

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, December 1, 2008

Meeting Highlights

PREAUTHORIZATION FOR IMAGING The Rhode Island Chapter of the American College of Cardiology reported progress in discussions with BCBSRI and its vendor, MedSolutions, regarding appropriate use of echocardiography and nuclear cardiac imaging. (The national ACC and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology have also weighed in on the Rhode Island discussion from a national perspective.) RIMS has reinforced the cardiologists' concerns in RIMS' own regular meetings with BCBSRI. RIMS has welcomed demonstrations of flexibility on the part of the insurer and its vendor (e.g., the initial grace period, concessions to radiology and oncology, and the prospect of positive changes affecting cardiology). Preauthorization requirements for imaging have been an active concern of RIMS since 2001. The issue has been a topic of every RIMS Council and Executive Committee meeting for the past 26 months.

PROVIDER TAXES The multi-step process of challenging the gross receipts taxes enacted by the RI General Assembly in June 2007 has proceeded on budget, and generally on schedule.

On December 1, 2008, the Hearing Officer for the Division of Taxation issued a final denial to RIMS. This event opens the door for RIMS to initiate litigation against the state. Having waited 12 weeks for the denial, RIMS expects to file suit later this month. (At its July 28 meeting, the RIMS Council reaffirmed its authorization for the RIMS Treasurer to proceed to suit.)

RIMS' legislative and judicial challenges to the taxes have already been successful to the extent that the 2009 state budget did not increase or broaden the existing provider taxes.

PRIMARY CARE The RI Primary Care Leadership Council, which was founded as an autonomous organization in 2006, has proposed to RIMS that RIMS and the PCLC explore possibilities of formally joining the two organizations together. Toward that end, a group of 8 conferees had a fruitful meeting on November 17. Further discussion is planned, and recommendations to the Council will probably be forthcoming.

HOSPITAL MERGERS RIMS will recirculate its 7-month old white paper and provide a forum at a future Council meeting for proponents of the merger of the Lifespan and Care New England hospital systems.

RI's APPLICATION TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR A "GLOBAL WAIVER" UNDER MEDICAID Rhode Island is asking the federal government for permission to restructure Rhode Island Medicaid over the next 5 years. The stated goals are increased consumer choice and substantial cost savings (including a projected \$67 million in savings to the state in the current FY, which began July 1, 2008). RIMS meets

regularly with a broad coalition of community organizations monitoring the progress of RI's waiver application at the federal level.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS At this meeting, the Council elected Gillian E. Pearis, MD, to the position of Vice President of RIMS. Dr. Pearis is a child and adolescent psychiatrist practicing in Providence.

The Council also elected Nitin S. Damle, MD, to the position of Councilor-at-Large. Dr. Damle is a general internist practicing in Wakefield. He is also the current Governor of ACP until April 2011. (Councilors-at-Large serve on the Executive Committee as well as the Council.)

The Council amended the RIMS Bylaws to modify the process of nomination and election to encourage broader participation and enhance transparency.

PATIENT SAFETY The Council discussed ways to reinvigorate the process initiated by RIMS and the Hospital Association a year ago to eliminate wrong site/ wrong procedure/ wrong patient errors throughout the health care system in RI.

2009 GENERAL ASSEMBLY The Public Laws Committee will meet December 9. The meeting is open. Specialty societies are urged to attend and to share legislative initiatives they contemplate. Specialties have been invited to submit ideas for inclusion on RIMS' legislative agenda for the 2009 session of the General Assembly, which opens January 6.

AMPAC and RIMPAC RIMS Past President, Public Laws Chair and AMA Delegation Chair Michael Migliori, MD, has been elected by the AMA Board of Trustees to a 2-year term on the Board of AMPAC, effective Dec. 1.

Council members are urged to encourage their constituents to support AMPAC and RIMPAC, which must rebuild for the next election cycle.

DELEGATION TO AMA The Council paid tribute to the long, varied and continuing service to RIMS of Dr. Arthur Frazzano and Dr. Michael Macko, including their combined 14 years representing Rhode Island in the AMA Houses of Delegates.

2009 RIMS BUDGET The Council reviewed and approved a budget for the Medical Society for the coming year.

COMING EVENTS

- On December 4 RIMS will host a CME-bearing AMA program at RIMS to help physicians address patients' concerns about vaccine safety.
- On December 10 at RIMS, Dr. Peter Hollmann will present on CPT changes for 2009.
- RIMS is working with the Connecticut State Medical Society to bring consultant Frank Cohen back to southern New England early in 2009 to present again on enhancing practice revenue.