



DENVER MEDICAL BULLETIN

Official Publication of The Denver Medical Society

Volume 97/Number 12 December 2007

Do It Anyway!

DMS President Nora Morgenstern, MD, delivered the following inauguration speech at the DMS Annual Meeting at Palettes restaurant in the Denver Art Museum November 9, 2007.

Hello and thank you all for coming to the DMS 137th Annual Meeting. It is truly a great honor and privilege to stand before you as your new president. I will work hard to lead this great organization through the challenges of the upcoming year.

I've spent some time pondering how I came to be in this position. I grew up in the Midwest and was the quirky kid who loved all the science courses, had the ant farm, rescued baby birds, tortured my family over dinner with "The Little Puzzle Book" and so forth. There were no medical people in my family, and I didn't have kindergarten aspirations to become a doctor. I did have exposure to politics early on. My father was a newspaper editorial writer, so, in my family, bonding occurred while crowding around our small black and white TV watching presidential conventions back in the days when they actually meant something.

In high school and college I continued to sign up for the science courses and helped pay my way with a variety of "healthcare" type jobs. But I hadn't considered being a doctor (maybe a social worker or a science teacher) until it dawned on me my senior year that very soon I would need to go out in the real world and make a living. The nice guy down the hall was applying to medical school. It occurred to me, I can do that! Luckily, in the early 1970s medical schools were quite interested in recruiting women students. So I was off and

running on my great life adventure.

My professional life has all been in Denver, starting with internship and residency at UCHSC and my first job in a senior clinic where I began my career in Internal Medicine and Geriatrics. Over the years I've practiced in a variety of settings – private IM practice in south Denver with one partner, hospital-based senior clinic (P/SL), faculty at UCHSC (Geriatrics), past 6 years at Kaiser (nursing home and assisted living practice and most recently, Hospice and Palliative Care). So I would like to reassure you that I believe I can appreciate the struggles and challenges that each of you faces in your very diverse practice settings.

Many of you have asked me: why are you a member of the DMS? Why be on the board, or for that matter, be the president, with all the hours it entails (Johnny Johnson's not telling!)? To answer that question, I thought it might be instructive for me to understand the beginnings of the DMS back in 1871. Who were the physicians who founded the organization and what were their concerns?

Denver at that time had a population of less than 5000 but was in a state of rapid growth and rapid change, with the era of mining and railroads in full swing. Not too different from today in some ways. It also, as you all know, was becoming a treatment center for TB, which it remains today.

Thanks to the research of Dr. Tom Noel, I share with you the story of Dr. Frederick Bancroft, one of the founding members of the Denver Medical Society. Like me, he was "a romantic fond of natural gardens". He took it upon himself to beautify Denver. His method

DMS 2007 "To Do List" Completed. . .Page 4

was to introduce the “taraxacum officinale” to our fair city. Yes – the dandelion! For this effort he suffered the wrath of the Denver Post, which then, as now, closely followed health care issues.

Dr. Bancroft had several other claims to fame. One was his research of Market Street’s “Nymphs du Pavé”. (I’d never heard that term before, but I’m sure you can do the translating). Through these efforts he called public attention to the problem of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) -- thus beginning DMS’ ongoing commitment to public health. Another was his prodigious size of 250 pounds. I can imagine him exhorting his thinner patients – “Eat! Eat!” He was reported to be a great lover of red wine and red meat. That brings us back to the present and this great restaurant. I hope you all have enjoyed your dinner and drinks!

Back to the question of why be a DMS member. We all are terribly busy. Gone are the days where lunch meetings or evening meetings conveniently fit into our schedules. My answer: if not now, when?? We are facing a time of extraordinary challenges to our profession.

Our city, our state and our country are at a critical juncture, with immensely high health care costs, a huge and rising national debt, and millions of uninsured persons. The US % GNP used for health care is the highest in the world, yet our basic public health outcomes fall below those of many western countries. You all know the facts and figures.

We are also facing critical environmental concerns on both a local and international level – ranging from

mining-related health problems to global warming and droughts. It is believed that we are overdue for a flu pandemic, akin to the 1918 pandemic, that would place severe strains on our health care delivery system and disrupt the every day fabric of how our city and state function.

Here’s another issue that has caught my attention: Primary care medicine – where I began my career – is an endangered species. Physician supply in primary care is shrinking; fewer physicians choose primary care, and internists and family practitioners are retiring early. Only 41% of family medicine residency slots were filled by US medical school grads in 2006. Among internists only 1 to 2 out of 10 are now choosing primary care; the number of internal medicine primary care residency positions filled peaked in the late 1990s and has been steadily declining since. Locally, small family practices are struggling to pay the bills. Practices are closing.

At our last DMS board meeting, we were honored to have a visitor – a bright enthusiastic second year medical student. We were startled to hear him say, only half in jest, why not become a physician assistant instead of staying with family medicine? Training is shorter, costs a lot less, and you earn more!

Why am I concerned about the loss of primary care physicians? For one thing, primary care oriented countries have better health, ranging from lower infant mortality to higher life expectancy; per capita health care expenditures are also lower (1/3 to 1/2 of US costs). From my professional standpoint, as an internist, geriatrician, and palliative care medicine specialist, I wonder who’s going to steer the ship? Who’s going to guide an aging population in making critical health care decisions? Our profession has its work cut out for it.

The public understands that health care as we know it needs to change. To quote Michael Rourke, spokesperson for the United Auto Workers during the strike against General Motors earlier this year: “Health care is an epidemic in this country”. His grammar notwithstanding, I think we all know what he was trying to say.

It is time for our profession to step up to the plate and hit some home runs (or even a few solid base hits) and take a leadership role:

CLASSIFIED AD

Medical Office Space Available

LONE TREE MEDICAL PLAZA. Buy or Lease. New construction. Various sizes available. Amenities include: Signage, Covered Parking, Covered Patient Drop-Off and more. Contact Jan Friedlander, CCIM at 303.885.9200 or janfriedlander@comcast.net.

Denver Medical Bulletin: Nora E. Morgenstern, MD, DMS President and Publisher / Johnny E. Johnson, Jr., MD, Chair of the Board / Randall M. Clark, MD, President Elect / Michael B. Keller, MD, Treasurer / Kathy Lindquist-Kleissler, Executive Director / Barbara Kamerling, Program Director. The **Bulletin** is the official publication of the Denver Medical Society, established April 11, 1871, as the first medical society in the Rocky Mountain West. Published articles represent the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official policy of the Denver Medical Society. All correspondence concerning editorial content, news items, advertising and subscriptions should be sent to: The Editor, **Denver Medical Bulletin**, 1850 Williams Street, Denver, CO 80218. Phone (303) 377-1850. Fax (303) 331-9839. Web www.denvermedsociety.org. Email: dms@denvermedsociety.org. Postmaster: Send address changes to 1850 Williams Street.

- assuring basic health care for the citizens of our state
- preparing for pandemics
- facing environmental concerns that affect the health of our city and state
- supporting young primary care physicians who are trying to stay in practice
- fighting for the principles of quality care and patient safety

This summer I attended the CMS annual meeting for the first time. I was amazed by the energy, enthusiasm and optimism of this group of physicians. We voted overwhelmingly for major health care reform. We worked collaboratively together to address complicated controversial issues. Two CMS members sit on the 208 commission.

I am very proud to be among a group of bright, dedicated physicians. Together we can make the hard decisions. We'll need to compromise. We'll have to do things differently. But if we are able to unite in one voice, I am confident that we can help shape the direction of health care reform and make a difference. I ask for your support and wisdom in the coming year.

In closing, I would like to share with you a poem found on the wall of Shishu Bhavan, the children's

home in Calcutta:

ANYWAY

*People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered
 Love them anyway
 If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives
 Do good anyway
 If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies
 Succeed anyway
 The good you do will be forgotten today
 Do good anyway
 Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable
 Be honest and frank anyway
 What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight
 Build anyway
 People really need help but may attack you if you help them
 Help people anyway
 Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth
 Give the world the best you've got anyway*



SPANISH FOR THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IS BACK!

FEBRUARY 15 – 17, 2008

Denver Medical Society, 1850 Williams Street, Denver

Rios Associates will again offer Beginning and Intermediate Spanish for physicians, APNs, PAs, nurses and other medical personnel. This is the twelfth time we have offered this popular class. 24 CMEs available. Call DMS at (303) 377-1850 or email to dms@denvermedsociety.org for additional information.

Enroll me in *Spanish for the Medical Profession* course offered February 15-17, 2008.

Name: _____ Intermediate Class _____

Address: _____ Beginner Class _____

Phone: _____

Please make checks payable to the Denver Medical Society and mail with registration to 1850 Williams Street, Denver 80218. You may fax credit card registrations to (303) 331-9839.

DMS members - \$395 All others - \$460

Payment enclosed: Check Credit Card

VISA MasterCard Card # _____ - _____ - _____ Exp ____/____

Cardholder Name and Address _____

(if different from registrant) _____

Signature _____

Denver Medical Society 2007 "To Do List"

✓ KEEP PHYSICIANS INFORMED

✓ Publish monthly DENVER MEDICAL BULLETIN chock full of information such as. . .

- NPI (National Provider Identifier)
- Health Plan Class Action Settlements
- Medicare PQR
- Disaster Preparedness

✓ Offer educational meetings on important topics like. . .

- Technology and Medical Practice
- Colorado Health Care Reform
- Practicing Medicine in Iraq
- Clinical Workflow Assessment

✓ Provide Legislative updates on state and federal issues impacting medicine

✓ Alert physicians when their voices need to be heard

✓ REPRESENT PHYSICIANS BEFORE POLICYMAKERS

✓ DMS President Johnny Johnson to meet with Colorado Congressional delegation in DC to discuss physician reimbursement

✓ Hold Legislative grassroots meetings with Colorado legislators to voice physician issues

✓ Invite 208 Health Care Reform Commission members and legislators to discuss reform proposals with DMS physicians

✓ Have DMS Chair Alan Synn discuss Medicare paycuts with Senator Ken Salazar

- ✓ DMS represented at CMS Physician Congress on Health Reform by Bruce Madison, MD

✓ PROMOTE PHYSICIANS' INTEREST WITH HEALTH PLANS

- ✓ Collect data on health plan payment performance
- ✓ Monitor impact of new policies for lab and radiology referrals
- ✓ Join CMS on United Physician Advisory Council
- ✓ Speak out on United/HealthONE contract dispute's impact on patients

✓ SUPPORT PHYSICIAN PRACTICE

- ✓ Act as a resource and problem solver for Denver physicians
- ✓ Strengthen practices through DMS Office Managers Group, which offers education, networking, and practice management tools
- ✓ Help physicians to help their patients with DMS Prescription Discount Program
- ✓ Develop statewide NPI database for Colorado physicians
- ✓ Offer medical Spanish course designed for physicians
- ✓ Create tools for disaster preparedness that address physicians' unique needs

Done and done!





Richard E. Anderson, MD, FACP
Chairman and CEO, The Doctors Company

We reward loyalty. We applaud dedication. We believe doctors deserve more than a little gratitude. We do what no other insurer does. We proudly introduce the TributeSM Plan. We go way beyond dividends. We reward years spent practicing good medicine. We salute a great career. We give a standing ovation. We are your biggest fans. We are The Doctors Company.

You deserve more than a little gratitude for a career spent practicing good medicine. That's why The Doctors Company created the Tribute Plan. This one-of-a-kind benefit provides our long-term members with a significant financial reward when they leave medicine. How significant? Think "new car." Or maybe "vacation home." Now that's a fitting tribute. To learn more about our professional liability program, including the Tribute Plan, call Mark L. Schor at The Doctors Agency of Colorado at (303) 306-6171 or (800) 366-9919 or go to www.thedoctors.com/tribute.





Some are too big.



Some are too small.



**We'll find you a health care
package that's just right.**

Everyone in your practice has different needs that can't be met by a "one-size fits all" insurance package. Introducing the CMS Employee Benefit Plan, a comprehensive plan designed specifically for physicians and their staff. Call us to learn more about how this plan can work for you.

COPIC Financial Service Group
Call Andrea Levine at (720) 858-6287
(800) 421-1834
www.cms.org or www.copicfsg.com

NEW OFFICES

GREAT LOCATION

CUSTOM BUILD OUT

OFFICES OF SOUTHGLENN

- Free High Speed Internet
- Phone line included
- Janitorial Services
- Walk to Post Office
- Walk to the NEW SOUTHGLENN MALL



6590 South Vine St.
Centennial, CO 80121

- Plenty of Parking
- Well lighted
- 24 Hour Camera Surveillance

For More Information
Call
Mark Greenberg
303-808-8282

WELL PRICED

STATUS BUILDING