

COMMUNIQUE



JUNE 2007

Write for *Healthy Living News*

The Community Relations & Communications Commission is recruiting contributors to The Academy Corner in *Healthy Living News*. Articles for the monthly publication are approximately 300 words and can be sent to Dr. Ron Shapiro at rshapiro@edok.com. Maintaining the presence of The Academy Corner in *Healthy Living News* favorably keeps The Academy of Medicine in the public eye, as well as its members.

Physician's Guide to Survival

The AMA's new "Physician's Guide to Survival and Success in the Medical Practice" will be available in July 2007!

Up-to-date tools and techniques for managing personnel, finance and operations, marketing and risk management are found in this invaluable practice management resource. Also included is current coverage of electronic health records and other technologies affecting the practice.

This 400-page volume in 3-ring binder format also comes with a companion CD-ROM. For more details and to view sample pages, visit: <http://enews.ama-assn.org/UM/T.asp?A40.586.4301.1.75599>. Pre-order your copy today!

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Fight Back Against Fraud — What You Can Do!

The news is full of stories daily about fraud scams. What can you do to protect yourself and your family from fraud?

- Contact your financial institution immediately if you receive a change of address verification letter from them, but you did not request an address change. Most financial institutions will send a change of address verification letter to the old address to ensure a fraudster is not attempting to change the address of record.



- If you notice that you have not received a bill in the mail, contact the creditor to report it. If you suspect that mail has been stolen from your mailbox, report it to the police and to the post office.
- If you receive live credit cards you did not apply for, contact the issuer immediately.
- Request a copy of your credit bureau report once per year. You can go online to www.annualcreditreport.com and request one credit bureau report from each of the three reporting agencies per year. If there is inaccurate information, report it to the credit bureau.
- If you have online banking, review the balances on all your accounts frequently, including loan balances. Report unauthorized transactions to your financial institution immediately.
- If you receive your bank statements by mail, always review them upon receipt and report any unauthorized transactions immediately.
- Never give your credit card number over the phone unless you have made the call.
- Never throw away credit card or bank statements, invest in a shredder or a shredding service.
- Be skeptical of unsolicited offers received in the mail or via email. If the offer is too good to be true, it is.

For further information, please contact: **Maureen Brown, Fifth Third Private Bank (419) 885-6555** or visit the **Federal Trade Commission website for Identify Theft at www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft**.

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Academy/Flower Hospital Joint Meeting

Peter W. Carmel, MD, D. Med Sci., Professor and Chair, Department of Neurological Surgery at The New Jersey Medical School and a member of the AMA Board of Trustees, made an excellent presentation at The Academy of Medicine/Flower Hospital Joint Meeting, hosted by Flower Hospital, on May 14. Dr. Carmel spoke about what will happen to physicians with the new Democratic Congress. He said the Democratic healthcare items include: The Government must negotiate drug costs in Medicare; and Medicare should withdraw the supplement (7-11%) that is now given insurers for Medicare Advantage plans. Critics say negotiations will not result in significant cost reduction without greatly restricting pharmacy. VA negotiations have been very successful at lowering cost. Medicare Advantage has increased profit for insurers, but with very modest benefits for patients, and no increase for physicians.

Dr. Carmel indicated that AMA policy recommends ending the subsidy for Medicare Advantage plans, saying the \$5.2 billion per year should be reallocated elsewhere. The AMA supports financial neutrality between Medicare Advantage and traditional Medicare. Dr. Carmel said the Senate is looking at Medicare Advantage plans and there is concern over the costs of the plans and lack of a separate trust fund. He said shortfalls from Medicare Advantage plans are taking money from traditional Medicare, and contribute to the rise in the part B premium. Money saved by cutting the Medicare Advantage costs could help pay for renewal of S-CHIP and the planned 10% physician cuts in 2008.

Dr. Carmel said **most** Democrats recognize that Medicare is not sustainable and will go broke, and recognize the SGR is not sustainable and is not good public policy. He said **many** Democrats recognize our healthcare system is broken, healthcare costs burden employers and defensive medicine increases healthcare costs. He said **only a few** Democrats feel the entire healthcare system needs to be reformed, and do not recognize that our current medical liability system is not working, and is inequitable and costly.

Dr. Carmel said the Bipartisan Articles of Faith include reducing the number of uninsured Americans. Politicians of both parties are looking at S-CHIP (state children's health insurance program), because children are cheap and there are only 7.6 million uninsured children. He said 38 million uninsured adults are a lot harder to fix. S-CHIP will expire in September and some states ran out of funds as early as March. He indicated that the S-CHIP deficit for 2007 was \$700 million.

What about physicians? Dr. Carmel said the 109th Congress approved a freeze in Medicare for 2007, instead of a 5.1% cut. However, this will leave a 10% Medicare cut for physicians in 2008. Most Democrats are not interested in medical liability reform, but many express interest in the medical courts proposal

Join Academy Mailing List today!

The Academy continues to update its website (www.toledomedicine.org). If you would like to receive website updates and a FREE online subscription to **Toledo Medicine** and the **Communiqué**, please type **"subscribe"** in the subject header of an email to joey.begeman@gmail.com.

(Common Good). He said analysis shows Medicare growth of physician costs in 2006 was 0.8%, the lowest since the inception of the SGR system. Eighty-six medical societies signed an AMA circulated letter to Leslie Norwalk, CMS administrator, to apply the \$1.35 billion fund (Tax Relief Health Care Act of 2006) to the 2008 conversion factor. Dr. Carmel said there are hearings on Medicare in the House Ways and Means Committee. The Medicare Trustees 2007 Report said payments to physicians are to be cut 10% in 2008 and said over the decade the total cuts will be 41%. Physicians' practice costs will rise at least 20% in the same period. The Report calls the cuts "implausible" and Chairman Pete Stark agreed and feels the Trustees understated the costs of physician services because they did not include the "fix".

Dr. Carmel said the impact on Ohio includes: loss of \$249 million in healthcare funds in 2008; loss of \$7 billion by 2015 because of SGR; impact on 1.6 million Medicare patients; and an impact on 160,000 Tricare patients. There are 46 million uninsured Americans and 1.3 million are in Ohio. Ohio hospitals provided \$400 million in unreimbursed charity care in 2004 and also \$148 million for patients who could not pay deductibles or co-pays.

Dr. Carmel said the AMA Healthcare Proposal includes: individually owned and selected healthcare insurance; portable insurance, not dependent on employers or even on being employed; can cover 94% of the uninsured under 400% of the federal poverty level; can be implemented now and can be incremental; and does not stop employer-based plans.

AMA advocacy for 2007 proposes no Medicare physician cut and a 1.7% update for 2008; total replacement of the SGR formula; access to care for 46 million Americans without health insurance, renewing S-CHIP first; eliminate the six life-style scourges of our society: tobacco, obesity, alcohol/drug abuse, traffic accidents, violence/suicide and teen pregnancy.

How can you help? **Sign up now at the Physicians Activist Network at www.ama-assn.org. Encourage your patients to lend their voices and ask them to go to The Patient Action Network at www.patientsactionnetwork.com.**

Recommended Bylaws Amendment

A Bylaws amendment was approved by The Academy of Medicine Council, as well as the Ohio State Medical Association Council, and was read at The Academy/Flower Hospital Joint Meeting on Monday, May 14, 2007. The amendment will be voted on at The Academy/The University of Toledo Medical Center Joint Meeting, which will be held in the fall.

The present wording of Article V, Section 6 (b) is, "The President of The Medical College of Ohio shall be elected annually by the new Council at its first meeting."

It has been recommended that the Section 6 (b) be amended to read, "A physician leadership representative from The University of Toledo College of Medicine as designated by the President of The University of Toledo shall be elected annually by the new Council at its first meeting."

Important Information Regarding The Academy of Medicine Retired Fellows Health Insurance Plan

A newly retired physician has 30 days from the date of retirement in which to join The Academy's health insurance plan. If the physician does not do so within 30 days, they are ineligible to do so at a later date. When planning for your retirement, remember to check into The Academy Retired Fellows Health Insurance Plan. **If you have any questions regarding the plan, please contact Jan Schutt by phone at (419) 471-3131 or via e-mail at jm.schutt@gmail.com.**

OSMA Physicians Testify for Long-Overdue Medicaid Reimbursement Increase

Two OSMA physicians presented testimony before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee regarding the dire need for an update in the Medicaid fee schedule. Dr. Rick St. Onge, Ob-Gyn at the Holzer Clinic and OSMA member, testified yesterday that Medicaid reimbursement rates are failing to keep up with practice costs. He stated that most of the Governor's proposed increases in provider rates would go toward managed care plans and asked the Senate to remedy that problem by supporting an OSMA-backed amendment that would require the managed care plans to pass along any increases to physicians that provide care to Medicaid patients. Dr. St. Onge also asked the Senate to increase the Medicaid fee for service schedule by an additional 3% a year, which would cost the state about \$3.2 million over the biennium.

In addition, former OSMA Councilor Dr. Larry Yodlowski submitted written testimony that stated practice costs have gone up over 20% in the last 7 years and Medicaid reimbursement rates have remained flat. He stated that in this current environment, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Ohio physicians to continue to see Medicaid patients at such a substantial loss.

The Senate Finance Committee is scheduled to vote on H.B. 119, the biennium budget bill, on June 12th. Senators must hear from their local physicians if the OSMA is going to be successful in increasing the Medicaid fee schedule by 6% and ensuring the increases are passed along by the managed care plans. Please contact your Senator today!

Community Health Commission Notes

Immunization Update – Concerns were raised by the AMA and the American Academy of Pediatrics about recent price increases for standard vaccines. Issues of access, insurance reimbursement, up front costs to private physicians and state budget restrictions need to be addressed.

Obesity Update – The problem of the progressive increase in obesity continues to receive media attention. A new book, "Thinking Thin" by Gina Kolata, a science reporter for the *New York Times*, gives a balanced overview of current science and fad.

Newborn Screening – The March of Dimes has a new DVD guide for parents explaining newborn screening (cost \$20, 1-800-367-6630). The American Academy of Pediatrics has provided fact sheets about all the newborn screening tests currently available. (www.acmg.net/resources/policies/ACT/condition-analyte-links.htm).

Environmental Toxins – Recent problems with contaminated pet food continues to expand to animals intended for human consumption (pigs, chickens, and farmed fish). Concerns about quality control of Chinese consumables have the attention of regulators in the U.S. and China. The recent report of diethylene glycol substituted for glycerine from Chinese sources in various liquid medications in Panama and the subsequent hundreds of deaths have added to the dilemma.

Foodborne Pathogens – The CDC last month published a 10 year study of diseases associated with food showing a continuous increase in reported cases since 2000.

HOT TOPICS STATE NEWS AMA NEWS PRACTICE MANAGEMENT ISSUES POLICY NEWS COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES
UPCOMING EVENTS MEMBERSHIP SERVICES & BENEFITS TIPS & TRICKS BREAKING NEWS ACADEMY MEETINGS NEW
MEMBERS THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF TOLEDO AND LUCAS COUNTY TORT REFORM

CLASSIFIED ADS

Space for Lease - 4126 Holland-Sylvania Rd. Toledo, Ohio at impressive new 61,000 sq.ft. medical office building. 14,000 sq.ft. available: build to suit with option to buy.

Call **Dr. Stacy Bowen** at 419.473.9210.

Billing Service - Today's Billing Solution is an established and experienced locally owned and operated billing service offering full practice management. Check us out at www.todaysbillingsolution.com or call 419/866.1489.

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Academy Night at the Mud Hens
Tuesday, August 7, 2007
The Roost at Fifth Third Field
Dinner at 5:30 pm,
first pitch at 7:00 pm



*Academy of Medicine &
The University of Toledo
Medical Center
Joint Meeting
Fall, 2007
Date and Location TBA*



Academy Annual Meeting
Thursday, January 10, 2008
Gladieux Meadows
Guest Speaker
Craig W. Anderson, MD
President, OSMA

Give Autism the Boot!

Autism is the fastest growing disability in America. One in 150 births today results in a child with autism according to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Give Autism the Boot!" is a local fundraiser for people affected by autism and is scheduled for Friday, June 22nd, and Saturday, June 23rd.

Please consider making a donation to The Great Lakes Center for Autism. Your donation will help to serve one out of 150 of your patients affected by autism right here in North West Ohio? We are a tax exempt charitable organization and your donation is fully tax deductible. One hundred percent of the collections from "Give Autism the Boot!" and your donation will go to agencies serving people affected by autism in Northwest Ohio.

If you are able to help us serve this growing population, please make your check payable to: The Great Lakes Center for Autism, 4848 Dorr Street, Toledo, OH 43615. Thank you.

Mary Walters, Executive Director
Great Lakes Center for Autism



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419.473.3200 FAX 419.475.6744

APPLICATIONS

TED BLOCH, MD

Pathology

AMANDA M. MATHENY, MD

General Surgery

YASMIN D. PIRZADA, MD

Infectious Disease

DAVID A. TAUB, MD

Urology

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