

# Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, June 6, 2011

## \*\*\*Meeting Highlights\*\*\*

**Prior Authorization** Dr. Bubly's op-ed piece, published May 19 in the *Providence Journal*, is part of an on-going, all-fronts effort to reduce the burden of preauthorization requirements for high-end imaging. The efforts include numerous direct discussions with Blue Cross' leadership, including its CEO, as well as legislative, regulatory and public education approaches.

Dr. Bubly encourages physicians to report their own experiences and concerns in writing to the Interim Director of Health, the Health Insurance Commissioner, the CMO of Blue Cross and to legislative representatives.

**Accountable Care Organizations** The public comment period on the proposals published on March 31 by CMS and other federal agencies ends this week. RIMS' well-attended ACO seminar for RIMS members, held on April 14, anticipated the consensus that has since emerged generally in organized medicine that the federal ACO proposal is unwieldy and hardly viable. It remains to be seen how long the "final" ACO proposal will take to emerge and how different it will be from the original.

RIMS is meanwhile in discussion with the medical societies of MA, CT, NY, NJ and PA to explore potential regional opportunities to deploy Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans (COOPs) and/or Multi-Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs) to benefit physicians.

**Leadership team for 2011/2012** The Council elected the following to take office on September 17: Nitin Damle, MD, President; Alyn Adrain, MD, President-elect; Elaine Jones, MD, Vice President; Elizabeth Lange, MD, Secretary; Jerry Fingerut, MD, Treasurer. Michael Migliori, MD, was reelected Delegate to the AMA. Councilors at Large, Adjunct Councilors, directors of the RIMS-IBC and committee chairs were reelected.

**Legislative agenda** Dr. Migliori provided an update on RIMS' legislative agenda, which includes measures relating to medical professional liability for physicians, physician assistants and hospitals; a bill to promote transparency of the medical professional liability insurance industry; a bill to reduce the burden of prior authorization requirements; and bills to promote public health with regard to tanning salons, sugary beverages, seat belts, ignition interlocks and tobacco. In addition, RIMS is seeking repeal of the medical provider taxes and enactment of tax credits for physicians who provide on-call emergency services.

**Specialty reports** The Council heard reports from Dr. Alyn Adrain, representing the RI Gastroenterological Society, Dr. Sarah Fessler, representing the RI Academy of Family Physicians; and Dr. Andrea Mernan, representing the RI Psychiatric Society; Dr. Mernan

also represents Rhode Island in Area 1 of the APA, which includes most of eastern Canada as well as New England.

Gastroenterologists are finding that patients with high-deductible plans have an unfortunate incentive to skimp on needed follow-up care.

The recent annual meeting of the Academy of Family Physicians included an address by Dr. Bubly as RIMS President and presentations on the Patient Centered Medical Home, a concept in which Rhode Island has become a national leader.

Psychiatrists are concerned about the low practical relevance and high expense of the Maintenance of Certification process; about certain coding issues; and about the potential expansion of prescriptive privileges for psychologists in certain other states. Also, psychiatrists are persistently underrepresented among the membership of state medical societies, including RIMS; a lingering misperception that RIMS membership requires and is contingent upon AMA membership may be a contributing cause.

Responding to a request from Dr. Bubly, Lt. Colonel Frederick Burgess, MD, shared some impressions from his recent deployment to Iraq.

**Commendation for Dr. Steve Lee** The Council passed a resolution commending Dr. Steve Lee for his local, regional and national leadership in organized medicine during his years as a student at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and for his outstanding participation in public policy advocacy on behalf of RIMS, as well as for his other voluntary activities in support of various RIMS efforts and programs during his medical school career. (Dr. Lee received his medical degree from Brown on May 29 and was the Class Speaker at graduation. He will pursue residency training in internal medicine at Boston University.)

It was noted that the Brown Student Chapter of AMA has become increasingly strong and active over the past dozen years.