

# Rhode Island Medical Society Council

Meeting of Monday, October 3, 2011

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

### **New leadership**

- Nitin Damle, MD, a South County internist, is RIMS' new president, succeeding Dr. Gary Bubly.
- Alyn Adrain, MD, a Providence gastroenterologist, is president-elect.
- Elaine Jones, MD, a Providence neurologist, is vice president.
- Elizabeth Lange, MD, an East Providence pediatrician, is secretary.
- Jerry Fingerut, MD, a Pawtucket gastroenterologist and community health center administrator, is treasurer.

Councilors-at-Large are Marlene Cutitar, MD (GS); Steven Fera, MD (CD); Martin Papazian, MD (OTO); and Scott Wang, MD (Pathology).

All are members of the Executive Committee of the RIMS Council.

**Rhode Island a leader in health information technology** Guest presenter Laura Adams, president of the RI Quality Institute (RIQI), provided an update, overview and preview of developments in health information technology (HIT) and health information exchange (HIE) in Rhode Island.

Years of community collaboration among RI stakeholders -- convened and coordinated largely by the RIQI -- have made the Ocean State a national leader and earned RIQI significant federal funding in three overlapping areas: the RI Regional Extension Center (or REC, which helps medical practices achieve Meaningful Use of electronic medical records); HIE (called *currentcare* in Rhode Island); and the Beacon Community (further promoting electronic infrastructure to support the transformation of medical practice in communities that are already acknowledged national leaders in HIT and HIE).

*Currentcare* so far has data-sharing agreements with Eastside Labs, Surescripts, Lifespan, Care New England, South County Hospital, Memorial Hospital of RI and 215 physicians. 80,000 patient records are in the growing *currentcare* database; physicians have the key role to play in boosting that number as quickly as possible. 771 RI medical professionals are members of the REC.

**Campaign to eliminate Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate formula (SGR)** The Medical Society has scheduled face-to-face meetings with Senators Whitehouse and Reed to urge their intercession with the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction ("Super Committee") in support of a final fix to the SGR.

Those conversations will be supported by data from the electronic survey distributed to RIMS members last week. Preliminary results were shared with the Council. Returns over the weekend were strong, but physicians are urgently encouraged to respond quickly in still greater numbers.

**President's work plan** Dr. Damle foresees meeting personally with physician groups for outreach and membership development; strategic planning; expanded opportunities for members to participate in RIMS' advocacy at the State House; and a series of RIMS bicentennial observances in 2012.

**RIMPAC / AMPAC** Dr. Migliori previewed the 2012 Congressional elections with special attention to contested Senatorial seats and party balance in both chambers. He emphasized the importance of physician engagement in the electoral and legislative processes, both locally and nationally.

**BCBSRI** Dr. Damle met with the leadership of BCBSRI, including the company's new CEO, Peter Andruskiewicz, on September 29. BCBSRI shared statistics from the first 8 months of 2011 regarding prior authorization requests, denial rates, turn-around time and utilization trends; these data were reviewed and discussed by the Council.

**Specialty reports** Dr. Gyan Pareek reported on behalf of the RI Urological Society, which will hold a dinner meeting with U.S. Representative Cicillini on October 21.

Dr. Ira Singer reported that orthopedic surgeons in some parts of the country have been retroactively denied payment by CMS based on CERT (Comprehensive Error Rate Testing) audits. CERT uses InterQual criteria; however, InterQual misapplies certain underlying AAOS guidelines.

**Representation and advocacy** RIMS has a seat on the Health Department's new comprehensive statewide health care planning commission, which will convene for the first time this month.

Dr. Damle addressed the New England Council of State Medical Societies on October 1, in Waltham.

RIMS' leadership and Brown medical students participated in a meeting of the New England Delegation to the AMA on Oct. 1.

RIMS presidents and presidents-elect continue to meet regularly with the Director of Health, the Lieutenant Governor, the Health Insurance Commissioner, and third-party payers and other key players.

**Budget** The Council approved a balanced budget for 2012, which includes a 4% dues increase, the first since 2007.

**Bicentennial Committee** A new senior medical student prize will be established at the Brown medical school in the name of the Medical Society. The prize will recognize engagement with organized medicine and with the issues and processes of public policy formation relating to health care.

Council members were asked to assist fundraising efforts to support the series of observances planned by the Bicentennial Committee (Diane Siedlecki, MD, Chair).