

# MMS News Briefs

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MARIN MEDICAL SOCIETY

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## December 2009

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### **MMS membership reception and toy drive in San Rafael on Dec. 8**

All MMS members are invited to attend a membership reception at the Marin Community Clinic in San Rafael from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 8. In addition to food, drink and collegiality, the reception will include a toy drive for the clinic's pediatric patients and a tour of the facility. Members are encouraged to bring new, unwrapped toys of all types for collection at the door.

The reception is FREE for MMS members and their spouses or one guest. Tickets for additional guests are \$45 each. To RSVP, contact Jessica Whitton at [jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org](mailto:jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org) or 924-3891. The MCC clinic is located at 3110 Kerner Blvd. in San Rafael.

### **Reminder: Dues payment discount expires Dec. 31**

MMS members are reminded to return their dues invoices, which were mailed in September along with the directory verification forms. Members who pay their dues by Dec. 31 qualify for a 5% discount. Payments need to be at MMS by Dec. 31; **there is no grace period.**

If you need a copy of your invoice or have any questions about dues, contact Jessica Whittom at [jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org](mailto:jessica@marinmedicalsociety.org) or 924-3891. Nonmember physicians can complete a simple online application for MMS and CMA at [marinmedicalsociety.org/join.asp](http://marinmedicalsociety.org/join.asp).

### **MMS leadership meets with Huffman re faulty CPPI data**

The MMS leadership team, including Drs. Lori Selleck, Helen Biren and Dan Chaffin, met with Assemblymember Jared Huffman on Nov. 18 and Dec. 2 to express their concerns about faulty data from the California Physician Performance Initiative (CPPI). Blue Shield plans to publish physician rankings based on the CPPI data, and Anthem Blue Cross and United Healthcare may follow suit. Over the past two years, CPPI has used claims data from all three insurers to measure physicians on a set of quality measures.

The MMS leaders, CMA and other organizations expressed their concerns with the validity and accuracy of the data that has been collected, and they urged Huffman to take legislative action. Results of CPPI's own reconsideration process in 2009 found significant inaccuracies, with 33% of physician scores being overturned.

Because the CPPI program relies solely on claims data, it fails to comprehensively document the care a patient receives or the reasons why a patient may not receive care. Blue Shield, which originally planned to give digital "blue ribbons" in December to physicians who scored in the top 50th percentile, has postponed action until CPPI meets with CMA and other stakeholders after the holidays.

### **Coastal Health Alliance gets grant from PFMC**

The Coastal Health Alliance in Pt. Reyes Station has received a grant from the Pacific Foundation for Medical Care to address risky behaviors among West County youth. The total amount granted to the Coastal Health Alliance and three other projects in Sonoma County was \$25,000.

PFMC grants are given twice a year to support projects that enhance the availability or quality of health services in counties served by the foundation, including Marin. The next deadline for PFMC grant applications is April 2, 2010. Instructions on how to apply for the grants are posted on [www.pfmc.org](http://www.pfmc.org). PFMC, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving patient access to physicians, includes many MMS physicians in its provider network.

### **CMA opposes current version of Senate health reform bill**

CMA, which supports health reform legislation passed last month by the House of Representatives, opposes the Senate health reform bill as currently written. To reinforce that point, CMA leaders will be visiting Washington, DC, this month to lobby senators.

"There is no way health care reform can work if patients can't get access to a doctor," said CMA President Dr. Brennan Cassidy. "The Senate bill fails to fix major problems in Medicare and Medicaid, which currently suffer from chronic underfunding that undermines access."

Cassidy called for major improvements to both programs, including better funding. CMA is working with senators to draft amended legislation that meets these goals.

"California's physicians appreciate the support of senators and their sensitivity to critical issues affecting the well-being of patients and the doctors serving them," Cassidy said. "It's essential that the Senate's leadership adopt changes to help California and protect patients."

### **House passes Medicare reform bill; Senate action pending**

Last month, the House of Representatives passed the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act, which eliminates the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula that would have cut payments to physicians by 21% in 2010. Action in the Senate is still pending.

After the House vote, AMA President Dr. James Rohack issued a statement saying, "The AMA urges the Senate to act quickly before the cut begins on January 1. Fixing the Medicare physician payment formula once and for all is an essential element of comprehensive health reform. Congress needs to fulfill its current commitments as it considers expanding its obligations. Physicians must be assured of stable payments so they can continue to care for seniors, baby boomers and military families."

### **AMA adopts several California resolutions at November meeting**

Delegates at the interim AMA meeting in November, attended by MMS President-Elect Dr. Peter Bretan, adopted several California resolutions. Among the highlights:

- **E-prescribing of scheduled medications.** Supports action requiring that the Drug Enforcement Administration move expeditiously to establish reasonable requirements enabling the use of e-prescribing for controlled substances.
- **Federal payment for emergency services for undocumented immigrants.** Supports federal legislation to extend Section 1011 of the Medicare Modernization Act, which provides for federal funding to the states for emergency services provided to undocumented immigrants.
- **Physician supervision over certified registered nurse anesthetists.** Urges the federal government to repeal the opt-out provision of the Medicare Conditions of Participation that eliminated the long-standing requirement that certified registered nurse anesthetists practice under direct physician supervision.

### **Red Flag Rule delayed to June 2010; bill introduced to exempt physicians**

For the third time, the Federal Trade Commission has delayed enforcement of the Red Flag Rule, which requires some physician practices to develop and implement identity-theft detection and prevention programs. The rule is now scheduled to take effect in June 2010.

Several factors appear to be causing the delays, including objections from organized medicine, accountants and attorneys. The American Bar Association recently won a lawsuit in federal court holding that the rule could not be applied to attorneys, a decision that may impact enforcement of the rule with physicians.

A bill (HR 3763) recently introduced in Congress would create an exemption from the rule for health organizations, including physician practices, with 20 or fewer employees.

### **State rejects expanding scope of practice for nonphysicians**

The California Office of Administrative Law has rejected regulations proposed by the state Department of Public Health that would have expanded the scope of practice of psychologists and potentially all other health care practitioners working in licensed health care facilities.

CMA strongly opposed the regulations, which would have weakened medical staff self-governance rights and could have been interpreted to allow unqualified health care professionals to carry out the duties of a physician or surgeon.

The regulations would have allowed nonphysician practitioners to admit patients, perform medical examinations, place patients in restraints, complete medical records, coordinate care, and order transfers. The regulations would also have circumvented the self-governance rights of medical staffs to establish and enforce the rules, regulations, criteria and standards for medical staff membership and privileges.

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

### **Space for Rent (Mill Valley)**

Modern professional building close to downtown Mill Valley, ideal for medical practice. Spacious ground floor suite offers multiple space configurations (smaller suites available). Private foyer, meeting room facilities and private bath w/shower. Natural light with southern exposure and energy-efficient lighting, heating/cooling system. Building provides generous onsite parking. Miller Avenue entry foyer 50 sq. ft. Total space available: 2,279 sq. ft. Contact Michael Walsh, 415-383-2727, [walshco@gmail.com](mailto:walshco@gmail.com).

### **Shared Office Space (Novato)**

Shared medical office space to rent. Fully equipped with two exam rooms, waiting room, reception area, kitchen, and shared office. Available all day Mondays and Saturdays, after 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays for late appointments. Lots of parking available. Located on first floor. Local phone and PGE included. Professional Center Dr. at Hill Rd. 415-897-9800, [dr\\_gail@marinweightloss.com](mailto:dr_gail@marinweightloss.com).

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

To submit a classified ad for MMS 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.

## **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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