



Physician Advocate

The Harris County Medical Society serves as an advocate for physicians in Harris County. *Physician Advocate* is produced quarterly to provide recent highlights of HCMS advocacy on behalf of member physicians and their patients.

HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM

TMA House Calls on Health System Reform – TMA scheduled House Call meetings across the state to hear from patients and doctors about their opinions on Health System Reform. HCMS coordinated three meetings on Aug. 17, 24 and 26, which were peaceful, educational discussions with TMA President and Former HCMS President **Dr. William H. Fleming III** and HCMS President **Dr. Lewis E. Foxhall** leading the discussion. Each of the meetings had more than 120 participants. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and State Representatives Garnet Coleman, John Davis, and Ellen Cohen attended the meetings. TMA collected surveys and comments from the participants of the House Calls, which will be compiled, then distributed to media, legislators and members. A video of the Aug. 17 event can be seen at www.meandmydoctor.com. Survey results can be viewed at www.hcms.org under the *Health System Reform Updates* section.

Health Reform Discussion With Congressmen – At the request of our elected officials, HCMS and The University of Texas Health Science Center coordinated a meeting with HCMS physician, hospital, business, and health insurance leaders on Aug. 31 to discuss Health System Reform. Congressmen Gene Green, John Culberson and Michael McCaul participated in the meeting. State Sen. Rodney Ellis and State Representatives **John Zerwas, MD**, and Ellen Cohen listened to the dialogue.

TMA Statement on Reform Process and Concerns – TMA President and HCMS Past President, **Dr. William Fleming III**, sent a letter on July 17 to the Texas Congressional Delegation about the health system reform process and TMA's concerns about HR 3200. The statement can be read at www.hcms.org under *Health System Reform Updates*. TMA elected not to take a formal position on any of the current preliminary bills other than to point out the positive and negative aspects.

Letter to the Editor on Reform – HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall's** letter to the editor of the *Houston Chronicle* that emphasized "First Do No Harm" was published on Aug. 8. The letter can be viewed at www.hcms.org in the *Health System Reform Updates* section.

Meeting with Senator Cornyn – On June 30, many HCMS physicians, which included HCMS President Elect **Dr. William S. Gilmer**, attended and asked questions at the Town Hall meeting on Health System Reform led by Senators John Cornyn, John McCain and Mitch McConnell.

Meeting with Congressman Culberson – On July 6, HCMS members attended a Town Hall meeting with Congressman John Culberson. The congressman listened to physicians as they urged Congress to slow the process of health care reform down and not to accept change just for the sake of change.

Call with Congressman Dr. Michael Burgess – TMA Board members, Health Reform Task Force members and county societies participated in a conference call with Congressman Michael Burgess, MD, on July 27. Congressman Burgess is a member of the House Energy Committee, which was debating HR 3200. Congressman Burgess agrees with TMA's agenda that the final bill needs to fix the Medicare SGR formula, provide tort reform, allow physician ownership and eliminate the public option. He

subsequently submitted several amendments during the Committee's deliberations. Unfortunately, all were defeated.

ML Board Reviews HR 3200 – Members of the HCMS Board of Medical Legislation (ML) read HR 3200 in its entirety and presented their assessment of the bill at the meeting on Aug. 5. The ML Board submitted a report for the TMA Healthcare Task Force, which is also available to the membership on the HCMS Web site.

Letter to the Membership – HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** wrote a letter in August to the entire membership outlining the activities HCMS has undertaken to address member concerns about the health system reform debate.

TMA's Patient Campaign – TMA prepared patient education materials for physicians to distribute to patients, "Fix What's Wrong, Keep What's Good Facebook Cause" campaign, a Twitter petition, and a special patient advocacy Web site, www.MeandMyDoctor.com.

Health System Reform – HCMS has been placing the latest information on Health System Reform on www.hcms.org under *Health System Reform Updates*, including the Senate Finance Committee Chairman's Mark and a report from the Physicians Foundation that questions some of the assumptions used in the various reform proposals.

AMA Annual Meeting Focuses on Health Reform – Health system reform was the principle topic of discussion at the AMA meeting. Actions taken at the AMA meeting and AMA's principles and framework for reform are included along with President Obama's speech to the AMA House of Delegates. HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** attended the meeting along with AMA President **Dr. James Rohack**. AMA has information about Health System Reform on its Web site, www.ama-assn.org.

Health System Reform Media Report – On Aug. 25, HCMS President Elect **Dr. William S. Gilmer's** interview on the hassles with health insurance was aired on KHOU-TV (CBS), *Insurance Companies dealing with their own health care issues*. On Aug. 8, *Houston Chronicle* printed **Dr. Foxhall's** op ed piece, *Primum non nocere—First do no harm*. The letter can be viewed at www.hcms.org on *Health System Reform Update*. On Sept. 23, PBS TV interviewed **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** on health system reform to discuss organized medicine's views and talk about the panel discussion that will take place on live TV on Oct. 20. On Aug. 22, Sept. 5, 12, 19, and 26, and Oct. 3 HCMS Southeast Branch President **Dr. Kenneth W. Hollis** did radio interviews with 650 AM on health care. On Aug. 18, Fox 26 TV aired more information on the Aug. 17th HCMS/TMA House Call on health system reform. Aug. 17, TMA President and Former HCMS President **Dr. William H. Fleming III**, and HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** were interviewed on health system reform at the HCMS/TMA House Calls meeting on Aug. 17. Television stations KPRC Channel 2 (NBC), Fox 26 TV and KTRK Channel 13 (ABC) aired the House call. On Aug. 17, *Houston Chronicle* printed a story on HCMS/TMA House Call on Aug. 17, *Doctors soliciting Houstonians' views on healthcare reform*. On Aug. 24, TMA and HCMS distributed news advisories on the Aug. 25 and Aug. 26 HCMS/TMA House Calls in Houston with information concerning health system reform. On Aug. 7, **Dr. Foxhall** was interviewed by *Houston Business Journal* on physician ownership of facilities and how it relates to HR 3200. On Aug. 5, **Dr. Foxhall** was interviewed

for a series by Fox TV Channel 26 on health system reform. Aug. 4, **Dr. Kenneth W. Hollis** did a radio interview on health system reform for 650 AM. On Aug. 1, **Dr. Jose E. Rodriguez**, member of the HCMS Community Health Improvement and Communications Committee, did an hour-long interview on Mega 101 KLOL in Spanish on health system reform. On June 24, **Dr. Foxhall** appeared in KTRK TV (Channel 2) NBC news report, *Houstonian's on President Obama's Health Care Plan*. July 17, HCMS provided information to Fox TV Channel 26 on health system reform for story "Will Obama's health plan work?" On July 17, **Dr. Ken Mattox** provided blog answers to Fox TV people who asked questions about the uninsured. July 12, HCMS President Elect **Dr. William Gilmer** was quoted in the *Houston Chronicle* article, *Feds strike at Medicare fraud in Houston area: City's ramped-up operation joins others nationwide*. The article also discussed the need for fraud control as it relates to health system reform. July 9, Reuters New Association interviewed **Dr. Foxhall** on the uninsured issues and health system reform for an upcoming in-depth story. On May 11, **Dr. Foxhall** presented "Truth in labeling—What's in your health plan" to media at the HCMS/HAM Francis C. Moore, MD, Medical Journalism Awards Luncheon. HCMS gave *Houston Press* reporters information on the length of time it takes to get an appointment with physicians.

OTHER

TMA Fall Leadership Conference – A panel discussion about health system reform moderated by former AMA President Dr. Nancy Dickey was the highlight of the conference. Panelists included AMA President Dr. Jim Rohack, TMA Council on Legislation Chair Dr. Dan McCoy, and Congressman Henry Cuellar. Dr. David Lakey, Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, presented an update on the H1N1 Flu.

Young Physicians Wine Tasting with CME-To-Go – On Oct. 7, HCMS held a Young Physician Wine Tasting Meeting, which included CME-To-Go (take home CME) for physicians 40 years old and under or who have been in practice for eight years or less, so physicians could network and receive CME credit. The Council of Young Physicians is chaired by **Dr. Etai Funk**.

Council of Hospital Chiefs of Staff – On Sept. 17, the HCMS Council of Hospital Chiefs of Staff, chaired by **Dr. George D. Santos**, held a one-hour CME seminar on disruptive physician behavior, which was open to chiefs of staff, CEOs of hospitals and chief nursing officers. After the meeting, **Dr. David E. Persse** of the Houston Department of Health Human Services gave an update on H1N1.

Young Physician Ambassadors – HCMS asked physicians to serve as Young Physician Ambassadors to assist with planning of Young Physician meetings and Branch meetings. **Dr. David M. Anmuth** (Central Branch), **Dr. Gregg C. Castillo** (North Branch), **Dr. Kelly A. Gabler** (East Branch), **Dr. Matthew D. Hoggart** (Southeast Branch), **Dr. Ramy Mankariou** (Southwest Branch), and **Dr. Christopher N. Prichard** (Western Branch).

HCMS Met with TMB – HCMS Executive Committee and HCMS Board of Ethics, chaired by **Dr. Gary J. Sheppard**, met with Mari Robinson, JD, Executive Director of Texas Medical Board, and Dr. Alan Moore, TMB Medical Director, on Oct. 1, to discuss the complaint process and other issues.

HCMS Branch Societies – HCMS Branch Societies held meetings throughout Houston. Central Branch President **Dr. Frank A. Redmond** had meeting on Sept. 24. *Don't Make Me Sue You*, for one hour ethics CME credit. Western Branch President **Dr. Mina K. Sinacori** had meeting on Sept. 24 on *Five Financial Ratios That Will Tell You If Your Practice is Healthy* for one hour of ethics CME credit. Southeast Branch President **Dr. Kenneth W. Hollis** had meeting on Sept. 29 that was a wine tasting and CME-To-Go on EMRs for 1 hour ethics CME. East Branch President **Dr. Mohammad R. Khoshnevis-Asl** held a meeting on Oct. 6 on *Regulatory & Ethical Aspects of Prescribing Controlled Substances to Pain Patients* for one hour ethics CME credit. Southwest Branch **Dr. Armando J. Jarquin** on Oct. 8 held a meeting on *The Physician-Patient Relationship: Is It Time to Call It Quits?* for one hour ethics CME credit. North Branch President **Dr. Thomas R. Newton** held a meeting on Oct. 13 on *Political Prognosis* for one hour of ethics CME credit.

H1N1 Patient and Physician Flyers – On Sept. 28, HCMS Community Health Improvement and Communications Committee (chaired by **Dr. Dexter G. Turnquest**), with input from Harris County Health Department and City Health Department, created two downloadable flyers for patients and physicians on H1N1 Flu to provide the latest information on H1N1, which were faxed and e-mailed to the membership. The physician flyer includes information on vaccine availability, usage, CDC priority recommendations, etc. The patient flyer has information on what are the H1N1 symptoms, calling 2-1-1 for information, CDC vaccination priorities and more. Physicians are encouraged to offer the patient flyers in their reception area. The flyers will be updated frequently, as the information is constantly evolving. The flyers are located at www.hcms.org on the front page.

H1N1 Resource Page – HCMS has created an H1N1 resource page on www.hcms.org to provide the latest information on H1N1.

HCMS Direct – HCMS Community Health and Communications Committee, chaired by **Dr. Dexter G. Turnquest**, has been working on HCMS Direct, in which HCMS physicians can receive information from HCMS on the topics they choose. The topics to choose from are: CME opportunities, Medical Legislation, Public Health, Practice Management & Insurance, Newsletters, HCMS Products & Services. HCMS physicians can sign up for the free service by going to www.hcms.org and clicking on *News-HCMS Direct*.

Downtown Aquarium Day – HCMS members received discounted entry to the Aquarium on Aug. 29. The program was very successful, with 117 reservations and 704 wristbands sold to HCMS members, family and guests.

New Member/Young Physician Event – On Aug. 4, HCMS hosted its fifth annual New Member and Young Physician Reception, co-chaired by HCMS Membership Committee Chair **Dr. Madhureeta Achari**, and HCMS Council of Young Physicians Chair **Dr. Etai Funk**, at the John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science. The 2 ½ hour event included food and drink for adults downstairs and kid-friendly food in a kid zone upstairs. Children were given supervised activities so parents could network, meet with sponsors and attend a one hour ethics CME seminar. Approximately 110 physicians attended.

Metro Counties Met – The executives from the five largest Texas county medical societies met at TMA to discuss common issues. Health System Reform and the results of the 2009 Legislative Session were the primary agenda topics.

HCMS Medical Student Mixer – More than 150 first-year medical students from The University of Texas Medical School at Houston and Baylor College of Medicine attended the HCMS First-Year Medical Student Mixer held Aug. 21 on the front lawn of the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center (HAM-TMC) Library. HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** along with physicians from UT Houston and Baylor welcomed the students at the mixer.

Majors Books, Montage of Houston, the U.S. Army, and the HAM-TMC Library provided support for the mixer.

Boy Scout Physicals – June 6 marked the 17th Annual Urban Boy Scout Physicals event. Fourteen HCMS physicians, 15 medical students from Baylor College of Medicine and The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, and 26 nursing students from all of the local programs volunteered to perform physicals for the scouts in the Urban Scouting Division. Under the leadership of **Dr. Bruce Edison**, 200 urban boy scouts and their families benefited from the program.

Disaster Preparedness Brochure – HCMS Community Health Improvement and Communications Committee (chaired by **Dr. Dexter G. Turnquest**) and HCMS Emergency Medical Services Committee (chaired by **Dr. Joan E. Shook**) created two brochures (one in color and one black/white for printing) for physicians on disaster preparedness for their practices and patients. The brochures are available to be downloaded off the HCMS Web site, www.hcms.org. The prevention information includes: creating a disaster plan for your practice, disaster supply kit, how to secure your practice, evacuation plans, and information for patients. Links to the brochures have been sent by e-mail or fax to HCMS physicians.

Federal Health Board Discussion – **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** participated in a discussion panel about establishment of a Federal Health Board. The meeting was held at the Houston branch of the Federal Reserve Bank and began with a presentation about the structure and functions of the Federal Reserve Bank. **Dr. Foxhall** participated in a reaction panel that included hospital, health plan, business and public health experts. There was consensus that we need more standardization, transparency, and accountability in the health system. There was not a consensus about whether a Federal Health Board was the best mechanism for accomplishing this.

Dr. Butts Honored – Former HCMS President **Dr. Donald R. Butts** received the annual "Outstanding Houston Surgeon" of the year award from the Houston Surgical Society. **Dr. Foxhall** presented **Dr. Butts** with a congratulatory resolution from the Texas House of Representatives that was initiated by Representative Debbie Riddle.

Medical School Commencement Ceremonies – HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** represented HCMS at the Baylor College of Medicine commencement on May 27 and The University of Texas Medical School at Houston commencement on May 28.

State Health Services Council – HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** was reappointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the State Health Services Council for a term to expire Feb. 1, 2015. The Council makes recommendations regarding the management, operation, policies, and rules for public health, mental health and substance abuse.

HCMS Met with BCBSTX – On June 2, HCMS staff met with **Drs. Dee Whittlesey** and **Jerald Zarin** from BlueCross BlueShield of Texas to discuss issues concerning out-of-network, credentialing and the RICO settlement.

Health Plan Liaison Committee – On June 3, the committee had a conference call with the Director of CAQH Committee on Operating Rules for Information Exchange (CORE) to discuss their initiatives regarding administrative relief as related to administrative Web portals. The committee reviewed a letter to President Obama from the Association of Health Insurance Plans committing to using Web portals to reduce health care administrative costs.

HCMS Met with CIGNA – On June 4, the Board on Socioeconomics met with CIGNA to discuss a new pilot being implemented in Harris and surrounding counties regarding CIGNA/Medsolutions Member Outreach Program.

Texas Children's Health Plan – HCMS staff met with the vice president of Texas Children's Health Plan to discuss issues related to physician audits and to meet the new director of contracting.

Baylor College of Medicine – On June 4, HCMS staff had a conference call with the credentialing department at Baylor MedCare to discuss 2007 HB 1594 as related to expedited credentialing of a group practice. Outcome: BCB-STX made a change to academic credentialing.

TMA/HCMS Reimbursement Consultations – On May 19-22, HCMS/TMA held private 30-minute reimbursement consultations with a TMA reimbursement expert in north, southeast and central Houston. Thirty-seven HCMS physician practices participated in the free consults.

Meeting with Rice University's Executive Education Representatives – On May 7, HCMS and Medserv staff met with representatives of Rice University's Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Management. Rice has developed courses for physicians and wanted to discuss the possibility for obtaining CME for the courses for possible presentation before HCMS meetings. Rice already has a number of educational business programs for physicians and has developed a one hour CME for the upcoming Medserv Business Expo to be held Nov. 7 and HCMS meetings in 2010.

Media Coverage – HCMS distributed news releases on all the winners of the annual HCMS/HAM Francis C. Moore, MD, Medical Journalism Awards for excellence in medical/health journalism in May, in which **Dr. Foxhall** and Houston Academy of Medicine Vice President **Dr. JoAnne L. Rogers** presented awards. June 12-18, *Houston Business Journal* published article, "NuPhysicia rolls out workplace health care telemedicine option," in which **Dr. Foxhall** was interviewed and quoted. On June 26, HCMS directed reporters from *Houston Chronicle*, *KHOU-TV (CBS)*, *Reuters News Association*, and television stations from Los Angeles and New York City on how to find public information on physicians so they could find out where Michael Jackson's physician practiced, etc. On July 1, TMA President and Former HCMS President **Dr. William H. Fleming III** and HCMS and TMA communications staff met with KHOU-TV (CBS) to present reporters with TMA's Anson Jones Award. On July 1, **Dr. Judi Shaw-Rice** and HCMS and TMA communications staff met with KUHF-FM 88.7 (NPR), *Health and Fitness Magazine*, and a freelance reporter to present reporters with TMA's Anson Jones Award. On July 9, *Reuters News Association* interviewed **Dr. Foxhall** on the uninsured issues and health system reform. In July, HCMS sent a report from **Dr. Steven D. Brown**, 2008 HCMS Hospital Chiefs of Staff chair, on the summary of lessons learned from Ike for TMA's Web site and *Texas Medicine Magazine*. On Aug. 26, HCMS President **Dr. Lewis Foxhall** did an interview with Fox 26 TV on H1N1 flu, and **Dr. David Perse** of Houston Department of Health and Human Services did an interview on H1N1 flu with Fox TV on Aug. 24. On Sept. 25, KHOU TV aired interview on scope of practice of nurse practitioners with **Dr. L. Slayton Halberdier Jr.**, family practice physician who has nurse practitioners in his office. On May 1, HCMS scheduled Houston Urological Society President **Dr. Raja Salameh** to discuss the level of vasectomies since the economic downturn with a reporter from the *Houston Chronicle*. On Sept. 18, HCMS provided a reporter from 20/20 general information on Dr. Conrad Murray regarding the Michael Jackson news story. On July 15, *Texas Medical Center News* printed article on Louise Geerts, *Remembering Louise Geerts*, *Harris County Medical Society*. In July, AAMSE also published article on Louise Geerts. On July 29, HCMS scheduled **Dr. Carlos Romero**, president of Texas Gulf Coast Anesthesia Society, to be interviewed by Channel 13 on the likelihood about being addicted to popofol. Also, how is it administered? HCMS is distributing the HCMS Newsletter to media through HCMS Direct and has been receiving inquiries about various stories.