

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, June 10, 2013

Meeting Highlights

James V. McDonald, MD, MPH, Chief Administrative Officer, RI Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline addressed the Council regarding opioid use and misuse. His presentation included 39 slides followed by discussion.

Dr. McDonald outlined the extent and impact of opioid abuse in Rhode Island, emphasized the need for collaboration among prescribers, pharmacists and payers, and discussed appropriate prescribing and monitoring of controlled substances. Prescription drug misuse is Rhode Island's leading cause of years of potential life lost. It leads to:

- four deaths per week in Rhode Island
- 66% of the deaths in Providence County annually
- over 4,000 ED visits a year in the state.

Dr. McDonald recommended <http://www.health.ri.gov/saferx>.

Councilors noted that accessing the state Prescription Monitoring Program is cumbersome.

Attestation lawsuit against the Department of Health The Rhode Island State Nurses Association has filed an amicus brief in support of the suit brought by the Medical Society and the RI Academy of Physician Assistants last fall over the Department's contravention of the state's "universal signature" statute. Progress of the lawsuit has otherwise been glacial.

RI Health Benefits Exchange RIMS' statement of "Principles to Guide the Design and Operation of Rhode Island's Health Benefits Exchange," as approved at the April 8 Council meeting, was forwarded to the Director of the Exchange, Christine Ferguson. The document is posted on the RIMS website, www.rimed.org.

BCBSRI, United, Tufts and Neighborhood Health will offer a total of some 17 plans on the Exchange. However, the rates for the plans will remain unknown for another few weeks while OHIC reviews them.

The Expert Advisory Committee to the Exchange (including Dr. Jones and Dr. Lange) is currently seeking a solution to a problem occasioned by the fact that Exchange will permit patients a 90-day grace period for payment. If a physician renders services in good faith during that grace period but the patient ultimately fails to pay the premium and therefore loses coverage retroactively, the physician would be uncompensated as matters stand now.

Rhode Island's exchange will be unusual and perhaps unique in the nation in that it will permit individual employees of small companies free choice among all the options.

Legislative agenda The Rhode Island General Assembly will wrap up its 2013 session within the next two or three weeks. As usual, many bills hang in the balance until the final days and hours of the session.

RIMS and the PA Academy have successfully promoted legislation to better focus the state resources and stem regulatory overreach that threatened to impair workflow in countless medical practices and delay the launch of PA training programs in Rhode Island.

Elections The Council approved the report of the Nominating Committee and elected the Executive Committee for 2013/14 as follows:

President:	Elaine C. Jones, MD
President-Elect:	Peter Karczmar, MD
Vice President:	Russell A. Settipane, MD
Secretary:	Elizabeth B. Lange, MD
Treasurer:	Jose R. Polanco, MD
Councilor at Large	Bradley J. Collins, MD
Councilor at Large	Dieter Pohl, MD
Councilor at Large	Ira J. Singer, MD
Councilor at Large	Patrick J. Sweeney, MD, PhD, MPH

In addition, Dr. David Bourassa and Dr. Joel Kaufman will remain as Adjunct Councilors. Dr. Adrain will succeed Dr. Michael Migliori as AMA Delegate for a two-year term that commences January 1, 2014. Committee chairs and members remain in place.

Officers will be installed on September 21, 2013, at the Annual Member Banquet, which will take place at the Warwick Country Club.

Community service RIMS' annual spring distribution of bicycle helmets to children of RIteCare families took place at the Community School in Cumberland on Saturday, May 11. The give-away is made possible each year by the generosity of RIMS members and the support of the RI Society of Emergency Physicians, the RI Academy of Pediatrics, the RI Academy of Family Physicians, the RI Neurological Society, the RI Orthopedic Society, the RI Medical Society Foundation and the RI Dept. of Human Services. Medical students from the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University routinely donate their time to assist in fitting the helmets. This year nine (9) medical students were on hand to help out.

This year's judges of the annual statewide Tar Wars competition were Dr. Roanne Osborn-Gaskin, President of the RI Academy of Family Physicians; Dr. Peter Karczmar, Vice President of RIMS; and TV-10 anchor and health reporter Barbara Morse-Silva. This year's winner was from the Metcalf School in Exeter. She and her family won an expenses-paid trip to the national Tar Wars competition in Washington, DC.