



DENVER MEDICAL BULLETIN

Official Publication of The Denver Medical Society

Volume 101/Number 3 March 2011

Lessons from Washington, DC — Buckle Your Seatbelts

By Naomi Fieman, MD, President

The Denver Medical Society joined with other Colorado medical societies to bring the voice of physicians to Capitol Hill in February. DMS President Naomi Fieman, MD, and DMS Executive Director Kathy Lindquist-Kleissler joined representatives of CMS and several other county societies in Washington, DC, for the AMA National Advocacy Conference, which included visits to the Colorado congressional delegation to discuss topics that included a fix for the Medicare physician payment formula (SGR), liability reform, and changes anticipated as health care reform efforts move forward. The Colorado contingent met with representatives from every one of our congressional delegations' offices and shared with them the realities for patients and physicians at the grassroots level.

"We had a knowledgeable and articulate team on the trip. Everyone participated in the meetings and did a wonderful job advocating a frontline view of medical care from the perspective of the Front Range, to the Western Slope, and the San Louis Valley" said CMS President Dr. Michael Pramenko. "It was im-

portant that we reminded our congressional delegation that the SGR patch only lasts 12 months and that it needs attention right away."

I was fortunate to be able to participate in this year's AMA sponsored President's Forum and 2011 National Advocacy Conference which took place in Washington, DC, February 7-10. The meeting initially focused on issues facing States on a local level, from physician shortages in rural areas to implementation of electronic healthcare records. Colorado is positioning itself to take an innovative role with pilot projects such as patient-centered medical homes and the payment reform workshop hosted by CMS on February 26.

The National Advocacy Conference focused on several major issues, including preventing the Medicare payment rates from being cut by 27% on January 1, 2012. Since 2002 Congress has intervened on twelve different occasions to avert cuts called for under the SGR. However, the funding has not been provided to truly reform the fundamentally flawed system. I

found the Colorado legislators we met with on both sides of the aisle listened carefully to our concerns about the viability of private practice and the looming access issues if Medicare cuts really occur.



Rep. Diana DeGette;
Naomi Fieman, MD, DMS President

HR-5, a federal bill modeled after the medical liability reforms enacted in Texas and California, places caps on non-economic damages. Not surprisingly, Republicans were more receptive to this bill than the Democrats we spoke with.

There is major emphasis on reforming the health-care payment system and moving from a volume-driven system to a value-driven system. By the time this Bulletin has been published the Colorado Medical Society will have undertaken an all day program with nationally known healthcare economist and public policy expert, Harold Miller, one of the speakers at the AMA conference. Hopefully, Colorado physicians will be moving toward successfully navigating these impending changes.

Initially I was skeptical of physicians playing a role in the public policy of healthcare reform. I forgot to show up at my economics classes in medical school. I was too busy learning subjects like anatomy and physiology! However, I have come to the realization that if we don't familiarize ourselves with economic principles and become actively engaged in the discussion, we will be left behind. There are many problems to be dealt with, like how to create viable Accountable Care Organizations in spite of stringent anti-trust laws.



Kathy Lindquist-Kleissler, DMS Executive Director;
Naomi Fieman, MD, DMS President; Rep. Michael Coffman

The first step is to collaborate with each other and set common goals.

Many questions remain unanswered as to which direction reforms will go. However, buckle your seatbelts. There is guaranteed to be unexpected turbulence along the way.

The AMA National Advocacy Conference is held each year at the beginning of the Congressional session and brings together physicians and medical society leaders from across the nation. The focus of the meeting is to provide information about key legislative issues that will be considered that session and to provide an opportunity for physician leaders to hear directly from policy makers and legislators while also spending time meeting with their own congressional delegation. This year speakers included Donald Berwick, MD, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator, as well as David Blumenthal, MD, national coordinator for health information technology with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Jacob Swanton, Legislative Assistant to Sen. Mark Udall;
Mike Pramenko, MD, CMS President; Dr. Fieman

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Things You Should Know

CMS to pull requirement for physician signatures on lab orders—The AMA has learned that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is pulling the controversial new requirement for physician signatures on lab requisitions. The requirement was included in the Final Physician Fee Schedule Rule published in early Nov. 2010 and was originally scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1. The AMA worked closely with the lab community to first win a postponement to April 1 and ultimately succeeded in urging CMS to reverse its position.

Blue Cross Blue Shield settlement agreement expiring May 31, 2011—One way organized medicine has addressed unfair payer practices has been settlements with major commercial health insurers. Make sure you are benefiting from the physician protections the Blue Cross Blue Shield settlement offers before the it expires. Visit the AMA's website at www.ama-assn.org/go/settlements to access numerous resources, including an archived webinar explaining how the settlement agreement helps physician practices and how to file a compliance dispute, a summary of the key business practices mandated in the settlement, and an interactive map that lets physicians determine which Blue

Cross Blue Shield plans and subsidiaries in their state have settled. Because contracts provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield to physicians in its provider network must conform to the settlement agreement, physicians should be sure to review their contracts to ensure they are receiving all the protections the settlement provides.

CO-REC releases list of 14 approved EHR vendors—The Colorado Regional Extension Center (CO-REC) has identified 14 approved EHR integration products. CO-REC is an initiative of six organizations led by CORHIO (Colorado Regional Health Information Organization). CO-REC's selected vendors have ONC-ATCB certified EHR products that meet a series of rigorous technical and cost criteria. The federal incentive program that pays healthcare providers to use health information technology to achieve specific improvements in care is prompting many physicians to purchase, implement and "meaningfully use" EHRs. CO-REC and CORHIO developed this approval process to help physicians sort through the sometimes frustrating process of vendor and product selection. Visit <http://www.corhio.org/co-rec/provider-information/preferred-vendors.aspx> for more info and the complete, up-to-date list of approved products.



What's New For You?

Get Practical Tips on Issues Impacting Your Practice!

New Webinars

ACE (Acute Care Episode) Demonstration Project. CMS has launched a 5 year pilot testing bundled payments for hospitals and physicians focusing on acute and post-acute services, including office visits. Should your practice participate?

March 22—Inpatient ACE Pilot
April 22—Outpatient ACE Pilot

Practice managers Laura Andrebb (Colorado Pulmonary Associates) and Linda Lee Hendrick (South Denver Nephrology) will outline the requirements of these programs. Is this how practices will be reimbursed in the future?

Latest Archived Webinars

What's New with PECOS and the Skolnik Transparency Act. <http://revenuecyclemanagement.physicianspracticetoolbox.com/free-webinars/pecos-and-the-michael-skolnik-law>

2011 Beginning of the Year Tips. <http://revenuecyclemanagement.physicianspracticetoolbox.com/free-webinars/what-the-bleep1>

Young Physicians Meet to Discuss Social Media

The DMS Young Physicians group and friends met at Maggiono's on February 16 for their quarterly dinner and a presentation on the use of social media in medical practice marketing. The program, entitled "Managing Social Media – The New Communication Paradigm", featured presentations by marketing professionals, the site administrator for DMS' Physicians Practice Toolbox (PPT), and DMS member Vandna Jerath, MD. The meeting was sponsored by The Doctors Company.

Phil Odell, Director of Account Services for marketing and communications firm WellComm+, a PPT core sponsor, presented



Speaker, Vandna Jerath, MD, and Diane Woodford, MD

data on the growing use of social media and the ways in which professionals are now incorporating it into their marketing strategies. Mr. Odell defined the purpose of social media as "building a participatory online presence by leveraging existing online networks to generate word-of-mouth marketing". PPT Site Administrator Meghan Stephens reviewed tools available on PPT to help practices manage their social media sites from one location.

Dr. Jerath shared her experiences using social media to market a newly relocated practice by incorporating Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked In, online blogs and practice websites.

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Discussing Social Media. . .

As one of the first physicians in the area to extensively utilize social media, Dr. Jerath shared her experience in attracting new patients while creating a visible brand for her practice. She has successfully positioned herself as a resource to advise patients and the community, which has resulted in significant “word-of-mouth” referrals. She estimates that 30% of her patients have come to her through an initial social media contact. She encouraged her colleagues to accept the challenge of using social media to expand their practices’ presence online and emphasized that much of it is self learned and inexpensive since you are utilizing free online platforms rather than investing in expensive marketing campaigns.



Shawna Olsen and
Blaine Olsen, MD,
DMS Board member



Jonathan Zonca, MD,
and Michelle Robert

However, practices have to be realistic in anticipating the investment of time, either the physician’s or that of a trusted staff member, in monitoring and making current their online content. She predicted a future in which these tools will become increasingly important as a means of communication and patient interactions for health care providers and therefore an arena in which physicians must prepare themselves to participate.



Denise Auen, RN,
and Lisa Davidson, MD



Sarah Pilarowski, MD,
and Anne Kowalski, MD

. . .Enjoying Professional Networking

Meaningful Use Workshop

The metro Denver county medical societies (Aurora-Adams County, Arapahoe-Douglas-Elbert, Clear Creek Valley and Denver Medical Societies) and CO-REC (Colorado Regional Extension Center) are offering a series of free workshops to help you learn more about meaningful use and **what you need to do to qualify for EHR stimulus funds**. The next workshop in the series will be held:

March 8, 2011 6:00 PM—8:00 PM Swedish Medical Center, Aspen Room
501 E. Hampden Ave., Englewood, CO 80113

Bring a billing report from your practice with your 2009 and 2010 billings and charges by payer source.

At the conclusion of this activity attendees will be able to:

- Explain the purpose and features of the federal government “Meaningful Use” and EHR incentive programs
- Determine your eligibility to participate in one of the Meaningful Use EHR Incentive Programs.
- Describe the clinical quality measures and payment incentive structures
- Prepare to meaningfully use an Electronic Health Record

To register go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PG5SY27>

This workshop is provided by CO-REC and Colorado Medical Society, with funding from The Physicians Foundation.

RAINER AUDITORIUM AT SAINT JOSEPH HOSPITAL

Chamber Music Concert

5:30 pm—Cocktails and Hors d’oeuvres
6:30 pm—Concert
7:00 pm—Dessert

Tuesday, March 29, 2011

Faxonius Trio

Paul Mashund, trombone
John Neurohr, trombone
Greg Karper, trombone

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Academy Women's Healthcare Associates (AWHA), a leading Christian-based OB/GYN provider in Colorado Springs since 1993, is looking for a highly qualified OB/GYN physician to join our staff.

Academy Women's Healthcare Highlights

- **Over 17 years** of serving Colorado Springs
- 5 physicians and 3 nurse practitioners
- Busy practice with history of **over 23,000 deliveries**
- Physicians are **total laparoscopic hysterectomy instructors**
- Robotic assisted surgery training available
- AIUM certified OB/GYN **ultrasound department on site**

Position Highlights

- Flexibility of **full or part time employment**
- **Relocation costs**
- **Full benefits**
- Salary package based on experience
- **Partner track**
- Call coverage of 64 calls per year (1 in 5.7)
- Colorado Springs ranks in the top ten for **"Best Cities to Live, Work and Play"** by Kiplinger's Personal Finance and MSNBC

We are looking for someone who is **like-minded in meeting our mission to show Christ's love and compassion** to every staff member and OB/GYN patient.

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