

MLCMS News Briefs

The monthly newsletter of the
Mendocino-Lake County Medical Society
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TOP NEWS

Eight local physicians elected to MLCMS leadership posts

Per the recently concluded election, eight Mendocino-Lake physicians have been named to leadership posts at MLCMS, where they will join the current president, Mark Luoto, MD, and the immediate past president, Paul Marchand, MD.

The new officers are:

President-elect: John Williams, DO, internal medicine, Willits

Secretary/treasurer: Jay Joseph, MD, radiation oncology, Ukiah

Board members:

* Brian Hanson, MD, gastroenterology, Ukiah

* Anne Tait, MD, internal medicine, Middletown

* Robert Werra, MD, family medicine, Ukiah

CMA delegates:

* Bruce Andich, MD, internal medicine, Willits

* Richard Guthrie, MD, surgery, Ukiah

CMA alternate delegate: Aldis Baltins, MD, orthopaedic surgery, Ukiah

Potter Valley Health Center threatened with closure

The Potter Valley Community Health Center, which had more than 14,000 patients visits last year, is slated to close on Aug. 21 unless new funding can be found. The center, the sole provider of medical services in the remote community of 3,200, lost more than half its funding in the austere new California budget.

"If somebody magically comes up with some funding," said Interim Director Catherine Andres, "we could stay alive for another year." Meanwhile, she and other staff are scrambling to find medical homes for the center's patients.

The nearest facilities are in Ukiah or Willits, but there is no bus line, so patients without cars will have to arrange for transportation.

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If you received this issue of MLCMS News Briefs by regular mail, now is the time to send MLCMS your e-mail address so you can begin receiving the newsletter electronically. **This is the last issue that will be sent by regular mail.**

To receive News Briefs by e-mail, simply send your name and e-mail address to mlcms@mlcms.org.

Designed for quick reading, News Briefs includes items of interest to physicians from MLCMS and CMA; medical news from Mendocino and Lake counties; state and national stories; and updates on local people and events. Send your e-mail address to mclcms@mlcms.org to ensure continued delivery.

One survey completed, another still in the wings

Results of the MLCMS survey of medical staff wages and benefits will be mailed to all respondents in September. The survey, conducted in July, gathered information about staff wages and benefits to help physicians better manage their practices.

Even as it compiles results of the first survey, MLCMS is preparing a second survey, to be sent to all members later this month. The second survey will gather members' opinions about what MLCMS should be doing to ensure its relevance and value to physicians in Mendocino and Lake counties.

New contact information for MLCMS

Cynthia Melody, MNA, became executive director of MLCMS in July. She replaced Robert Faulk, who retired after 13 years of service to the medical society. Cynthia also directs the Sonoma County Medical Association and the Marin Medical Society. She brings two staff members from those organizations to MLCMS.

New contact information for MLCMS staff is as follows:

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Physicians need to verify accuracy of their CPPI quality data by Sept. 11

More than 13,000 California physicians who treat patients insured by Anthem Blue Cross, Blue Shield of California, or United Healthcare were slated to receive their latest quality performance results from the California Physician Performance Initiative in late July.

CPPI sent each physician their individual quality measure scores based on patient care provided from September 2007 to September 2008. Physicians were provided with a percentile rank compared to their peers; performance scores by measure; and performance scores for each patient group.

Physicians can verify the accuracy of the data used to calculate their scores by requesting their patient lists at www.cchri.org/cppi by Aug. 28. Doctors who believe their scores to be in error

have until Sept. 11 to submit correction requests (with supporting data).

New state budget cuts Healthy Families, spares Medi-Cal rates

The new California budget includes nearly \$1.5 billion in health care cuts that could prevent the state's most vulnerable residents—children, the elderly, and the poor—from getting adequate health care.

A major victim is the Healthy Families program, which provides health care to nearly one million children from low-income families statewide. Funding for Healthy Families was cut by \$400 million, meaning that an estimated 350,000 children will be unable to enroll in the program during the coming year.

"This is a devastating blow to the swelling ranks of California's needy, who are struggling to get through the worst economic crisis in a generation," said CMA President Dev GnaanaDev, MD.

In contrast, the budget does not include a Medi-Cal provider rate cut. A federal appeals court recently upheld the merits of the preliminary injunction issued last year that forced the state to reverse the 10% Medi-Cal rate cut that took effect in July 2008.

The budget assumes that \$1 billion in Medi-Cal savings will come from shifting certain costs for Medi-Cal/Medicare dual-eligibles to the federal government. If the federal funding does not materialize, additional cuts will have to be made.

PEOPLE

Joe Dunn resigns as CEO of CMA

Joe Dunn, a former Orange County state senator who became CEO of the California Medical Association in 2006, has announced that he will leave his post as soon as CMA selects a new CEO. Dunn, who continued to live in Orange County while working at CMA's main office in

Sacramento, said he wanted to spend more time with his family.

"Rest assured," Dunn wrote in a general e-mail to CMA staff, "my decision does not in any way reflect disagreement or dissatisfaction with our organization, our physicians or our amazing management and staff."

The CMA board of directors has begun looking for a new CEO, but no schedule has been released to date.

EVENTS

CME programs available on NORCAL website

NORCAL, the malpractice carrier endorsed by MLMCS, offers a range of CME courses at norcalmutual.com/cme. The courses emphasize risk management and include both clinical and administrative topics.

NORCAL also reminds physicians to check their MBC profiles quarterly at medbd.ca.gov/lookup.html.

CMA offers webinars on CPPI, Good Samaritan laws

MLMCS members are urged to register for the following CMA webinars in August.

California Physicians Performance Initiative. Aug. 11, 11:00 to 11:45 a.m.

Implications of Good Samaritan laws. Aug. 27, noon to 1 p.m.

The webinars are FREE for MLMCS members. To register, visit cmanet.org/calendar.

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CLASSIFIEDS

How to submit a classified ad

To submit a classified ad for MLCMS News Briefs, contact Nan Perrott at nperrott@rhscommunications.com or 707-525-4226. The cost is one dollar per word.

ABOUT MLCMS

The Mendocino-Lake County Medical Society, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit association, supports local physicians and their efforts to enhance the health of the community. Founded in 1938, MLCMS is affiliated with the California Medical Association and the American Medical Association.

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