

# Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, December 5, 2011

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

**Michael D. Fine, MD, Director of the RI Dept. of Health** As a guest of the Council, Dr. Fine discussed the evolving environment of health care in the state. He sees opportunities for Rhode Island to make significant headway in combating HIV, colon cancer, smoking and sexually transmitted diseases. He sees reorganization of the health care delivery system, including the rationalization and consolidation of hospital services, as a painful but inevitable result of market forces, and a necessity if Rhode Island's economy is to be rescued.

He said that the medical profession must take responsibility for reshaping the delivery system so that it serves the public and becomes a greater economic asset to the state, making Rhode Island attractive to employers. He also said Rhode Island needs a public medical school devoted to training primary care physicians.

**Campaign to eliminate Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate formula (SGR)** The Medical Society met with Rhode Island's congressional delegation in October, urging them to impress upon their colleagues on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction ("Super Committee") the overriding importance of seizing the opportunity to eliminate the SGR and enact federal reforms of the tort system. The AMA conducted a multi-front campaign, which included a series of national television ads.

The subsequent failure of the Super Committee to act has set the stage for yet another congressional band-aid on SGR, most likely a retroactive one that will come too late to forestall the temporary implementation of destructive 27.4% cuts in physician reimbursement effective January 1.

**AMA Interim Meeting** Dr. Damle noted the AMA's highly democratic processes and the large volume of important work conducted by the AMA House during November 11-15. He highlighted discussions about ACOs ("Accountable Care Organizations"), SGR, nursing scope of practice, prescription drug monitoring and the AMA's impressive legislative efforts. Dr. Migliori noted actions taken on national drug shortages, new tools for prescribing controlled substances, ICD-10, and guidelines for states' Health Benefits Exchanges.

**Brown medical students** Grayson Armstrong and Rahul Banerjee reported on activities of the Brown AMA chapter and a continuing pattern of success for the chapter within the AMA Medical Student Section and extending into the AMA House of Delegates. A link at [www.rimed.org](http://www.rimed.org) connects to recent photos and a list of twelve Brown students who attended the AMA Interim meeting in New Orleans. Dr. Migliori noted the consistently high visibility and exceptional leadership of Brown students at AMA meetings.

**American College of Surgeons, RI Chapter** By invitation, Dr. Damle met with the executive committee of ACS-RI on November 29. Discussion included payment reform, health information technology and physicians' rights to due process in disputes with institutions.

**Public Laws Committee** All are welcome at the Public Laws meeting at RIMS on Wednesday, December 7, 6:30 p.m. Specialties are particularly urged to send representation, especially if they have issues and priorities for the upcoming General Assembly session; that session begins on January 3.

**RIMPAC / AMPAC** Dr. Migliori noted the continuing fluidity of the 2012 general election cycle nationally, as demographic shifts, the ongoing redistricting processes in many states and an unusual number of retirements portend potentially significant changes in the composition of Congress. He highlighted AMPAC's VIP (Very Influential Physician) program for doctors who have close relationships with members of Congress or with well-placed congressional staff.

**Healthcentric Advisors** Dr. Paul McKenney, chair of the board of directors of Healthcentric Advisors (formerly Rhode Island Quality Partners, founded by RIMS in 1995) and *ex officio* member of the RIMS Council, commented on the reasons for the organization's recent name change. Those reasons include the increasing diversity of services offered by HCA and the broad scope of its geographic reach, which has long extended well beyond Rhode Island's borders.

**Bylaws** Upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Council amended the RIMS Bylaws in order to more clearly differentiate certain membership categories.

**RIMS' bicentennial year 2012** On December 15, RIMS will hold the first of a year-long series of bicentennial observances. RIMS was founded April 22, 1812, and is the eighth oldest state medical society in the country.

The December 15 event is an authors' reception and book signing, marking the publication in November of a new collection of essays by Dr. Stanley Aronson and Dr. Joseph Friedman, edited and supplemented by Ms. Mary Korr. The book is entitled *Medical Odysseys, A Journey through the Annals of the Rhode Island Medical Society*.

The event will take place at Brown University's Hay Library, 5 – 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 15.

**Tar Wars** The meeting handbook included recruitment materials for this year's Tar Wars faculty. This nation-wide tobacco education program for middle schoolers was introduced into Rhode Island by the RI Academy of Family Physicians and has been carried on for 18 years by RIMS, RI-AFP, the RI Academy of Pediatrics and the RI Chapter of the American College of Cardiology under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Frazzano. RIMS used to have more physician volunteers for Tar Wars than could be deployed in the 40 – 50 participating schools; many physicians conducted the program year after year. However, in recent years, recruitment has become more difficult.