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PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

NEWS

When you think professional, ethical, quality healthcare, think physicians of Pulaski County Medical Society.

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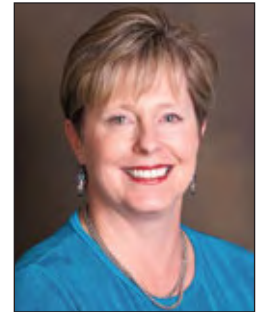
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2011 President's Message – GIVING PHYSICIANS A VOICE

In the ongoing debate over health care delivery, it sometimes seems as though the physician is rarely considered. We would like to provide a forum for your ideas and concerns and challenge you, the physicians of Pulaski County Medical Society, to express them.

The numbers are there. In 2010 the Pulaski County Medical Society exceeded 900 active members for the first time since its inception. But



Ashley Deed, MD

“having a voice” is not just about numbers. It is also about being heard.

Physicians choose medicine for a variety of reasons but paramount is a desire to deliver compassionate health care, to heal the sick, and comfort those who suffer. Delivering those services becomes more and more difficult as time demands increase and shrinking reimbursement plague the profession.

My goal for 2011 is to provide a forum for your letters through a **PCMS News Op-Ed Section** in which we bring together as many voices as possible on issues that concern the larger community and to join with those state and national medical

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2011 President's Message

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organizations in expressing those concerns. Granted, we cannot address everything that ails health care but we can provide a vehicle for civil discourse. We look forward to hearing from you.

Submissions should be emailed to Carolyn@pulaskicms.org by the first of each month. All manuscripts must be signed by the author. The acceptance or rejection of an article is at the sole discretion of the PCMS Editorial Board. For practical purposes there will be a 500-word limit on submissions. Disclaimer: All articles, opinion editorials, letters to the editor, and advertisements published in *PCMS News* represent the opinions of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the Pulaski County Medical Society or the institution with which the author may be affiliated, unless clearly specified. The PCMS Editorial Board has sole discretion for acceptance or rejection of printed materials and advertising.

Welcome New Members

Atif Akhter, MD

Leslie Anderson, MD

Zareena Bozeman, MD

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Michio Kajitani, MD

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2011 Calendar of Meetings & Events

February 15	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
March 16	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
April 19	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
April 30	Arkansas Medical Society Meeting & House of Delegates, Arlington Hotel, Hot Springs
May 17	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
June - July	No scheduled meetings.
August 16	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
September 20	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
October 18	PCMS Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 p.m., Doctors Bldg.
November	TBD
December	TBD

Advocating For Improvements to the Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act* (ACA) is a comprehensive health system reform law that will increase health insurance coverage substantially for the uninsured and implement long overdue reforms to the health insurance market. The new law includes many major provisions that are consistent with AMA policy and hold the potential for a stronger, better performing health care system. While the new law represents a tremendous step forward on the path toward meaningful health system reform, it is not the last step, but rather the beginning.

A number of key provisions in the law will be implemented this year, but many others will not become effective until a number of years in the future, allowing the AMA and state and specialty societies to have maximum input into the regulatory process and to seek further legislative changes. The following is a summary of some of the major provisions in the ACA that are generally consistent with AMA policy, and provisions we believe need additional refining.

Major provisions the AMA generally supports

- Increasing health insurance coverage to 32 million more Americans
- Making health insurance more affordable for families and small businesses through the creation of state health insurance exchanges and the provision of sliding-scale premium tax credits and cost-sharing subsidies
- Health insurance market reforms to address abuses of the health insurance industry
- Preventing denials of care and coverage, including those for pre-existing conditions
- Stronger patient protections
- Administrative simplification, to eliminate billions of dollars of unnecessary costs and administrative burdens
- Medicare bonus payments for primary care physicians and general surgeons
- Increasing Medicaid payments for primary care physicians
- Increasing geographic adjustments for Medicare physician payments
- Expanding and improving coverage of preventive services in the public and private sectors
- Funding state demonstration grants to study alternative medical liability reforms

- Providing more flexibility in the Graduate Medical Education program
- Requiring individuals to have minimum health insurance coverage or pay a penalty
- Improving Medicare prescription drug benefits by reducing the coverage gap (i.e., "doughnut hole")
- Comparative effectiveness research

Changes to the ACA already accomplished

Prior to enactment, the AMA successfully advocated for several favorable changes to the legislation, including:

- Eliminating a budget neutrality adjustment for primary care and rural surgery bonuses
- Eliminating a tax on elective cosmetic surgery and medical procedures
- Eliminating a Medicare/Medicaid enrollment fee for physicians
- Eliminating a five percent Medicare payment cut for "outlier" physicians
- Postponing penalties related to quality reporting data

* H.R. 3590, the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (P.L. 111-148), as amended by H.R. 4872, the "Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act" (P.L. 111-152), collectively referred to as the Affordable Care Act (ACA).²

"As physicians, we have so many unknowns coming our way... One thing I am certain about is my malpractice protection."

Medicine is feeling the effects of regulatory and legislative changes, increasing risk, and profitability demands—all contributing to uncertainty and lack of control.

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