



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.



It Was a Very Good Year...The Best is Yet to Come...

Made famous by Frank Sinatra, these song titles fit this time of year perfectly.

The end of the calendar year is often a time for reflection. I agree and the following is my end of year reflection on some of the accomplishments of the past year and the opportunities of the coming one at LCMS and PA MED.

The Lehigh County Medical Society continued its Middle School Program in Allentown again this year. It has been a great success, with dozens of students in the Health Career Club learning about the health professions. But it doesn't stop there. They also learn to make good choices in such areas as driving and nutrition. Students from Raub Middle School and Harrison Morton Middle School in Allentown met weekly after school with physicians from the Lehigh County Medical

Society as well as nurses from the Allentown Health Bureau, and other health care professions to get exposure to many careers that can be pursued in health care. They also take trips to St. Luke's Hospital, Lehigh Valley Hospital, and several other locations to see first-hand areas to which many of them may never otherwise have exposure. We are looking to continue this into the future and expand it to other area schools. We are always looking for volunteers to come spend time with these kids and help us reach out beyond Allentown. Our program, started with a grant from the Pennsylvania Medical Society, has helped build a program that builds interest in health care in our community. The leadership of the Lehigh County Medical Society in developing this program has earned us many thanks from state and local leaders, the Allentown School District, and other community based organizations.

In order to continue our mission in preserving the health and wellness of our communities, to keep this and other educational initiatives funded, we began the Lehigh County Medical Society Education Fund. Managed by the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation, monies will be released from it to fund LCMS health educational programs in our community. Donations are being accepted to the fund and you can even direct your United Way contribution to the fund.

In order to help develop our future leaders, a formal Student Section of the LCMS was created with its own bylaws. The Section will have its own officers who will sit on the Board of the LCMS as well as represent Lehigh County at

Lehigh County Medical Society, 1620 W Highland St, Allentown, PA 18102-1033  
Phone: 610-437-2288 Fax: 610-437-0910 [www.lcmedsoc.org](http://www.lcmedsoc.org)

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

The DR Bulletin is published six times a year bi-monthly, beginning in January, by the Lehigh County Medical Society.

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**

the Pennsylvania Medical Society. From helping on LCMS initiatives already in place to creating their own projects, the new Student Section will extend the reach of LCMS into our community. It is a win-win-win for our students, our County Medical Society and our community.

We are also in the midst of bylaws changes that will improve function and make LCMS more relevant. Last changed in 1997 and prior to that, in 1972, changes proposed will include Board composition, bylaws changes, quorum and committees. More to come in 2015.

At the Pennsylvania Medical Society, one of the most prolific victories in recent memory was finalized in October. A settlement was reached in the PAMED/HAP litigation with the Commonwealth. In 2009, reserves from the Mcare fund were used to balance the budget in Pennsylvania. To be certain this type of misappropriation will not occur again, the settlement includes provisions so that significant reserves will not build up in the future. Also in the agreement, \$200 million to be returned to physicians, hospitals, and other health care providers who pay assessments into the fund. This is clear evidence that your dues do work for you and the providers in our Commonwealth.

In the most recent House of Delegates meeting, historic changes were made to the PAMED bylaws. These changes will allow the Board of Trustees to be more responsive and nimble in executing initiatives supportive of our Mission. The House of Delegates will also be allowed to vote via electronic means between annual meetings to further increase responsiveness. Changes will also include those affecting bylaws changes, quorum and size of the House and Board. The future House and Board will be able to better keep pace with the social media world around it.

The Keystone Peer Review Organization (KEPRO) was started in 1985 to provide Pennsylvania physicians a peer organization for new initiatives taking place across the state for quality review. This PAMED subsidiary became self-sufficient but over the years, would have required further investment approximating \$20-30 million to remain viable. So when the offer came from Consonance Capital Partners to purchase the subsidiary for over \$44 million, it was considered carefully. The sale was accomplished and the Board and Finance Committee are considering the fate of the funds resulting.

So it has been a busy year as well as a good one. The next year is shaping up to be even busier. So jump on board and get involved and let's make next year great!

**- SAVE THE DATE -**  
**Saturday April 25th, 2015**  
**Annual Banquet**

## **Mcare Settlement Is Good News: \$200 Million to Be Returned to Physicians and Health Care Providers**

The Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) and the Hospital and HealthSystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) have settled our litigation with the commonwealth regarding the Mcare Fund – our appeals of prior assessments and the challenge to the transfer of \$100 million to the general fund from Mcare in 2009.

The agreement requires that \$200 million be returned to physicians, hospitals, and other health care providers who pay assessments into the fund – \$139 million in refunds for prior assessment overpayments and \$61 million via a reduction to the 2015 Mcare assessment.

“We’re pleased that this historic settlement has happened,” said Bruce MacLeod MD, PAMED president, in a statement. “We thank Gov. Corbett and his staff for working to resolve the issue. Our physician members will be happy to know that they won’t be overcharged and the dollars that they pay into the Mcare Fund for professional liability coverage are protected.”

As the statewide physician organization covering all specialties, we were able to coordinate with HAP and the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association (PPMA) to get this landmark agreement completed.

### **Here are some answers to early questions physicians are asking: *Who is eligible for the refunds?***

Physicians will be eligible for a refund if they paid an Mcare assessment (or an assessment was paid for them) for any time during 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2014 (excluding 2013).

### ***When will I get my refund?***

The refunds likely will not be made until 2016 due to the extensive calculations required to determine the amount payable to each eligible health care provider. However, the 2015 assessment will be reduced by about one-third.

### ***What address will my refund be sent to?***

When the refunds are ready to be sent to providers, physicians will receive a letter from Mcare, followed up by a lump sum payment from the Treasury. The refunds for physicians will go to the physician’s license address, so physicians should make sure that this address is up to date.

### ***Will I be required to remit my refund to an employer who wrote the check for my assessments?***

This will vary depending upon your circumstances. For example, even though an employer wrote the check, you may have ultimately borne the cost due to an overhead reduction from your compensation pool. The settlement does not impact any contractual or other obligation that a health care provider may have to remit a refund provided under the settlement to another provider or entity.

The Mcare Fund provides medical professional liability coverage to physicians, hospitals, and certain other health care providers above their basic coverage. The covered health care providers must pay an annual assessment to cover the cost of the fund’s claim payments and other expenses.

As part of the agreement, PAMED and HAP will withdraw our challenge to the 2009 diversion. However, the settlement includes key protections against any future diversion.

The commonwealth has agreed to operate the fund on a pay-as-you-go basis going forward. This means that health care providers will not be required to put money into the fund until it is needed and the fund will not be able to build up substantial reserves such as those diverted in 2009.

The Mcare Fund is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance. Moving forward, the commonwealth has agreed that it will be operated as a trust fund and its funds will not be considered the general revenue of the commonwealth.

PPMA also is a party to the settlement as it was a party to the 2009 assessment appeal.

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**Lehigh County Medical Society  
Welcomes the following  
New Members**

Lori A. Chapleskie Alfonse, DO (SO)  
1240 S. Cedar Crest Blvd, Ste 205  
Allentown, PA 18103

Frances Feudale, DO (EM)  
Cedar Crest & I 78  
Allentown, PA 18105

Gregory Grabon, MD (PM)  
801 Ostrum St  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

Angel Rafael Gonzalez Rios, MD (OBG-Res)  
St. Luke's Graduate Medical Education  
801 Ostrum  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

Mira Saad Mitry, MD (IM-Res)  
One City Center  
707 Hamilton St, 9th Floor  
Allentown, PA 18101

Bonnie Patek, DO (IM-Res)  
1255 S. Cedar Crest Blvd, Ste 3200  
Allentown, PA 18103

Neiman Ramjattan, DO (IM-Res)  
1247 S. Cedar Crest Blvd, Ste 202  
Allentown, PA 18103

Laura Van Wyck, DO (IM-OBG-Res)  
1953 Sunset Dr  
Whitehall, PA 18052

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**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

## When Does the New Child Abuse Training Requirement Go Into Effect?

We've received many calls from physicians who have questions about when the state's new child abuse training requirement goes into effect and if they need to meet the requirement this licensure cycle. Physicians also are asking about a question that appears on the unrestricted license renewal application that asks if they have completed two hours of Board-approved training in child abuse recognition and reporting.

Under the amended Child Protective Services Act (CPSA), all physicians seeking to renew their license on or after Jan. 1, 2015, will need to complete two hours of approved training on child abuse recognition and reporting as a condition of licensure.

However, if you renew an unrestricted license before Dec. 31, 2014, you will have until 2016 (when these licenses are scheduled to be renewed again) to meet the new training requirement.

Bottom-line: If you are a physician with an unrestricted license and you renew your license before Dec. 31, 2014, you will have until 2016 to meet this new requirement and can safely answer "no" on the license renewal application.

The Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) will continue to keep members up-to-date on the changes to the CPSA — most of which go into effect Dec. 31, 2014 — and notify you about educational opportunities as they become available.

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## Physicians Can Access PQRS and eRx Reports to Check On Penalties

Physicians can now request 2013 PQRS and ePrescribing (eRx) feedback reports through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Quality Reporting Communication Support. These reports will help practices determine if they will be facing penalties in 2014 and 2015.

Eligible professionals will face a 1.5 percent PQRS penalty in 2015, as well as a 2 percent eRx penalty in 2014, based on their 2013 performance in these programs.

Requests for these reports will take two to three days to process.

Additional information on the PQRS feedback report is available in the [http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/PQRS/Downloads/2013\\_PQRSFeedbackReportUserGuide\\_F04-02-2014.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/PQRS/Downloads/2013_PQRSFeedbackReportUserGuide_F04-02-2014.pdf)

Group practices that participated in the group reporting option (GRO) can access their feedback reports through their 2013 quality resource and use reports, which are expected to be available later this fall.

**NOTE:** Members of the Lehigh County Medical Society can now view the membership roster (Physician Directory) at our website: [www.lcmedsoc.org](http://www.lcmedsoc.org) or request a Membership Roster by calling the Lehigh County Medical Society at: 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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