



# 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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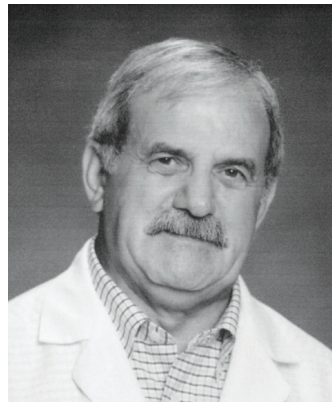
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## YOUR 2016 PRESIDENT, Charles J. Scagliotti, M.D.



### The Age of Specialization

Ask any medical student to share his/her future professional aspirations and the answer is sure to be urology or orthopedics or neurosurgery. This is in keeping with the way medicine has evolved over the past few years. Everyone is a specialist and, once in practice, the scope of that specialty may become even more finite- the orthoped becomes a hand specialist, the neurologist focuses on MS or Parkinson's disease, etc.

This specialization of medicine certainly bodes well for our patients. No one physician can have expertise in all areas but that is no longer necessary. A patient can choose the doctor whose specialty best matches their need.

Take this scenario one step further to include the patient with multi-system pathology.

A myriad of physicians are consulted, each dealing with the organ or system that is their area of specialization. One could assume that this approach should improve patient care. But does it? This convergence of talent can only be truly effective if it fulfills the 2 C's: collaboration and communication.

We must remember we are working as a team in order to treat the "whole" patient. No one body system functions solely on its own so as physicians we must constantly collaborate with each other to be sure we are working as a team and not as individuals to achieve our goal of patient recovery. Secondly it is vital that there is a defined treatment plan that is communicated to the patient and his family. It would be most desirable if the team of specialists would designate one physician to be the communicator. This communication should include the action plan of each specialist with the desired outcome and the answering of questions posed by the patient and his family. This truly becomes a team approach to the care and management of the seriously ill patient.

We are appreciative of the fact that our patients have access to the best care right here at our local hospitals and no longer have to travel to Philadelphia and beyond in search of specific specialists. By remembering to incorporate both true collaboration and improved communication our patients can be assured they are receiving the highest standard of care.

-Charles J. Scagliotti, M.D

Lehigh County Medical Society, 1620 W Highland St, Allentown, PA 18102-1033  
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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.

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.

**Preserve Your County Medical Society - The Grassroots of Organized Medicine**

### Senate Committee Action Fragments the Health Care Team

The Senate Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee, chaired by Sen. Robert Tomlinson (R-Bucks), took action on SB 717, a bill that would allow nurse practitioners to throw away collaborative agreements and practice independently of physician oversight. Although the measure ultimately won committee approval, PAMED applauds Sen. John Gordner (R-Columbia), a member of the Senate Republican Leadership team, for voting against the proposal.

The Pennsylvania Medical Society is deeply disappointed in the Committee's action. By eliminating the collaborative ties that exist between nurse practitioners and physicians, SB 717 removes an important safeguard in patient care and fragments the health care team.

Patient care is best when a team of health care professionals with complementary—not interchangeable—skills work together. With the complexity of our health care system ever increasing, patients need both physicians and nurses, coordinating care and sharing information for the benefit of the patient.

Nurse practitioners have less training and education than physicians, but when physician expertise and leadership is combined with the care of a skilled nurse practitioner, patient care is better. Nothing in current law keeps a nurse practitioner from exercising his or her professional judgement to the fullest extent of their training. Collaboration with a physician as a parameter of practice is not a burden, but rather an assurance of greater expertise immediately available in the care of patients.

SB 717 devalues the importance of the health care team. Let's not destroy team-based medical care and instead promote existing law that allows both physicians and nurse practitioners to exercise the full range of medical knowledge available at the moment it is needed. From [www.pamedsoc.org](http://www.pamedsoc.org)

### Pennsylvania's Medical Malpractice Verdicts Are Lowest in 15 Years

Pennsylvania medical malpractice jury verdicts have reached their lowest point since 2000, the first year the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) began reporting these statistics.

A total of 101 medical malpractice cases were tried via jury verdict in 2015. This number represents a 20 percent decrease from the previous year, according to a report from The Legal Intelligencer. Last year's medical malpractice cases tried by jury are almost 70 percent less than the average number of cases reported from 2000 through 2003.

Seventy-nine of the 101 jury cases in 2015 resulted in a verdict in favor of the defense. Of the cases in which the outcome was an award to the plaintiff, the results were as follows:

- Three verdicts with awards less than \$500,000.
- Two verdicts with awards between \$500,000 and \$1 million.
- Twelve verdicts with awards between \$1 million and \$5 million.

- Three verdicts with awards between \$5 million and \$10 million.
- Two verdicts with awards greater than \$10 million.

What has led to the reduction in medical malpractice litigation? A variety of reasons are likely contributing to the decrease, including the rising cost of litigation, an increase in the use of alternative dispute resolution methods like arbitration, and Mcare's requirement that plaintiffs obtain a certificate of merit from an expert that establishes that the medical procedures in a case fall outside acceptable standards.

Additional PA medical malpractice statistics from 2000-2015, including breakdowns by county, are available from the AOPC. Access the statistics. From [www.pamedsoc.org](http://www.pamedsoc.org)

**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](http://www.lcmedsoc.org)**  
 Call: 610-437-2288

### PA's DOH Shares Updates on Temporary Regulations for Medical Marijuana

The first set of temporary medical marijuana regulations are currently being drafted, Pennsylvania's Department of Health (DOH) Sec. Karen Murphy said June 1 in a press conference.

The regulations will be in place for two years from the date of publication and will not be implemented all at one time. The temporary regulations will help shape the final regulations. Other highlights of Sec. Murphy's presentation include:

- Growers and Processors—DOH is working on regulations for growers and processors, and these will likely be the first set of regulations. Applications for growers and processors will be available by the end of the year via PA Bulletin. Sec. Murphy also addressed financial requirements to obtain a grower or processor permit.
- Other Regulations—Regulations for dispensers, physicians, caregivers, labs, and other entities contained in the law will be implemented sequentially.
- Who Will Be Involved in Developing PA's Medical Marijuana Regulations?—Sec. Murphy said that all four legislative caucuses, as well as stakeholders including patients and physicians, will be involved in developing the regulations.
- DOH Developing Online Tools and Resources—DOH is developing a medical marijuana website which Sec. Murphy expects to be up soon. The website will include a 10-question survey for public input. Additional FAQ pages on the medical marijuana program will also be added to the DOH website.
- Hiring Process for PA's Medical Marijuana Director—

Sec. Murphy indicated that over 120 people have expressed interest in the medical marijuana director position. Sec. Murphy said that the director should be hired this summer.

- Obtaining Medical Marijuana from Other States for Minors—The regulations currently being drafted regarding minors will not limit obtaining medical marijuana from only neighboring states. Those who wish to obtain medical marijuana from another state will be required to register with DOH and receive a medical marijuana card for getting it out of state. This regulation, once published, will apply only to medical marijuana obtained for minors.

Sec. Murphy also confirmed that a workgroup to obtain physician feedback will be convened this summer. As new information regarding these temporary regulations and the physician workgroup becomes available, it be reported in PAMED's Daily Dose email newsletter. From [www.pamedsoc.org](http://www.pamedsoc.org)

### **Pennsylvania Medical Society Reacts to Opioid Education Bill Moving out of State Committee**

A bill that would require prescribers of opioids to take continuing medical education related to this type of medication moved out of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee.

Senate Bill 1202, sponsored by Senator Gene Yaw (R-23), would require physicians with Drug Enforcement Administration approval to prescribe controlled narcotics to complete at least two hours of education in pain management or two hours of education in the prescribing practices of opioids as a portion of the total continuing education required for biennial renewal. It does not apply to doctors who can't prescribe such drugs. Currently, physicians must have 100 hours of continuing medical education each license cycle with 12 of those hours being in the areas of patient safety and risk management.

It's important to be smart, safe, and sure when working with opioids. Sometimes opioids are the best option for patients, and sometimes they're not. Since opioids are often prescribed to treat pain, continuing medical education will help those who prescribe narcotics keep up with the latest developments in this area of medicine.

For many years, the Pennsylvania Medical Society has been working to address prescription drug abuse and misuse specific to opioids. Our initial campaign earlier this decade started the process of raising the profile of this crisis in Pennsylvania. That campaign included public awareness, medication drop-off projects funded by grants, continuing medical education, and a legislative push for the state to give physicians access to a controlled substance database.

More recently, we have been updating our continuing medical education, working with the state to develop prescribing guidelines, and again raising the profile of this crisis through public awareness.

The Pennsylvania Medical Society fully supports Senator Yaw's effort.

### **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

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

### **Christopher S. Alia, MD (PCC)**

St Luke's Pulmonary & Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Thanhnga Doan, Med. Student**

### **Osamudiamen Idahosa, MD (CCM)**

St Luke's Pulmonary & Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Sabrina J. Logan, MD (CCP)**

Inpatient Pediatrics Lehigh Valley Hospital  
Po Box 689 Allentown PA 18105

### **Ariel Leonardo Penaranda, Med. Student**

### **Rhonda Robeel, Med. Student**

### **Deborah M. Stahlnecker, DO (PCC-IM)**

St Luke's Pulmonary and Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Kirth W. Steele, DO (IM- PUD)**

St Luke's Pulmonary and Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Jonathan David Trager, DO (EM-CCM)**

St Luke's Pulmonary and Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Mohamed Abdulhafid Turki, MD (PCC)**

St Luke's Pulmonary and Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Nicole D. Yoder, DO (PUD)**

St Luke's Pulmonary & Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

### **Thomas Bruce Zanders, DO (PCC)**

St Luke's Pulmonary and Critical Care Associates  
709 Delaware Ave Fountain Hill PA 18015

## **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.**

LCMS is looking for members interested in becoming active on the Board of Trustees or on various committees. Please contact our office if you are interested, 610-437-2288 or [lcmedsoc@rcn.com](mailto:lcmedsoc@rcn.com)

*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.

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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