

Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, April 8, 2013

Meeting Highlights

RI Health Benefits Exchange The RIMS Council approved a statement of “Principles to Guide the Design and Operation of Rhode Island’s Health Benefits Exchange.” This new RIMS policy statement was developed at Dr. Adrain’s request by Dr. Joel Kaufman, Adjunct Councilor, in collaboration with RIMS staff in light of discussion at the February 8 meeting of the RIMS Council.

The statement has been forwarded to Christine C. Ferguson, director of the Exchange, and to others currently involved in the design of the Exchange, including Dr. Peter Howland, RIMS’ representative on the Exchange Advisory Board. In addition, serving on the Expert Advisory Board of the Exchange are RIMS’ President-Elect Elaine Jones, MD; RIMS’ Secretary Elizabeth Lange, MD; and former RIMS President Nick Tsiongas, MD, MPH,

The new RIMS policy statement is posted on the RIMS website, www.rimed.org.

Cost profiling by BCBSRI The Council reviewed a letter by Dr. Adrain to the CMO of Blue Cross underscoring the Medical Society’s continuing concerns about the insurer’s program of profiling physicians by cost measures without concomitant quality measures. Renewed discussion of the Blues’ program at the February 8 meeting of the RIMS Council inspired Dr. Adrain to write the letter, in which she reiterates RIMS’ call for the program to be suspended until it can be complemented with meaningful quality measures.

Dr. Adrain wrote to Health Insurance Commissioner Koller on this same topic in February.

Legislative agenda RIMS’ benevolent gesture bill (“I’m sorry”) received a full hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on March 27. A national expert brought in by RIMS was among those testifying.

RIMS and the PA Academy are promoting legislation to better focus the state’s limited resources and limit regulatory overreach that would impair practice workflow and delay the launch of PA training programs in Rhode Island.

The RI Society of Anesthesiologists objects to proposed changes in the scope of practice of CRNAs.

Dr. Migliori discussed the impact of “sequestration” on physicians and patients.

RIMS’ “House Call” program is now open to all RIMS members to observe the General Assembly at work. Members may register through the Member Portal on the RIMS website, www.rimed.org.

The Public Laws Committee met on March 27 and will meet again in early May.

Other advocacy The Council received updates on other matters, including:

- The joint lawsuit of RIMS and RI Academy of Physician Assistants against the Department of Health regarding Rhode Island’s “global signature” statute.

- Prior authorization issues related to BCBSRI's new PBM contract with Catamaran.
- Implementation of the Prescription Monitoring Program (for which regulations are still not published, though the program is in partial operation).
- The state Task Force on Administrative Simplification in health care, on which Dr. Adrain serves and which will soon turn its attention to prior authorization.
- The "Rhode Island Primary Care Trust," a Health Dept. proposal to create a single payer for primary care services and a network of "Neighborhood Health Stations" throughout the state.
- The posture of the Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline with regard to physicians prescribing controlled substances for family members.

Retail-based clinics (RBCs) Representatives of MinuteClinic (owned by CVS since 2006 and based in Woonsocket) have recently been approaching stakeholders, including RIMS, in an attempt to prepare the way for MinuteClinic's third attempt in a dozen years to establish a presence in the Rhode Island market. MinuteClinic representatives told RIMS on March 26 that they would soon be filing for licensure as an Organized Ambulatory Health Care Facility.

RIMS will review its 2008 statement on RBCs (which is posted on the RIMS website, www.rimed.org), update it as needed and analyze MinuteClinic's new filing when it becomes available.

Elections Dr. Jose Polanco was elected Treasurer of RIMS to succeed Dr. Jerry Fingerut, who has served RIMS in that office since 2008 and had asked last year to be relieved. A framed certificate of appreciation was presented to Dr. Fingerut.

Dr. Peter Hollmann was elected AMA Delegate to fill the new vacancy created by the allocation of a second Delegate seat to Rhode Island in recognition of AMA membership growth in the state. Dr. Hollmann has served as Alternate Delegate since 2006.

Dr. Arnie Herman and Dr. Mark Schwager were reelected to seats on the Rhode Island Medical Political Action Committee (RIMPAC).

The Council voted to authorize the President to appoint, convene and chair the 2013 Nominating Committee in accordance with the Bylaws. Members of this year's Committee are Dr. Alyn Adrain (Chair), Dr. Elaine Jones, Dr. Peter Karczmar, Dr. Diane Siedlecki, Dr. Gary Bubly, Dr. Nitin Damle and Dr. Michael Migliori.

Community service RIMS' annual bicycle helmet give-away to RIteCare kids will take place at the Community School in Cumberland on Saturday morning, May 11. The event is organized each year by RIMS with support of the RI Society of Emergency Physicians, the RI Academy of Pediatrics, the RI Academy of Family Physicians, the RI Neurological Society, the RI Orthopedic Society, the RI Medical Society Foundation and the RI Dept. of Human Services.

The culmination of the annual statewide Tar Wars tobacco education curriculum and poster contest will take place simultaneously at the same location. Tar Wars is a program of the American Academy of Family Physicians administered in Rhode Island by RIMS with support from the RIAFP and the RIAAP.