



PhysicianAdvocate

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

HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM

TMA Leaders Visit Washington – In January, TMA President-Elect **Dr. Susan Rudd Bailey** led a group that included TMA Council on Legislation Chair **Dr. Danny Ken McCoy**, chief lobbyist Darren Whitehurst and TMA Executive Vice President Louis J. Goodman, Ph.D., to Washington, D.C., to work with delegations from California and other state societies to lobby House and Senate members on health system reform legislation. TMA has been working to build support for replacing the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula with a stable funding platform for Medicare payments. It is also trying to protect Texas' medical liability reforms and to rewrite some of the more odious physician-evaluation provisions in the bill. The Council on Legislation met via conference call to reaffirm TMA's priorities. The comprehensive 11-page comparison of the House and Senate bills are located on the HCMS Web site at www.hcms.org under *Health System Reform* Section on the home page.

Houston Business Group on Health (HBGH) – On Dec. 3, HCMS staff attended the HBGH meeting to hear a presentation by Darren Rodgers, president of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas.

Health System Reform Resources – HCMS has been placing the latest information on Health System Reform on www.hcms.org under *Health System Reform Updates*, including a link to the KRIV-TV Fox 26 interview with HCMS President **Dr. William S. Gilmer**, entitled "Doctors' Health Care Reform 'Wish List,'" on Jan. 20.

Health System Reform Media Report – HCMS Community Health Improvement & Communications Committee Chair **Dr. Kenneth W. Hollis** has been conducting weekly radio interviews on health care subjects, including health system reform on KIKK-AM CNN 650. On Dec. 16, an HCMS story ran on KHOU-TV Channel 11 with an interview with **Dr. Mina K. Sinacori** and a Medicare patient and **Dr. Stephen D. Brown** on Medicare and health system reform. On Oct. 9, *Houston Chronicle* interviewed **Dr. William S. Gilmer** for an article on uninsured and health system reform. On Oct. 14, *Houston Chronicle* interviewed **Dr. Lewis E. Foxhall** on insurance and health system reform. In November, *Health & Fitness Magazine* interviewed **Dr. Foxhall** on the uninsured in Houston and health plans. On Jan. 20, KRIV-Fox 26 TV ran story on health system reform with HCMS President **Dr. Gilmer** and **Dr. Kevin R. Smith**, which can be viewed on www.hcms.org in the *Health System Reform* section. On Feb. 4, HCMS communications staff met with KIKK-AM CNN 650 Radio to discuss having a weekly physician show on various topics, such as health system reform, Medicare, dealing with the uninsured, and health insurance reform.

OTHER

Doctors Back to School Program – On Nov. 5, AMA President **Dr. J. James Rohack**, TMA President and

former HCMS President **Dr. William H. Fleming III**, Baylor College of Medicine physician **Dr. James L. Phillips**, and National Medical Association (NMA) President **Dr. Willarda V. Edwards** visited Houston's Jack Yates Sr. High School for the "Doctors Back to School Program" to encourage minority and disadvantaged students to overcome obstacles and become doctors by sharing with them their own stories of how they became physicians. The event was coordinated by HCMS, Baylor College of Medicine, TMA, AMA, NMA, and Houston Independent School District. The main goal is to increase the number of minority physicians and eliminate health disparities. AMA is partnering with the Commission to End Health Disparities to increase the number of physicians and schools participating in the "Doctors Back to School Program."

Community Leaders Shadow Physicians – On Oct. 28, HCMS Mini Internship Committee, chaired by **Dr. D. Rick Ngo**, invited five local community leaders who affect, report on and/or make health care policies to shadow two physicians for the day so that they could experience the rewards and trials of practicing medicine. These community leaders were selected to be a part of the HCMS program so a dialogue could begin with local physicians about the issues facing health care. The interns were *Texas Medicine News* reporter Burke Watson, Greater Houston Partnership Public Policy Manager Emily Kao Kopfensteiner, CIGNA HealthCare Manager of Provider Services Amy Finger, HCMS Vice President of Member Services Ahuva Terk, and Medserv Sales and Marketing Coordinator Holly Smith. Physician hosts were: **Dr. Brent R. King**, **Dr. Luis H. Camacho**, **Dr. Angela Siler-Fisher**, **Dr. Philip Matorin**, **Dr. Suresh K. Reddy**, **Dr. Bradford Patt**, **Dr. Judi A. Shaw-Rice**, and **Dr. Shkelzen Hoxhaj**.

Branches Hold CMEs – Southeast Branch, chaired by **Dr. Glen B. Garner**, and East Branch, chaired by **Dr. James J. Bernick**, held their first meeting for 2010 at the Rockets game and provided take home ethics CME on Feb. 2.

TMA Liaison Committee – The TMA Liaison Committee met Jan. 18 to discuss recommendations for TMA appointed and elected offices. The committee also reviewed plans for the spring activities for the HCMS Delegation to the TMA.

TMA Winter Conference – All TMA councils and committees met during the TMA Winter Conference in Austin, Jan. 29-30. TMA President **Dr. William Fleming** along with Gov. Rick Perry, the featured speaker, gave presentations on managing change and health care disparities. Besides national health system reform, the biggest discussion topic was on the anticipated \$11-19 billion budget shortfall that the 2011 Texas Legislature will likely face.

HCMS Chair Orientation – HCMS hosted an orientation for all committee, board and council chairs on Jan.

12. HCMS President **Dr. William S. Gilmer** led the meeting by reviewing the strategic plan and the processes and procedures for operating an efficient meeting.

HCMS/HAM Installation of Officers & Leadership Recognition – **Dr. William S. Gilmer**, HCMS president, and **Dr. JoAnne L. Rogers**, HAM president, were sworn into their leadership positions along with the rest of the 2010 Executive Board on Jan. 22, at the Westin Galleria. Former HCMS President **Dr. Tom Garcia** acted as the master of ceremonies. Photos can be viewed and ordered by going to the HCMS Web site, www.hcms.org.

HAM John P. McGovern Award – Former HAM President **Dr. Betty J. Edwards** presented **Dr. Raymond H. Kaufman** with the prestigious national John P. McGovern Compleat Physician Award on Jan. 22 to recognize his work as a multi-accomplished physician who exemplifies the ideals of Dr. William Osler.

HCMS RPOs Provide Haiti Support – The HCMS Retired Physicians Organization (RPO) stepped up to the call when asked to evaluate more than 75 Task Force 1 members who were going to participate in the search and rescue efforts in Haiti. On Jan. 14, **Drs. James A. Butler**, **Duane Catterson**, **Joel E. Reed** and **Peter V. Weston** evaluated the Task Force members so they could be deployed.

Finding Physicians By Language – The HCMS Health Plan Liaison Committee created a table that explains how to find a physician by language on the Web sites of the top five health plans in Houston. To download, go to www.hcms.org.

County Society Leaders Met – HCMS President **Dr. Gilmer**, HCMS President Elect **Dr. Guru T. Reddy** and HCMS Executive Vice President Greg Bernica represented HCMS at a meeting of county leaders from around the state. The group discussed challenges and opportunities facing their organizations. Topics included membership, meeting participation, communication, health system reform, EMRs and other new technologies, hospital physician issues and reimbursement issues that cause division between specialties. TMA leaders and staff presented TMA's plan for supporting the county societies.

Strategic Plan for 2010 – The Strategic Planning Committee met on Dec. 3 and reviewed information provided by all committees and boards. The committee finalized the 2010 plan and voted on its priorities. The HCMS and HAM Boards approved the strategic plan for 2010 and the Strategic Planning Committee established the priorities. HCMS President **Dr. William S. Gilmer** approved measures to be used to evaluate the success in accomplishing these priorities. Specific objectives and strategies have been assigned to each committee and board.

EMRs – The proposed regulations for “meaningful use” of Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) have been released. Comments about the 556-page document are due by March 15. The TMA Health Information Technology Committee and HCMS Board on Socioeconomics, chaired by **Dr. Ronald S. Walters**, have reviewed the regulations and will be making comments.

HCMS Member Day – The annual HCMS Member Appreciation Day on Saturday, Feb. 20, held at The John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science offered an ethics CME for physicians on “*RAC, CMS, OIG, MAC, CPT, E&M: What Does This Mean to Me?*” and free attendance to the museum for physicians and their families. The day provided an opportunity for HCMS members to network and enjoy the museum and its exhibits with their families.

Educating Medical Students in Business Practices

HCMS, in collaboration with medical student chapters at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston and Baylor College of Medicine, has been offering first- and second-year medical students courses on the business of medicine. Topics range from the basics on establishing a medical practice to politics in medicine. Working with faculty advisers, students are able to claim course and blue book credit and gain valuable knowledge on the practical aspects of running a practice. For HCMS, it has been a great opportunity to enhance the students’ academic curriculum and forge a relationship with future physicians. Physicians participating: **Dr. Angela Siler-Fisher, Dr. Bobby Kapur, Dr. Kalapalatha Guntupalli, Dr. John S. Oghali, Dr. William S. Gilmer, and Dr. Tracy Elliot.**

H1N1 Materials – HCMS collected information from the City of Houston, Harris County Health Departments, HCMS Emergency Care Committee, HCMS Community Health Improvement and Communications Committee, and Texas Department of Health Services, and CDC to produce patient and physician flyers on H1N1 materials, which were distributed by e-mail and fax to physicians. HCMS also has maintained the latest H1N1 information on the HCMS Web site, in the H1N1 section.

H1N1 Activities – HCMS created an H1N1 section on the HCMS Web site (www.hcms.org), which is updated regularly to include critical, verified information. HCMS staff participated in the Texas Medical Center H1N1 Advisory Group, which receives updates from state, city and county health agencies so that there is a better understanding of what major institutions in town are doing regarding H1N1 and to ensure that physicians’ needs are represented.

HAMAH Annual Meeting – On Nov. 21, HCMS Vice President **Dr. Russell W. H. Kridel** presented information on HCMS at the Hispanic American Medical Association of Houston (HAMAH) annual meeting. **Dr. Kridel’s** presentation covered health system reform and HCMS’ activities and achievements.

HCMS Alliance Holiday Event – On Dec. 7, HCMS Alliance held its 36th annual “*Touch, Smell and Hear*” holiday event at The John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science. The event allowed approximately 250 children with mental and physical challenges to experience the season with their senses.

TEXPAC/Specialty Society Retreat – The TEXPAC/Specialty Society Retreat was held on Oct. 23-25

in Frisco. The retreat offered the TEXPAC Campaign School, for those who are considering running for office, a series of breakout sessions on major issues, such as insurance reform, medical liability, physician ownership, and the uninsured. Saturday night featured the first forum for all announced candidates for the 2012 U.S. Senate race. Finally, the TEXPAC board met and formally endorsed Gov. Rick Perry for governor in 2010 as well as a number of other candidates seeking the office.

Web Portal Seminar – On Oct. 14, the HCMS Administrative Relief Subcommittee, chaired by **Dr. Philip A. Matorin**, held a seminar on Business of Medicine seminar, *How to get information on payers in one place using Administrative Web Portals*, to help physicians increase their efficiency in their practices by using the Internet to manage the accounts receivable cycle. There were 238 in attendance.

TDI TACCP meeting – On Nov. 12, HCMS staff attended the TDI Technical Advisory Committee on Claims Processing meeting via conference call. The committee discussed the rules that are being written on several House and Senate bills, which include network adequacy, real-time information from health plans, physician ranking, and mandatory fee mediation by hospital-based physicians.

TMA speaks to Chamber on Health System Reform

– Darren Whitehurst, TMA’s lead lobbyist, presented information on health system reform to approximately 200 people, mostly employers, at the West Houston Chamber of Commerce in October.

Reimbursement Consultations – On Oct. 19-23, HCMS hosted TMA experts who came to Houston to hold private 30-minute reimbursement consultations. The consultations were held in locations in east, southeast, southwest, north Houston and central Houston. Thirty-eight physician practices participated in the free consults, which assisted them with coding, appeals letters and how to receive payments quicker.

Patient Champion Awards – HCMS presented “*Patient Care Champion*” awards to legislators who went the extra mile to help physicians and their patients during the 81st Session at the local branch meetings. On Sept. 24, HCMS Central Branch President **Dr. Frank A. Redmond**, gave awards to State Reps. Ellen Cohen, and Garnet Coleman. HCMS Western Branch President **Dr. Mina K. Sinacori** gave an award to Sen. Dan Patrick. On Sept. 29, the Southeast Branch President **Dr. Kenneth W. Hollis** gave awards to State Reps. Carol Alvarado and John Davis. Southwest Branch President Elect **Dr. Kulvinder S. Bajwa** presented awards to Sen. Juan Huffman and Rep. John Zerwas, MD.

HCMS Aeros Day – HCMS members and their families and friends received discounted Aeros tickets for the Jan. 3 and Feb. 14 games.

Media Report – On Nov. 12, HCMS scheduled an interview with **Dr. Armando J. Jarquin**, president of the Harris County Academy of Family Physicians, for *Houston Chronicle* article, “Distribution of Swine Flu Vaccine Frustrates Doc.” On Nov. 5, HCMS received media coverage on the *Doctors Back to School Program* with interviews from AMA President **Dr. James Rohack**, TMA President **Dr. William H. Fleming III** and NMA President **Dr. Willarda V. Edwards**, from the following: KUHF Radio (NPR), *Houston Chronicle*, KTMD Channel 47 (Telemundo),

KRIV Fox 26 TV, KHQB Channel 39, and HISD TV. On Oct. 6, HCMS provided *Texas Medical Center News* with information on H1N1 flu for a story. On Dec. 7, Fox TV and *Texas Medical Center News* covered the HCMS Alliance’s *Touch, Smell and Hear* Holiday Event. HCMS distributed the media advisories and news releases to all local media. On Dec. 8, HCMS scheduled KHOU TV (CBS) interview with **Dr. Mina K. Sinacori** on Medicare. On Dec. 7, HCMS provided more information to *Texas Medical Center News* on the *Doctors Back to School Program*. On Nov. 20, HCMS scheduled an interview with **Dr. Lewis E. Foxhall** on mammograms for KPFT-FM 90.1 Radio. HCMS distributed the media advisories and news releases to all local media. In December, HCMS distributed news releases and media advisories to all the local media on HCMS Alliance’s 36th annual “Touch, Smell and Hear” event for children with mental and physical challenges. On Dec. 7, KRIV-TV Fox 26 and *Texas Medical Center News* covered the HCMS Alliance’s “Touch, Smell and Hear” holiday event. On Dec. 15, *Texas Medical Center News* published a photo and blurb on the HCMS Alliance “Touch, Smell, and Hear” holiday event. In December, HCMS provided more information to *Texas Medical Center News* on the “Doctors Back to School Program.” On Jan. 7, HCMS sent information to KTBU-TV Channel 55 on history of medicine for a television segment. News releases on the HCMS Installation of Officers and on the John P. McGovern Compleat Physician Award were distributed to all local media prior to and after the event. *Houston Business Journal* published the Installation of Officer story on Jan. 18, discussing **Dr. William S. Gilmer’s** and **Dr. JoAnne L. Rogers’** new roles. On Jan. 19, HCMS sent an appeal for news stories on new medical advances to the TMC institutions for the show “Doctors.” On Jan. 27, **Dr. Foxhall** was interviewed by the *Houston Chronicle* on H1N1 for a blog medical/health story. On Jan. 29, HCMS Francis C. Moore Medical Journalism Award entries were distributed to all local media. On Feb. 1, HCMS gave KTRK-TV Channel 13 information on physicians going to Haiti. *The Methodist Hospital System Health Care News Update* on Feb. 1 published a story on **Dr. Raymond H. Kaufman** receiving the McGovern Compleat Physician Award from HAM. The City of Houston on Feb. 1 published a photo and short story of **Dr. Gilmer** becoming the new president of HCMS. HCMS scheduled **Dr. Daniel G. Corredor**, Hispanic American Medical Association of Houston (HAMAH) president, to give an interview in Spanish on Feb. 2 to KXLN-TV Univision Channel 45 on how to tell if your doctor has a medical license in response to people posing as doctors and giving medical treatments without licenses. On Feb. 4, HCMS communications staff went to the TMC Public Relations Advisory Council (PRAC) meeting to discuss possible uses of social media for the medical organizations. In January, HCMS scheduled interviews with several physicians, which included **Dr. Etai Funk**, **Dr. Swapan Dubey**, and Steve Levine at TMA, to discuss use of social media. On Feb. 4, HCMS communications staff met with Carrie Feibel, health/science reporter at KUHF-FM 88.7 Radio, to discuss possible stories for the year. On Feb. 9, HCMS sent a media advisory on the Harris County Academy of Family Physicians meeting on health system reform. *Texas Medical Center News* published HCMS/HAM Installation of Officer information and The John P. McGovern Compleat Physician winner **Dr. Raymond Kaufman** on Feb. 15.