping individuals and communities work together to raise awareness and funds to find a cure for pancreatic cancer.



Dr. Davis

I've established the "Ron Davis Family & Friends" Team for PanCAN's PurpleStride Chicago Walk, which took place Saturday, May 3, 2008. You can support our Team in one of two ways.

First, go to the Team Page for "Ron Davis Family & Friends," at the following URL: <https://www.kintera.org/faf/search/searchTeamPart.asp?ievent=233829&lis=1&kntae233829=51521227F5B4444D98E1D7B087D3AD37&supId=0&team=2749034&cj=Y>

If you simply want to make a donation (without joining the Team), do the following: click on my name (Jared Davis) in the Team Members list (bottom right), enter a donation amount, and then fill out the required information for a credit card donation.

If you want to join our Team (which allows you to conduct your own fund-raising effort for the Team and/or participate in the Walk), click on "Join Our Team" at the top, click on "I agree" for the Waiver/Agreement, and then follow the directions.

If you want to join our Team and the long URL above doesn't work, do the following: go to the URL for the Walk (<http://www.pancan.org/purplestridechicago>), click on "Register to Walk" (on the left), click on "I agree" for the Waiver/Agreement, click on "Join a Team," choose "Ron Davis Family & Friends" from the drop-down menu, click on "Continue," and then follow the directions.

PanCAN is a 501(c)(3) organization, so donations made to PanCAN are tax-deductible. When you donate online to PanCAN or a PanCAN event, you'll receive an e-mail confirming your transaction, which can be printed and used for your tax records.

If you have questions, see the FAQ document at: http://www.pancan.org/Volunteer/Kintera/Kintera%20FAQ_08.pdf, or send me an email (jaredda@umich.edu).

Thanks, in advance, for your support!

Sincerely,
Jared Davis

ChicaGourmets! and



21 E Hubbard
Chicago

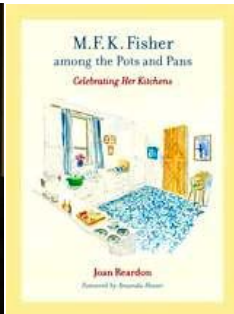
Sunday, July 13, 2008
5 p.m. Champagne Reception & Book Signing
Followed by Dinner

*Celebration of M.F.K. Fisher's 100th Birthday
On the Eve of Bastille Day!*

Guest of Honor Joan Reardon, Author of
M.F.K. Fisher among the Pots and Pans



Author Joan Reardon



Joan Reardon is a culinary historian, biographer, and author of *Poet of the Appetites: The Lives and Loves of M.F.K. Fisher* and *M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, and Alice Waters: Celebrating the Pleasures of the Table*, among other books. She lives in Lake Forest, Illinois, with her husband, the historian John J. Reardon, and their Irish terrier, Naughty Nora.

M.F.K. Fisher preferred to cook alone, and she had her own unique interpretation of the ideal meal. *M.F.K. Fisher among the Pots and Pans* provides a deeply personal glimpse at a woman who continues to mystify even as she commands our attention. The twenty-seven recipes, based on Fisher's writings and yearly appointment books, reveal her preferences for certain ingredients and dishes and give a wonderful sense of her menus and entertaining style. The result is an intimate portrait that lends a new dimension to a culinary legend.



**Chef-Partner
Yves Roubaud's
Menu**

RECEPTION

Oysters on the Half Shell – Frozen Mignonette
Edith's Cheese Puffs – Gougère
Angel's on Horseback
Saketini
Henri Abele Brut Champagne, France

DINNER

Summer Vegetable Farci à Provençal

Coquilles aux Crevettes

2004 Albert Boxler Pinot Gris, Alsace, France

Grilled Sliced Leg of Lamb – Rosemary Marinade
Ratatouille

2005 Domaine de Fontaine, Corbières, France

DESSERT

Fromage Blanc – Bleu, Blanc et Rouge

Yves Roubaud, a native of Martigues, France, trained at the Culinary Institute of Provence as well as several French restaurants in the Mediterranean port city of Marseilles and in Cannes. He joined Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Inc.® (LEYE) in 1980, when he first served as sous chef at Ambria and manager of Un Grand Cafe. Roubaud's Provence roots made him a natural to create seafood specialties for Shaw's Crab House when it opened its doors 23 years ago. Since that time, Roubaud has become a partner in LEYE and currently oversees all of the Shaw's properties in the Chicago area. Under his leadership, Shaw's Crab House has become one of the nation's best seafood restaurants.

ChicaGourmets Hosts Jim Price and Don Newcomb

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E-mail: donaldnewcomb@comcast.net Web Site: www.chicagourgourmets.org Tel: 708-383-7543 Fax: 708-383-4964

For non-internet reservations, mail to: ChicaGourmets! Premier Bank, 1210 Central Ave, Wilmette, IL 60091

SHAW'S
7/13/08

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City/State _____ Zip _____ Phone # _____

CMS physicians join “house call” on Congress

Voice, presence on Capitol Hill sends strong signal this election year

PROMISING TO HOLD LAWMAKERS ACCOUNTABLE, CMS physicians joined their colleagues in Washington, DC, to advocate for patients, the medical profession and the future of medicine during the AMA’s National Advocacy Conference, April 1-2.

Led by CMS President-elect William A. McDade, MD, the Cook County team visited the offices of Representatives Danny K. Davis (7th Dist.), Peter Roskam (6th Dist.), Bobby Rush (1st Dist.), and Senators Barack Obama and Richard Durbin.

Hot-button issues included Medicare physician payment reform and covering the uninsured.

Joining hundreds of others in a unity display rally at Capitol Hill’s Upper Senate Park, demonstrators showed their support for the *Save Medicare Act of 2008*. Introduced in March by U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, (D-Mich.), S. 2785 would prevent a 10.6% cut in Medicare physician payments planned for July 1, retain current levels for the remainder of this year, and enact a 1.8% increase for 2009.

MEMBERS RECOGNIZED



Arora

Gometz

Dayan

In other events, the AMA Foundation honored students, residents and fellows and physicians from across the country who display strong non-clinical leadership skills in advocacy, community service, public health or education. This year’s Excellence In Medicine winners included CMS students, **Hans Arora** and **Edward S. Gometz**, and physician **Steven Dayan, MD**. To read about their achievements, please check the Member News section of the spring issue of *Chicago Medicine* magazine.

Other CMS physicians in attendance were Im-



CMS President-elect William A. McDade, MD, “walks the talk,” as he addresses the AMA President’s Forum in Washington. Joining Dr. McDade are AMA President Dr. Ron Davis (center), and moderator Nelson L Adams, MD, President of the National Medical Association.

mediate Past President Shastri Swaminathan, MD, Past Presidents Neil E. Winston, MD, and Dennis M. Brown, MD.

IMPACTS OF MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT CUTS IN ILLINOIS

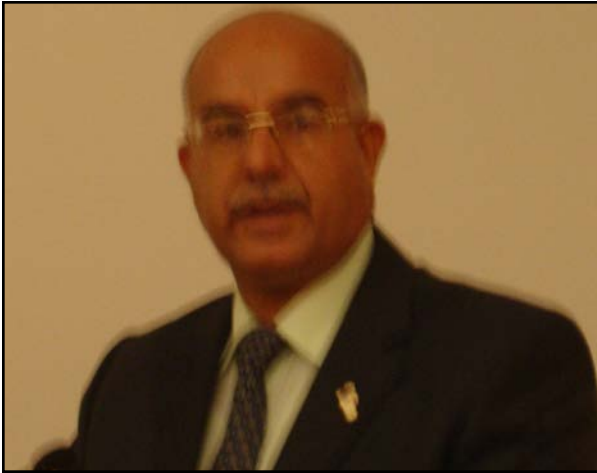
Illinois physicians will lose \$510 million for the care of elderly and disabled patients over the 18 months from July 2008 through December 2009 due to a 10.6% cut in Medicare payments in July 2008 and an additional 5% in 2009. On average, each Illinois physician faces a Medicare cut of \$16,000 over this 18-month period. In addition, the state’s physicians will lose \$9.8 billion for the care of elderly and disabled patients by 2016 due to nearly a decade of cuts for this important medical care.

- 115,935 employees, 1,594,917 Medicare patients and 155,872 TRICARE patients in Illinois will be affected by these cuts.

- 39% of Illinois’ practicing physicians are over 50, an age at which surveys have shown many physicians consider reducing their patient care activities.

In July 2008, East St. Louis area physicians face cuts of an additional 0.6% on top of the 10.6% cuts across the country and physicians in the Medicare payment area, “Rest of Illinois,” face cuts of an additional 1.4%. The 2003 Medicare law provided a temporary increase in geographic payment adjustments for certain geographic areas. This increase also will expire on June 30, 2008, under current law.

Alliance seeks to boost Iraqi health sector through telemedicine



His Excellency Salih Al-Hasnawi, MD, Minister of Health of the Republic of Iraq, addresses the Telemedicine conference at Northwestern on May 23.

USING TELEMEDICINE TO STRENGTHEN THE Iraqi health sector and signing up doctor volunteers was the focus of a day-long program on May 23, made possible by the Center for International Rehabilitation (CIR) and sponsored by the Chicago Medical Society (CMS), now a local chapter of CIR.

The event also launched “iCons in Medicine,” an Alliance led by CIR President William Kennedy Smith, MD, that links health professionals in war-torn areas of the world with specialized physicians who can provide consultations via the Internet. The Alliance includes volunteers from CMS and the National Arab American Medical Association.

Participants heard from a variety of speakers including the Iraqi Minister of Health, the Honorable Salih Mahdi Motlab Al-Hasnawi, MD, who presented an overview of the current Iraqi health sector in his keynote speech.

The exchange of ideas served to prepare Dr. Al-Hasnawi, and the international community, a viable set of options on how telemedicine, communications technologies and an international workforce might be used to strengthen the health sector in Iraq. These options were developed in parallel workshops focusing on developing recommendations in five key areas—public health, health care delivery, medical education and training, refugee assistance, and war wounded. Each workshop compiled ideas and conclusions into a final report for distribution.

“Telemedicine Support for the Iraqi Health Sector: Building Bridges Through Humanitarian Relief” was held in the Baldwin Auditorium, Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center, Northwestern University.

Organizers and sponsors were represented by Dr. William Kennedy Smith, CIR, a Chicago-based organization that develops research, education and advocacy programs to improve the lives of people with disabilities internationally; Dr. Saroja Bharati, President, CMS; Riad Almudallal, MD, President, Iraqi Medical Science Association; and Nabil Khoury, MD, President, National Arab American Medical Association.



Col. Ron Poropatich, MD, USA MC, left, Deputy Director, Telemedicine Advanced Technology Research Center; with CMS President Saroja Bharati, MD; and Paul Heinzlmann, MD, Massachusetts General Hospital.



Riad Almudallal, MD, President, Iraqi Medical Science Association.

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