

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, October 4, 2010

Meeting Highlights

Provider tax litigation Discovery and briefing are complete. A judge's decision is expected this month. An appeal by one side or the other will no doubt follow. RIMS has financed the effort to date with four waves of fundraising from the medical community since June 2007. In addition, the AMA Litigation Center has provided two contributions (in 2008 and 2010) totaling twenty thousand dollars. A fifth wave of fundraising is underway targeting sixteen national specialty societies with the support of the respective state chapters of those societies in Rhode Island.

Health insurance commissioner's survey of physicians Council members received copies of the 2010 survey that was conducted last summer and released in September by the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner. For the third year in a row, the survey documents physicians' dissatisfaction with all three commercial payers in the market and their consistent rating of BCBSRI as nevertheless being superior to both Tufts and United, with United consistently getting the lowest ratings of all from physicians.

Health system reform RIMS is a participant in community efforts initiated and led by the Lieutenant Governor seeking to anticipate and act upon statewide opportunities and challenges created by the new federal health care legislation. An interim task force report was released on September 23.

Liability RIMS' leadership and staff, along with claims managers and risk managers from liability carriers, hospitals and a few large medical practices, had a rare opportunity to interact informally with the new Presiding Justice of the RI Superior Court, Alice B. Gibney, on September 23. Justice Gibney has significantly reorganized and tightened the court's management of medical liability cases. The occasion was arranged for the community by the NORCAL Mutual Insurance Company.

Tar Wars™ RIMS needs more physician and medical student volunteer faculty to offer the annual tobacco education curriculum known as "Tar Wars" in fifty-some RI middle schools again this year. RIMS long had an over-abundance of volunteers each year, but a shortage has developed in recent years. The program begins in January each year. Several members of the Council spoke in praise of the Tar Wars program.

2011 member dues The Council voted to maintain RIMS member dues at current levels for another year, with the exception of dues for members on active military duty, whose discounted dues rate will be further reduced to zero.

Executive Committee The Council voted to amend the Bylaws to include the Alternate Delegate to the AMA House of Delegates as a member *ex officio* of the RIMS Executive

Committee. (AMA Delegates have long been members of the RIMS Executive Committee and the RIMS Council; Alternate Delegates have long been members of the RIMS Council but not of the Executive Committee, which is a smaller subset of the Council.)

HIV program cuts; pharmacy issues; payment issues The Council reviewed a number of developing matters that are of current concern to RIMS, including: state budget cuts affecting Rhode Islanders with HIV; the RI Pharmacy Board's over-restrictive view of physician dispensing in emergency departments; the state's continued failure to facilitate centralized monitoring of prescriptions for controlled substances; payers' elimination of patient out-of-pocket co-pays, etc., for preventive services; the elimination of consultation codes under CPT and the redistribution of the consultation RVUs (Relative Value Units) to other Evaluation & Management codes; the management of the state's vaccine program, under which the state purchases child and adult vaccines with funds provided by third party payers; and medical students as an untapped resource for providing vaccinations in the event of another influenza epidemic.

November 2 elections, 2011 legislative agenda Council members were encouraged to support RIMPAC and AMPAC, and to vote on Election Day. The Public Laws Committee, chaired by Dr. Migliori, will convene after the November elections to review options and priorities for the new General Assembly session that will open on January 4. Specialties are particularly encouraged to bring their issues and ideas to Public Laws.

Annual member banquet New RIMS leadership (elected by the Council in June) was installed in office on October 2 at the Squantum Association. Gary Bubly, MD, an emergency physician at the Miriam, succeeded Dr. Vera De Palo as President of RIMS. Dr. Nitin S. Damle is President-Elect. The Hill Award was presented to David Etensohn, MD. The Rakatansky Award was presented to Caroline Troise, MD.