

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, April 2, 2012

Meeting Highlights

Guest: James V. McDonald, MD, MPH, new Chief Administrative Officer of the Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline Dr. McDonald earned his medical degree at Loyola University, Chicago. He is a board certified pediatrician who has been employed by the Department of Defense for a number of years, most recently with the U.S. Navy in Newport. He assumed his new responsibilities at the Health Department on February 27; those responsibilities entail more than serving as CAO of the BMLD.

The BMLD receives about 500 complaints a year against physicians, mostly from patients and a few from insurers. Patient complaints regarding perceived breeches of etiquette (e.g., rudeness) rarely trigger an investigation, but the Board is otherwise mandated to investigate most complaints.

Dr. McDonald emphasized that the Board considers good medical records to be important. He noted that prescription opiates are a particular problem area; prescribing them has become complex; the proliferation and abuse of opiates is a public health problem in Rhode Island. An on-line prescription monitoring program is scheduled to be available to doctors starting May 29th using a Connecticut vendor.

Dr. McDonald expressed admiration for the value, effectiveness and integrity of the Medical Society's Physician Health Program.

Continuing Medical Education: licensure requirement RIMS' CME Chair, Patrick Sweeney, MD, PhD, MPH; Dr. Damle; Steve DeToy; and the Society's legal counsel collaborated successfully to address concerns about the Health Department's proposal to redefine the content-specific portion of the CME requirement "as public health needs require." It is RIMS and AMA policy to oppose content-specific CME mandates in principle.

Licensure fees The 2013 budget proposal submitted to the General Assembly by the Governor calls for substantial fee increases for most of the 700 professional licenses administered by the state, including 270 professional licensure categories administered by the Health Department. If the legislature approves the Governor's proposal, the licensure renewal fee for physicians would rise from the current \$650 biennially to \$1,090 biennially, an increase of 68% or \$220 a year. Annualized, Rhode Island's current renewal fee of \$325 compares with \$565 in CT, \$300 in MA and NY, \$290 in NJ, and \$250 in VT \$200 in ME, \$150 in NH. The Council voted to oppose the proposed increase. The General Assembly will vote on the budget in June.

Legislative agenda RIMS's 2012 agenda addresses professional liability from several perspectives, including protection for benevolent gestures ("I'm sorry"). Also on the agenda are certain other aspects of liability, as well as prior authorization, provider taxes,

and a variety of public health measures (sugary beverages “bath salts,” indoor tanning restrictions for minors). In addition, RIMS has testified based on policies of AMA, ACOG and AAP in response to a proposed ultrasound mandate related to abortion issues.

Brown University Four medical students participated in the State House press conference and hearing on the “I’m sorry” legislation on February 29. The Brown Student AMA Chapter received a grant to promote nutrition under the AMA student-led campaign “Miles for a Healthier Lifestyle.” In conjunction with TEDMed, the medical school will host a TEDx event on April 19 (<http://tedxcollegehill.com/>).

Tar Wars, bike helmets This year’s activities culminate at the Paul Cuffee School in Providence. Volunteers are welcome.

RIMS’ bicentennial year 2012 Dr. Siedlecki noted that RIMS’ bicentennial observances have so far included release of the anthology *Medical Odysseys*, an authors’ reception and book signing, and a special historical exhibit at Brown’s John Hay Library. The next major event will be a gala at Rosecliff on April 21. She highlighted the generosity of the sponsors and Steve DeToy’s success in building a fund for the bicentennial. As always, www.rimed.org provides more information.

Nominating Committee In accordance with the Bylaws, Dr. Damle, Dr. Adrain and Dr. Jones are *ex officio* members of this year’s committee. Dr. Damle has appointed Dr. Gary Bubly, Dr. Vera De Palo, Dr. Yul Ejnes and Dr. Diane Siedlecki to round out the committee