

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, June 6, 2016

Meeting Highlights

Senator Christopher Ottiano, MD

Dr. Ottiano was first elected to the RI Senate from District 11 (Portsmouth, Bristol, Tiverton) in 2010 as a Republican. He was reelected in 2012 and 2014. He left the Senate half-way through his third term, in October 2015, to become an associate medical director of Neighborhood Health Plan. He no longer practices surgery.

In his remarks to the Council, Senator Ottiano praised the Medical Society's leadership for volunteering their time, talent and energy to shape the future of medical practice and patient care through tenacious engagement with the political process.

He observed that the challenges facing individual practitioners have become overwhelming and have largely eclipsed physicians' entrepreneurial options and ambitions. The advent of third-party payers 70 years ago separated the recipient of services and the provider of services from the payer for services. As one consequence, high costs are now "choking our nation." Direct-to-consumer advertising further drives costs and undermines professional authority. "Cost is what it's all about" today, observed Senator Ottiano.

He noted that society allocates scarce resources through the political process, and that physicians therefore owe it to themselves, to their patients and to the physicians and patients of the future to engage with the political process at every level. They should vote and give to organized PACs and/or individual candidates. They should inform themselves and build relationships with elected representatives.

Senator Ottiano advised his colleagues that their first encounter with an elected official should not be occasioned by their own need for a favor. Because 2016 is an election year, officeholders and office seekers will be seeking to connect with voters and raise money for their campaigns. Citizens therefore have valuable opportunities to invest in relationship-building this year.

In responding to Senator Ottiano's remarks, some members of the Council expressed a more hopeful long-term view of physicians' opportunities to assert their autonomy and find fulfillment in their professional work. It was suggested that independence remains possible in some areas of medicine, but that the dampening of entrepreneurial opportunity may serve to smother some of the creativity that will be needed to realize successful reform of the American health care system.

Nominating Committee The Council approved the report of the Nominating Committee, thus electing Dr. Sarah Fessler as President, Dr. Bradley Collins as President-Elect, and Dr. Peter Hollmann as Vice President. Reelected were Dr. Jose Polanco as Treasurer and Dr. Christine Brousseau as Secretary. These 2016/17 officers will assume office on Friday, September 23, in the context of RIMS' annual meeting, which will take place at the Squantum Club in Riverside that evening.

RIMS legislative agenda 2016 Dr. Migliori, as Public Laws chair, provided an update on the General Assembly session and reviewed the status of RIMS' legislative agenda.

The General Assembly will soon be acting on the budget, and will then adjourn. Prospects appear encouraging for RIMS' new bill to improve credentialing processes.

Colorectal screening pledge Upon the recommendation of Drs. Lavigne and Adrain, the Council voted to place RIMS on record supporting the goal set by the American Cancer Society of reaching an 80% screening rate for colorectal cancer by 2018.

Coming events

- Choosing Wisely Kick-off, June 10 (co-sponsored by RIMS and the RI Business Group on Health, at Brown University).
- RIMS member cooking class: pizza on the grill, June 14, 166 Valley Street, Providence.
- RIMS Member Convivium (annual meeting), September 23, at the Squantum Club (awards, installation of officers).
- *Senior Physicians: Addressing Age, Ability and Acumen*, September 30, at the Crowne Plaza, Warwick (a regional conference initiated and organized by the RIMS Physician Health Program and made possible by a grant from the Coverys Community Healthcare Foundation).

Other matters

- RIMS participated in meetings of the Council of New England State Medical Societies and the New England Delegation to AMA held in Freeport, ME, on May 21.
- Opioids will be added to the CME carve-out requirement for the next 2-year licensure cycle that will end June 2018.
- RIMS sold the RIMS Insurance Brokerage Corporation on June 1.
- RIMS may lead a new collaboration with AMA, YMCA, Health Department, Warren Alpert Medical School and Healthcentric Advisors to promote healthy weight.