



Established 1852

Lehigh County Medical Society

The mission of the Lehigh County Medical Society is to encourage physicians and healthcare professionals to have the highest moral and ethical standards; to counsel and censure them when necessary; to serve as a strong and united voice for our Lehigh County physicians, our patients and our community; to promote healthful living and well-being and to advance the highest standards of healthcare and service in our region through education, service and advocacy.

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The DR Bulletin

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FROM YOUR 2014 PRESIDENT, Robert D. Barraco, M.D.



Professionalism Lost and Found

In this era of medical economics and medicolegal challenges, one core aspect of medicine has been in danger...Professionalism. There are several definitions but one that stands out to me is that of W. J. Goode in 1969:

"Something that resides in the interface between the possession of specialized knowledge and a commitment to use that knowledge for the betterment of others"

The American Board of Internal Medicine in 1995 added the following characteristics: "...aspires toward altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honor, integrity and respect for others". All of these terms are well known to us.

In fact, the concept of professionalism in healthcare has been around for thousands of years and forms the basis for various codes of medical ethics. Documents such as the Hippocratic Oath, the Chinese and Islamic Codes of Medical Ethics and the Oath and Prayer of Moses Maimonides lend clarity

and unity to the picture of professionalism. Here are some excerpts from them:

May the love for my art actuate me at all time; may neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to Thy children. May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain.

To protect human life in all stages and under all circumstances, doing my utmost to rescue it from death, malady, pain and anxiety, To keep people's dignity, cover their privacies and lock up their secrets, To be, all the way, an instrument of God's mercy, extending my medical care to near and far, virtuous and sinner and friend and enemy, To strive in the pursuit of knowledge and harnessing it for the benefit but not the harm of mankind, To revere my teacher, teach my junior and be brother to members of the medical profession joined in piety and charity

The first paragraph is from the Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, the second from the Islamic Code of Medical Ethics. One from the Middle Ages, the other from the Twentieth Century, both capturing the essence of what it means to be a professional in healthcare.

So how did we get from there to here? During the period of Enlightenment, science began to take hold. There was a heightened emphasis on competence. Fast forward to the late 20th century, and we began to feel a decline in professionalism. Expressions like "Gomers go to ground" from the "House of God" reflected this decline. Or did they propagate it? It has continued with modern media representations. From

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Manuscripts offered for publication and other correspondence should be sent to 1620 W Highland St, Allentown, PA.

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The editorial board reserves the right to reject and/or alter submitted material before publication. All manuscripts and letters should be typed double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" stationary.

The opinions expressed in these pages are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Lehigh County Medical Society.

The ad material is for the information and consideration of the reader. It does not necessarily represent an endorsement or recommendation by the Lehigh County Medical Society.

Preserve Your County Medical Society - The Grassroots of Organized Medicine

Dr. Kildare and Marcus Welby to “Scrubs” and “House”, the public perception of medicine has changed. Bad doctors often make the news. Good doctors don’t. Where have we heard that before? High school English, Shakespeare perhaps?

Many recent changes have begun to transform the profession of medicine into a job. The 80-hour workweek and an increase to the shift work aspects of medicine are good for learners and providers life balance but led to unanticipated consequences in need of solutions. Medical economics and a business focus have dominated the scene, especially since the Affordable Care Act. Concerns over RVUs and report cards have begun to overshadow concerns for our patients and our art. Legal issues may also have physicians second guessing themselves and ordering low yield tests. One can’t look at the patient in front of them when looking back over their shoulder. Medical school programs have begun to more formally teach aspects of professionalism, emotional intelligence and leadership to students to bridge the gap created by these changes.

I am not suggesting that many of these changes are not necessary. In fact, these oaths and codes should lead us to embrace some of them. For example, HIPAA is an extension of “keep people’s dignity, cover their privacies and lock up their secrets”. In wanting to be the best medical professional we can be, we should want to be appropriately credentialed, keep up to date on literature through continuing education, and aim to have patients satisfied with what we do wherever possible. As Aristotle once wrote, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

The problem in “legislating professionalism” is that the rules are often made from outside the profession and with variable involvement of physicians. Subsequently, our focus becomes the rules and not the patient. Osler warned of over-emphasis on the business aspects of medicine in 1907:

You are in this profession as a calling, not as a business; as a calling which exacts from you at every turn self-sacrifice, devotion, love and tenderness to your fellow-men. Once you get down to purely business level, your influence is gone and the true light of your life is dimmed. You must work in the missionary spirit, with a breadth of charity that raises you far above the petty jealousies of life.

I do believe it is a fair statement that if we live and work by the values of professionalism, then the rest follows: A desire for technical competence and knowledge, decreased law suits, no economic fraud, knowledge of the system and its resources, improved patient care and patient satisfaction. But we must get involved in how healthcare reform occurs. We, as medical professionals, must take the lead and we can only do that by embracing changes that support the values of professionalism. That is why I joined the Lehigh County Medical Society, participate in the PA Med House of Delegates and will be serving you this year as your President. And that is why I encourage you and all physicians to get involved. Together, we can make a difference for our profession, our communities and our patients.

REMEMBER

If you change your business or home address and/or phone or fax number, please notify the Lehigh County Medical Society. Call: 610-437-2288

New Laws Ease Physician Assistant Countersignature Rules but Protect Patient Safety

Two bills that will allow a physician the option of relaxing current physician assistant (PA) countersignature requirements were signed into law by Gov. Tom Corbett on Nov. 27, 2013.

The passage of these bills is a great example of how physician-led, team-based health care can be streamlined, increasing productivity and access to care, while at the same time preserving patient safety.

House Bills 1348 (Act 100) and 1351 (Act 101) permit a physician, if he or she chooses and believes it is safe, to ease the current requirement that he or she countersign 100 percent of all patient records completed by a PA once certain criteria are met.

Physicians will still be required to countersign 100 percent of a PA’s patient records within 10 days:

- During the first 12 months the PA is practicing post-graduation and licensure, and when the PA is practicing in a new specialty
- During the first six months the PA is practicing in the same specialty under the supervision of a physician, unless the PA has multiple approved physicians (physicians approved to reduce the number of charts they must countersign with the appropriate medical board) and the PA has practiced under the supervision of at least one of those approved physicians for at least six months.

Once those periods are over, physicians can choose to reduce, but not eliminate, the number of records completed by a PA that they must countersign by submitting a written agreement to either the State Board of Medicine (for MDs, per HB 1348) or the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine (for DOs, per HB 1351) for approval.

In order to obtain Board approval, the written agreement must require physicians to personally review a selected number of patient records completed by the PA on a regular basis. The records to be reviewed are determined by written criteria set by the physician and PA in the agreement and must include enough to assure adequate review of the PA’s scope of practice.

Recognizing the essential role of advanced practice providers on the health care team, PAMED previously worked with the Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants to reach an agreement on language included in this new law.

The new laws, which go into effect on Jan. 26, 2014, will ease the administrative burden on physicians where appropriate, while still requiring sufficient oversight to assure patient safety.

Mark Your Calendar!

The Annual Social for 2014 will be held on April 12th this year the Social will be held at
Cosmopolitan Restaurant - 22 North 6th St, Allentown

Physicians Urge Legislature to Strengthen Team-Based Care

With millions more Pennsylvanians potentially gaining health insurance as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) goes into effect, their physicians want to be sure that care is team-based and physician-led.

To spotlight physicians' concerns, on Dec. 10, 2013, PAMED leaders and members gathered at the Capitol in Harrisburg for a media event with Gov. Corbett and Rep. Matt Baker (R-Tioga), as part of the Pennsylvania Medical Society's (PAMED's) Physician Leadership Day.

Two bills that would help build a stronger framework for our health care teams have been introduced by Sen. Judy Schwank and Rep. Matt Baker. The bills propose a Patient-Centered Medical Home Advisory Council to help nurture the growth and development of patient-centered care.

Following the media event, the physicians and physicians-in-training visited with their legislators to push for support of measures to help keep Pennsylvania's health care teams strong, physician-led, and patient-centered.

PAMED physicians also urged their legislators to support bills to improve access to care for the uninsured, retain and recruit the physician workforce, especially through student debt forgiveness and expanded residency slots; prevent prescription drug abuse through a controlled substances database; and improve access to health care technology in Pennsylvania.

"What's important to remember is that the future delivery of care in Pennsylvania will be strongly influenced by legislative issues, including many aspects of Governor Corbett's Healthy PA initiative, as we strive to ensure quality, value, and access to care," said Dr. MacLeod.

Gov. Corbett said that his recently introduced Healthy PA plan supports patient-centered, team-based care, as well as the top physician concerns. "Doctors today have been asked to be many different things; business men, accountants, and other things. But Healthy PA says that they should be something else: doctors should be doctors" he said.

PAMED President Bruce MacLeod, MD, told the media: "There's a looming question on many minds: Will we have enough physicians to keep up with demand that could occur due to the Affordable Care Act and newly insured individuals seeking first-time care?... Even though we're in good shape now, we have to make sure we can replace those physicians who are retiring or planning to retire while keeping up with health care demand."

NOTE

Members of the

Lehigh County Medical Society can now view the membership roster (Physician Directory) at our website: www.lcmedsoc.org or request a Membership Roster by calling the Lehigh County Medical Society at: 610-437-2288.

Lehigh County Medical Society Welcomes the following New Members

Elizabeth L. Dierking, MD (OBG)
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Fountain Hill, PA 18015

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Fountain Hill, PA 18015

Joan M. Gonzalez, MD (FM)
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Allentown, PA 18102

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701 Ostrum St., Ste 203
Fountain Hill, PA 18015

Hridayesh S. Nat, MD (IM)
10282 Cormorant Dr.
Breinigsville, PA 18031

Tricia L. Royer, MD (ID)
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James M. Sacco, MD (ORS)
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Bethlehem, PA 18015

Anatasia Shnister, MD (GE)
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Allentown, PA 18104

Amy Slenker, MD (ID)
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Allentown, PA 18103

Karen E. Taverna-Miller, MD (OBG)
701 Ostrum St., Ste 203
Fountain Hill, PA 18015

Adriaan J. Van Gaalen, MD (OBG)
701 Ostrum St, Ste 203
Fountain Hill, PA 18015

Jeffrey A. Zlotnick, MD (FM)
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Allentown, PA 18104

ATTENTION

Lehigh County Medical Society MEMBERS

Does your Physician Group have a Website?

Contact the Lehigh County Medical Society and have your Website linked onto the Lehigh County Medical Society Website.
www.lcmedsoc.org Call: 610-437-2288

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The vision of the Lehigh County Medical Society is to be a relevant and influential leader in the Pennsylvania Medical Society; to unite our physicians and to empower them to deliver compassionate, ethical and evidence based healthcare of the highest quality and value to our community.

The Lehigh County Medical Society will accomplish its mission and its vision by the following:

Legislative Advocacy within our State Medical Society and our Government
Community Education within the Public Health Arena
Member Education, Collaborative Relationships and Collegiality
Service Activities for our members and our community

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