

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, August 8, 2011

Meeting Highlights

Prior Authorization for high-end imaging The community's on-going concerns about this issue are well articulated by Dr. Elizabeth Lange in a three-page letter dated June 6, 2011, and addressed to Director of Health Michael Fine, MD. Writing in her capacity as Chair of the Health Department's Primary Care Advisory Committee (PCPAC), Dr. Lange's letter summarizes the PCPAC's discussion of May 18, 2011, and includes six specific recommendations for improving the prior authorization process; the recommendations support those put forward by RIMS and RI-ACP. Presentations by the Rhode Island Medical Society and a Blue Cross medical director helped frame the issues for the PCPAC.

RI General Assembly The Council reviewed the results of the state legislative session that ended June 30, including wins and losses for medicine on several bills relating to liability, prior authorization, taxes and public health matters. Next steps in Rhode Island's implementation of national health system reforms were discussed.

Each member of the RIMS Council received a one-page summary of information regarding the individual state senator and state representative who represent the respective Council member, including contact information for the elected officials. All Council members are encouraged to establish contact with their General Assembly representatives well before the start of next session in January.

RIMS' Annual Meeting Dr. Bubby announced that Dr. Arthur Frazzano will receive the Hill Award and Dr. Pablo Rodriguez the Rakatansky Award at the annual member banquet on Saturday, September 17, at the Viking Hotel in Newport. New RIMS officers elected by the Council in June will be installed in office that evening.

American Medical Association Rhode Islanders currently occupy a number of leadership positions in the AMA.

- Dr. Michael Migliori serves on the Board of Directors of AMPAC. (Founded in 1961, AMPAC is celebrating its semicentennial this year; AMPAC is the nation's oldest non-labor political action committee.)
- Dr. Peter Hollmann is the newly appointed Chair of the AMA's CPT Editorial Panel.
- Dr. Stuart Gitlow has been reelected to the AMA Council on Science and Public Health.
- Fourth-year Brown medical student Eugene Cone represents the medical students of all of the medical schools in New England and New York State in the AMA House of Delegates.
- Second-year medical student Grayson Armstrong is Speaker of the Medical Student Section of the AMA House of Delegates.

- Newell Warde is Chair of the Executive Committee of the Litigation Center of the AMA and State Medical Societies.
- Steve DeToy serves on the executive committee of the AMA Advocacy Resource Center.

In addition, Dr. Georgia Tuttle, a New Hampshire dermatologist, was elected a Trustee of the AMA in June.

National advocacy The Council reviewed a recent sample of the numerous advocacy letters produced by the AMA to which RIMS, other state medical societies and numerous national specialties are routine signatories. Each year AMA analyzes and comments upon thousands of pages of federal documents on behalf of medicine. This essential work is part of the process by which medicine participates in shaping regulations that govern the implementation of federal laws.

In addition to regulatory matters, AMA and the rest of organized medicine collaborate similarly in shaping legislative proposals that are before Congress. In the judicial arena, the Litigation Center of the AMA and State Medical Societies that advocates for physicians' interests.

Last year's AMA victory on "Red Flags" resulted from AMA advocacy on all three fronts at once: regulatory, legislative and judicial.

Reports Dr. Martin Papazian reported on behalf of the RI Society of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgeons that Rhode Island otolaryngologists remain concerned about wasteful burdens imposed by insurers, including prior authorization requirements for certain procedures, down-coding and time lost in dealing with these issues on the telephone.

Dr. Kenneth Williams, representing the RI Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, presented selected statistics regarding utilization, personnel and facilities in Rhode Island. Emergency departments in RI receive about half a million visits a year. About 17% of visits are non-emergent; a similar proportion of visits results in observation or admission. Only three percent of total national health care spending is for emergency care. Half of emergency care is uncompensated. On average, every emergency physician in Rhode Island provides \$138,300 worth of uncompensated care annually.

Dr. Paul McKenney is chair of the board of directors of Quality Partners of Rhode Island. The Medical Society founded Quality Partners in 1995. The organization is now a fully independent 501(c)(3) entity. Quality Partners is changing its name to "Healthcentric Advisors"; the new name is intended to reflect the fact that Quality Partners' activities extend far beyond the boundaries of Rhode Island, and to more clearly identify the industry sector to which the organization belongs ("health").

RIMS' bicentennial Bicentennial observances in 2012 will include a black tie gala at Rosecliff on April 21; a series of public lectures, in conjunction with the Brown Institute for Brain Science, on advances in neurobiology and ramifications for society; and formal presentation of RIMS' portrait of Dr. Amos Throop (1736 – 1814), first president of RIMS, painted by Ralph Earl ca. 1795, to the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. Other events will include special publications on RIMS' history.