

chicago CHICAGO MEDICAL SOCIETY THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF COOK COUNTY **medicine**



Newsletter, August 2006, Vol. 109, No. 10

BUILDING BRIDGES

Host a politician at CMS Holiday Reception

A relaxed setting to share your concerns

EACH OF US, NO MATTER OUR PRACTICE setting, must advocate for health care solutions. Whether solo practice or faculty group, we are all affected by declining reimbursement, pay-for-performance, and increased regulation.

Working together, we have the momentum to bring about change—without going to Washington, DC, or Springfield.

*You can take a small step—write or call your senator or congressman (or approach them at a local fundraiser) and invite that person to be your personal guest at CMS' Annual Holiday Reception. Ask them to place it on their schedule and be sure to call their office several times to confirm their attendance.**

Our goal is to connect with 70 to 80 percent of the Cook County General Assembly. Our representatives need to hear about the “medical miracles” that happen every day but never appear on the 6 p.m. news. They must know about the difficulties of staying in practice without adequate reimbursement and timely payments and why medicine was your calling. Tell them how access to care is being threatened.

The Holiday Reception will be an opportunity to thank representatives for their sup-



Scott Warner, CMS

Sara Feigenholtz, center, (Rep. 12th district) was among the political officials who came to meet CMS members at the Annual Holiday Reception last December. With Rep. Feigenholtz are, from left: Richard A. Geline, MD, CMS past president; Shastri Swaminathan, MD, current president; Tara Swaminathan; and Kenneth Busch, MD, CMS councilor.

port on past health issues and ask for their support on many yet to be addressed.

The Holiday Reception will be held Dec. 13 at the Conrad/Chicago (formerly Le Meridien), 521 N. Rush St. Details will be published in upcoming issues.

**To contact your representative, go to www.cmsdocs.org, click on Advocacy/Search by Address or Zip Code.*

CMS Insurance Agency here to help you

A MEDICAL SOCIETY MEMBER RECENTLY called the CMS Insurance Agency for help in finding a carrier with a lower premium. The doctor had an unfavorable loss history and was paying a higher than average premium. The Agency was able to secure a quote with a lower premium and obtain new coverage, allowing the member to continue serving patients. With successes like these, the Agency continues to build relationships and instill loyalty among CMS members.

For a review of your policy and to be represented by the CMS Insurance Agency, contact: Dana Lucas at (312) 329-7337 or Phil Seroczynski at (312) 329-7346.

MEETING REGULATIONS

CMS offers OSHA training for clinicians and staff

Can your office afford stiff penalties?

OSHA REQUIRES ANNUAL TRAINING FOR all health care workers who risk occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens. Attend the two-hour training course, update your exposure control plan and satisfy most of your yearly OSHA regulations.

Remaining dates & locations:

- Friday, Sept. 15: Oak Lawn Hilton, at 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Wednesday, Sept. 27: Swedish Covenant Hospital, Chicago, at 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 2: Condell Medical Center, Libertyville, at 9 a.m. -11 a.m.
- Wednesday, Oct. 4: Chicago Medical Society Bldg. (downtown), at 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 26: Advocate Lutheran General

Hospital, Park Ridge, at 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

- Wednesday, Nov. 1: Swedish Covenant Hospital, at 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Speaker/trainer: Nancy G. Hauter, compliance assistance specialist, OSHA-Chicago North Office. Ms. Hauter has no significant financial relationships to disclose.

Fees: Two-hour initial update: \$59-CMS members & staff/\$99-non-members & staff

To Register: Visit the CMS Web site at www.cmsdocs.org or call (312) 670-2550 x338. Need on-site training? Call (312) 670-2550 x339.

CME: The Chicago Medical Society designates the continuing medical education activities for a maximum of 2.0 Category 1 credits toward the AMA Physician's Recognition Award. Each physician should claim only those hours that he/she actually spent in the activity.

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE NOW

Looming Medicare physician pay cuts deeper than first projected

THE MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT RULE released in August predicts a payment cut of 5.1 percent for 2007, highlighting the need for Congress to fix the deeply flawed Medicare physician payment system. The new rule also imposes cuts on imaging services.

All physicians and medical students are encouraged to call their U.S. representatives and senators about this critical issue. Tell them to take action before the October adjournment to

stop the 5.1 percent cut in Medicare physician payments for 2007 and to provide a positive update that reflects practice costs, as recommended by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. Explain that if Congress doesn't act, the cuts will reduce access to health care for America's seniors.

To contact your representative or senator, go to www.cmsdocs.org, click on Advocacy/Search by Address or Zip Code.

NEWS FOR CHICAGO PHYSICIANS



Newsletter, August 2006, Vol. 109, No. 10

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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 2006, *Chicago Medicine*. All rights reserved.



Chicago Medical Society
in conjunction with
Chicago Department of Public Health
presents

A **FREE** one-hour CME course
All healthcare professionals invited to attend

ONLY TWO LECTURES REMAIN!

**“Avian Influenza and the Potential
for a Pandemic” (Bird Flu)**

Learning Objectives -- At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Discuss the concept of antigenic variation among influenza strains.
- Explain the current situation of Avian Flu in other parts of the world.
- Prepare for the identification and management of suspected Avian Flu cases.
- Recognize how an influenza pandemic differs from seasonal epidemics and the current avian situation.
- Cite the fundamentals of pandemic flu planning.

Offered at the following locations and dates

Wednesday, September 20; 3:00-4:00 p.m.
East Bank Club, 500 N. Kingsbury St., Chicago

Wednesday, October 18; 3:00-4:00 p.m.
Hilton, 9333 S. Cicero Ave., Oak Lawn

To **REGISTER** contact **Ellen Wuennenberg**,
Project Coordinator, Chicago Medical Society at
(312) 670-2550 ext. 326 or
ewuennenberg@cmsdocs.org

SPECIAL HEALTH CARE COURT?

Litigation reform models proposed

A NEW SENATE BILL WOULD CREATE GRANTS for states wishing to try alternative dispute resolution methods for medical malpractice cases.

Introduced by Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, and Max Baucus (D, Mont.), the bill is titled the Reliable Medical Justice Act (S 1337). It would allow "health courts" and other methods of getting rapid compensation to victims instead of the medical tort litigation process. Injured patients or their families could still file lawsuits if they didn't want to use the expedited procedures.

In calling for a system that restores a sense of order and proportion, Senator Enzi said: "Although we could expect our tort system to lead to fewer medical errors, it has not....Litigation discourages the exchange of critical information that could be used to improve the quality and safety of patient care."

The bill offers the Secretary of Health and Human Services three possible model programs:

- Early disclosure and compensation, in which the

state would offer health care workers immunity from lawsuits in exchange for a timely offer of compensation to an injured patient.

- Administrative determination of compensation, in which the state would set up classes of avoidable injuries and establish an administrative board to resolve claims related to those injuries.

- A special health care court, which would be created by the state and overseen by judges with an understanding of health care who would adjudicate disputes over injuries allegedly caused by health care error.

According to Senator Enzi, "Our current system does not provide prompt or fair compensation to injured patients. It's racked by randomness and delay. The majority of patients who litigate recover little if anything. Doctors order unnecessary tests and procedures not to help patients, but rather to prepare for a possible legal defense....Research shows that for every dollar paid in malpractice insurance premiums about 60 cents goes for legal fees, court costs and other administrative expenditures. It's time for a change."

(ADVERTISEMENT)

CMS INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

THE CMS INSURANCE AGENCY, INC. CAN NOW SERVE AS YOUR AGENT.

The Agency is a proud sponsor of ChicagoMedical Society activities and programs.

THE CMS INSURANCE AGENCY, THROUGH SPONSORSHIP GRANTS:

- Supports CMS grassroots legislative advocacy, educational programs, seminars, and social events (annual dinner, golf outing, etc.).
- Supports CMS advocacy on your behalf with state and federal representatives.
- Will work with carriers to provide risk management seminars and office assessments so physicians can meet discount eligibility requirements.

There is no added cost to your liability premium.

For more information, please contact:

Phil Seroczynski (312) 329-7346 or Dana Lucas (312) 329-7337

Breakthrough on Medicaid payment cycle

THE MEDICAID PAYMENT CYCLE WILL BE reduced to no more than 60 days for all “clean” claims, the Blagojevich administration recently informed ISMS.

According to a statement released by ISMS on Aug. 14, the payment cycle will remain 30 days or less for all physicians who qualify for expedited payments, and the payment cycle reduction would remain in force through the end of the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2007.

“This announcement is a much-needed step in the right direction, but there is still work to be done. We welcome the additional funding and hope this signals the start of more serious attention by state officials to Medicaid’s more fundamental problems,” remarked William E. Kobler, MD, chair of the ISMS Board.

The Governor is sending a letter to Illinois doctors announcing this commitment to a shorter payment cycle.

The Blagojevich administration has asked to work with ISMS to educate Illinois physicians to increase the number of “clean” bills submitted for payment, according to Dr. Kobler. He said the “ISMS will continue to engage them on this matter

and provide physicians with clarification on what type of reimbursement submissions are likely to be ensnared in processing difficulties.”

HRSA health literacy Web site

THE US HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES Administration’s (HRSA) has a new link for their health literacy Web site which contains free and easy-to-read health brochures and information in various languages. *The HRSA Web site is now at <http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/>.*

CALL FOR QUALITY MEASUREMENTS

New bill would replace flawed Medicare formula

U.S. REP. MICHAEL C. BURGESS, MD, (R-TX) recently introduced the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Bill and Quality Improvement Act of 2006. The bill would:

- End application of the SGR Jan. 1, 2007, and institute a single conversion factor for 2007 and succeeding years: the MEI minus 1%. Rep. Burgess said this would eliminate the negative feedback loop that constantly creates a deficit in health care funding, and introduce a market-sensitive system. For 2007, the MEI forecasts that input prices for physician services will increase by approximately 2.8%.

- Encourage a market-based system of quality of performance reporting. The bill establishes a system of quality measures so physicians can voluntarily report data to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Rep. Burgess says this information would be invaluable to a patient looking to find a Medicare provider. Patients could assess the level of quality their prospective doctors

are achieving and decide which doctor they would prefer. The bill would establish, by law, a system of quality measures to be developed in collaboration with specialty organizations for core services.

- Bring a one-year delay in Medicare adjustments in payments for imaging services. In the meantime, the Department of Health and Human Resources will contract with the Institute of Medicine to study utilization and appropriateness of imaging services. The study will particularly examine the role of defensive medicine and whether imaging actually saves money by limiting the need for subsequent treatment. The results of this study will be reported no later than April 1, 2007.

Contact your congressional representative to fix the formula before October. For contact information, go to www.cmsdocs.org, click on Advocacy/Search by Address or Zip Code.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Office/building for sale/rent

EXCELLENT OAK BROOK LOCATION for doctor's office. Modern building with atrium; 1733 sq. ft. available. Landlord will assist in build-out and remodeling cost. Call (630) 279-5577.

FOR SALE—OB-GYN PRACTICE IN Lincoln Park, Chicago. Established for 34 years. Tremendous opportunity. Call (773) 348-6486.

SUBLEASE MEDICAL OFFICE, PROFESSIONAL building, opposite to hospital. Hoffman Estates, IL, 60195. E-mail address: med168@yahoo.com.

MEDICAL SUITES FOR RENT. NORTH-west Chicago, number of rooms: three exam, waiting and general office; includes HVAC. Park Ridge, IL, number of rooms: two exam, waiting and office; includes HVAC. Call (847) 636-6863.

INTERNAL MEDICINE/BARIATRIC PRACTICE for sale in Crown Point, Indiana. Great potential, reasonable price. Located in fast-growing area. E-mail inquiries to chaiman@comcast.net.

MEDICAL SPACE: GREAT SOUTHEAST Wisconsin location! Medical clinic in Kenosha, Wisconsin, located in Cornerstone Commons on Hwy 50 (1.2 miles east on Hwy 50 off of I-

94 west to Milwaukee) is looking to sublet space to physicians. Ideal for Illinois physicians looking to offset the Illinois insurance cost. The clinical has been recently built out with numerous exam rooms, offices and a lab. Close proximity to St. Catherine's Hospital and Aurora Medical Center. The clinic currently houses rheumatology and physical therapy. Please contact Socrates at (847) 334-6057; or Sandy at (414) 768-0940 for more information.

Personnel wanted

HOME PHYSICIANS, A MEDICAL GROUP located in Chicago/northwest Indiana and specializing in house calls, seeks physicians. Individuals trained in primary care/surgical debridement. Phone (773) 292-4800 or (219) 864-9900; fax (773) 486-3548; www.home-physicians.com.

GENERAL PRACTICE OR FAMILY PRACTICE for outpatient clinic—Chicago-area. Part-time or full-time. Spanish-speaking neighborhood. No night calls. No hospital practice. Call (630) 452-8445.

PART-TIME/FULL-TIME PEDIATRICIAN for pediatric practice located 45 minutes from downtown Chicago. Reply to Box #2284, *Chicago Medicine*, 515 N. Dearborn St, Chicago, IL 60610.

WE ARE SEEKING A GENERAL ORTHOPEDIC surgeon to join an established multi-

specialty group on the north side of Chicago. Ambulatory surgical facility includes all treatment modalities and diagnostic capabilities including physical therapy & rehabilitation, MRI, x-ray, and fluoroscopy. Salary \$500—\$700,000. Reply to Box #2304, *Chicago Medicine*, 515 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610.

WE ARE SEEKING A FAMILY PRACTITIONER for an established multi-specialty group on the north side of Chicago. Compensation includes a base salary and bonus to exceed \$100,000. Contact mvickery@mcleodusa.net, (773) 508-9800, ext. 235; fax (773) 508-1796.

Medical equipment for sale

SAVE \$\$\$, NEW AND PRE-OWNED EXAM tables, office and waiting room furniture, EKGs, sterilizers. Call for list and info: (800) 553-8367; or (815) 678-4657.

Business services

PHYSICIAN'S ATTORNEY—EXPERIENCED and affordable physician's legal services including practice purchases; sales and formations; partnership and associate contracts; collections; licensing problems; credentialing; estate planning and real estate. Initial consultation without charge. Representing practitioners since 1980. Steven H. Jessor (800) 424-0060 or (847) 212-5620 (mobile); 790 Frontage Rd., Northfield, IL 60093.