

# MMS News Briefs

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MARIN MEDICAL SOCIETY

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## August 2009

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### **Huffman and Sutter spar over \$90 million in transfers from MGH**

The war of words between Assemblymember Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) and the Marin General Hospital board of directors continues to escalate. In the latest salvo, an Aug. 11 letter to the board, Huffman asked for an explanation of how nearly \$90 million in transfers from MGH to other Sutter hospitals "complies with your obligations, as directors of the MGH board, to assure high quality medical care and fiscal integrity at MGH." Huffman also requested copies of all documents relating to the board's role in the transfers.

Board Chair Robert Heller is on vacation until Aug. 25 but indicated that he will respond to Huffman when he returns. In a July 27 letter to Huffman, Heller noted that Sutter's Equity Cash Transfer Policy, under which hospital affiliates transfer revenue to the Sutter network, has been approved the California Attorney General and the IRS. "Sutter Health," he wrote, "operates much like a family that supports each other in good times and bad. In good times, affiliates share a portion of their revenue in excess of expenses in order to help strengthen the network."

The controversy began in July, after news reports that MGH had transferred \$38.7 million to Sutter in 2007 and \$48 million in 2008. The total amount transferred out of MGH since Sutter took over in 1995 is more than \$120 million, according to Huffman, with only \$5.3 million transferred in.

The dispute over transfers comes as Sutter prepares to hand control of MGH back to the Marin Healthcare District in June 2010. Several local commentators have speculated that Sutter plans to use the transferred funds to compete with MGH after the 2010 handover.

Huffman will be speaking at a lunchtime event for MMS members on Sept. 16 (see story below).

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### **MMS members invited to informal lunch with Assemblymember Huffman**

All MMS and Sonoma County Medical Association members are invited to an informal lunch with Assemblymember Jared Huffman on Wednesday, Sept. 16, in Groverman Hall at Petaluma Valley Hospital. The lunch, scheduled for 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., will allow MMS and SCMA members to speak with Huffman regarding health care financing, the recent state budget, and pending health legislation (see link to CMA's Legislative Hot List below).

Petaluma Valley Hospital is located at 400 N. McDowell Blvd. in Petaluma, near the Washington Blvd. exit from Highway 101. To RSVP, contact Jessica Whittom at 924-3891 or [jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org](mailto:jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org).

CMA's Legislative Hot List at [cmanet.org/news/hotlist.asp](http://cmanet.org/news/hotlist.asp) provides a summary and current status of CMA-sponsored bills in the California Legislature, as well as the progress of other significant legislation followed by CMA's Center for Government Relations. For more information on a specific bill, contact the lobbyist identified at the end of each bill summary.

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### **Fall issue of Marin Medicine examines medicine and food**

The Fall issue of Marin Medicine, which was recently mailed to all MMS members, features several articles on medicine and food. Authors include Drs. Dean Ornish, Mark Wexman, William Elliott and Irina deFischer, as well as Lida Buckley, RD. Their topics include motivating patients to make lifestyle changes; devising an antioxidant-rich diet; food-drug interactions; and recognizing eating disorders.

Departments include an overview of the coming flu season by Marin Public Health Officer Fred Schwartz, MD, along with articles on breast MRI, the Marin Medical-Legal Partnership, a review of Dr. David Kessler's *The End of Overeating*, an update on Kaiser San Rafael, and a profile of new MMS President Helen Biren, MD.

To read the magazine online, visit [marinmedicalsociety.org/magazine](http://marinmedicalsociety.org/magazine).

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### **MMS potluck dinner for women physicians on Sept. 15**

Women physicians from all specialties are invited to a potluck dinner on Tuesday evening, Sept. 15. To RSVP and receive the location, contact Jessica Whittom at 924-3891 or [jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org](mailto:jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org).

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### **FTC delays Red Flag Rule to Nov. 1**

The Federal Trade Commission will delay enforcement of the Red Flag Rule—which requires many physicians to develop and implement identity theft prevention programs—until Nov. 1. The FTC will also release additional guidance to help physicians understand their obligations under the new regulations.

For more information on the Red Flag rule, see CMA's Red Flag Rule Toolkit and Webinar at [cmanet.org](http://cmanet.org). Both resources are free to MMS members.

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## **Extra CMA webinar on CPPI set for Aug. 19**

In response to looming deadlines for the California Physician Performance Initiative, CMA has scheduled an extra webinar on CPPI for Wednesday, Aug. 19, from 12:30 to 1:15 p.m. To register, visit [cmanet.org](http://cmanet.org).

CPPI is producing raw and relative performance scores for physicians on 16 quality measures based on claims data from various health insurers. The scores may be used by payors for pay-for-performance, economic profiling or tiered networks.

The deadline to request the patient data used to create CPPI scores is Aug. 28, and physicians must submit corrected data by Sept. 11.

In checking the data, physicians should verify whether CPPI correctly listed the patient name, physician name and specialty, and whether the physician performed the procedure. If you did not perform the procedure, make sure to indicate why the particular metric does not make sense as a measurement of the quality of care you provided to your patient.

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## **CMA offers free webinars on electronic health records**

CMA has partnered with Maxwell IT to provide members with complimentary registration to webinars on electronic health records. Topics include "How to Select an EHR" and "E-Prescribing Best Practices." To register, visit the HIT Resource Center at [cmanet.org](http://cmanet.org).

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## **New Sutter facilities in Novato**

Two new Sutter facilities have opened near Novato Community Hospital. The first is a 10,000 square foot ambulatory surgery center at 100 Rowland Way, and the other is a 9,600 square foot building at 101 Rowland Way with offices for physicians from Sutter Health and the California Pacific Medical Center, a Sutter affiliate.

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## **Joe Dunn resigns as CEO of CMA**

Joe Dunn, a former Orange County state senator who became CEO of the California Medical Association in 2006, has announced that he will leave his post as soon as CMA selects a new CEO. Dunn, who continued to live in Orange County while working at CMA's main office in Sacramento, said he wanted to spend more time with his family.

"Rest assured," Dunn wrote in a general e-mail to CMA staff, "my decision does not in any way reflect disagreement or dissatisfaction with our organization, our physicians or our amazing management and staff."

The CMA board of directors has begun looking for a new CEO, but no schedule has been released to date.

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## **APPLICANTS**

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## **CLASSIFIEDS**

### **How to submit a classified ad**

To submit a classified ad for News Briefs or Marin Medicine, contact Nan Perrott at [nperrott@rhscommunications.com](mailto:nperrott@rhscommunications.com) or 707-525-4226. The cost is one dollar per word.

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## **ABOUT MMS**

The Marin Medical Society, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit association, supports local physicians and their efforts to enhance the health of the community. We are affiliated with the California Medical Association and the American Medical Association.

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## **TO UNSUBSCRIBE**

You are receiving MMS News Briefs because you are a physician or an affiliated medical professional in Marin County. If you wish to unsubscribe, contact Steve Osborn at [sosborn@marinmedicalsociety.org](mailto:sosborn@marinmedicalsociety.org) or 707-525-4325.

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