

## Overview of the Year 2005-2006

### *Leadership*



#### **2005/06 SBCMS Executive Committee**

Top row from left: Rodney Borger, MD, Treasurer; Clifford Walters, MD, Vice President; and Guillermo Valenzuela, MD, Secretary  
Bottom row from left: Manmohan Nayyar, MD, President-Elect; Dennis Flynn, MD, President and Edward Hess, MD, Past President.

The 2005-06 SBCMS officers, board members and delegates were installed June 29, 2005 at the Redlands Country Club. **Dennis P. Flynn, MD**, became the 113th president of San Bernardino County Medical Society. The annual **Outstanding Physician Awards** for 2005 were presented during the installation of officers to Victor C. Ching, M.D., Outstanding Contribution to the Medical Society; Vellore Muraligopal, M.D., Outstanding Contribution to Medicine; James A. Fallows, M.D., Outstanding Contribution to the Community; and Stanley Clifford Weisser, Outstanding Citizen's Award. The awards are significant honors that reflect the respect, recognition, and appreciation of their fellow members.



#### **2005/06 SBCMS Alliance Board of Directors**

Left to right: Ronnie Salinas-Community Health, Adele Harmeling-Membership  
Lorene Sponsler-Legislation, Linda Letson-President-Elect, and  
Maggie Smith-Treasurer. Seated in front is Lynda Kuehn-President.

### ***Members***

Successful recruitment efforts have resulted in 107 new Students, 50 new House Officers and 111 new Active Members in 2005-06.

On November 28, Emeritus board member **Gebre-Christos Gobezie, MD** retired from the SBCMS Board of Directors after 22 years of service. Dr. Gobezie received a resolution from the Medical Society acknowledging "his outstanding, unselfish contributions, his leadership, his compassionate efforts to improve the health and well being of all citizens in our county, and his contributions to public health intervention efforts." We lost a valuable member when dr. Gobezie passed away late in April. The Medical Society and those of us who knew him and worked with him on the board of directors, the Executive Committee and during his term as president will miss him greatly.

**Vellore Muraligopal, MD** was honored by The Unforgettables Foundation at the 6th annual "Lights for Little Lives" Remembrance Walk on New Years Eve in Loma Linda. He received the 2005 Dr.'s Lawrence Tomasi and Nuria Pages Memorial "Unforgettable Pediatrician" Award.

### ***Physician Advocacy***

The steadfast fortitude of the CMA, in particular Jack Lewin, MD, CEO/EVP and Catherine Hanson, JD, Vice President and General Counsel, produced a **victorious outcome in lawsuits under the RICO** (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) statutes. Significant settlements have been negotiated with Aetna, Cigna, Health Net, and Wellpoint, with each organization agreeing to pay millions in reparations, change their heavy-handed business practices, and clean up reimbursement methods going forward.

SBCMS members participated in the RCMA/SBCMS sponsored continuing medical education cruise for physicians July 2-9, 2005. This second annual **Cruisin' Thru CME** cruise - from Montreal to Boston - provided physicians with a valuable course in pain management.

CMA President-Elect Anmol S. Mahal, MD, and 38th District Assemblyman Keith S. Richman, MD, were guest speakers at the 10th Annual **High Desert General Membership Meeting** September 14, 2005. 80 physicians enjoyed dinner and fellowship at the Apple Valley Inn. A chartered bus brought physicians from the San Bernardino valley to the High Desert. The Medical Society and the four desert hospitals hosted the annual meeting.

SBCMS/RCMA continued its series of **Medical Staff Leadership Forums**, developed to allow members of the Medical Executive Committees and Medical Staff Coordinators of Inland Empire Hospital to come together to learn and share concerns related to medical staff issues. Programs featured "Medical Staff Quality Leadership" by Richard Frankenstein, M.D., Speaker, CMA House of Delegates (September 28); "Pay for Performance - The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" by Ronald Bangasser, MD, CMA Past President (January 26); and "Evolving Bylaws Issues: The Need for Vigilance" by John V. Hill, MD, Chair, CMA Organized Medical Staff Section (May 24).



SBCMS and RCMA hosted a **CME Weekend**, October 15-16, 2005 at the Morongo Casino Resort, in Cabazon. Courses included "Last Chance for Pain," and "Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment." The program was designed to assist physicians in accruing CME hours for the pain management or general CME requirements.



43 physicians and their office staff attended **Taking Charge & Getting Paid**, a workshop held in the SBCMS/RCMA Inland Empire **Medicine** Conference Room on November 16. Topics covered included updates and changes in Medicare rules, regulations and billing procedures; proper coding, billing and documentation to increase revenue and avoid unnecessary delays and denials; the impact of Medicare Part D on Patients; tips, resources, contacts & references to improve collections; negotiating & contracting with payors; protecting against payor abuses; and silent

PPOs.

SBCMS/RCMA hosted a **Health Savings Account Program Seminar** on Tuesday, January 10, 2006 at the SBCMS/RCMA offices. Roy Lyons, Vice President of the Marsh Affinity Group, presented an overview of Health Savings Accounts and High Deductible Health Plans. SBCMS, RCMA and CMA have partnered with Marsh Affinity Services and UMB Bank to simplify the HSA process, combining all the necessary elements into one product.



Fifty physicians met with CMA representatives on March 2, 2006 to discuss **Workers' Compensation** and provide input for developing action plans to deal with this critical problem. Nileen Verbeten, CMA Vice President for Economic Services, provided an informative PowerPoint presentation that resulted in extensive discussion. Her presentation covered pressures driving reform, the elements of reform, reform's impact on physicians, and the current hotspots.

On March 16, 2006, NHIC presented a free half-day general **Medicare workshop** for 50 physicians' office managers and billing personnel at the SBCMS offices. The presentations covered Medicare updates, billing tips, primary care, the appeals process, and fraud and abuse.



SBCMS members attended the CMA's 9th Annual **California Health Care Leadership Academy**, May 5-7 at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa in Indian Wells, The theme was "Meeting Future Expectations without Breaking the Bank," a focus on economic trends and physician leadership skills. This year's conference addressed the challenges of rising costs, demands for quality improvement and the goal of expanded access to care as drivers of health system reform. Workshops focusing on conflict

resolution, chairing and motivating boards and committees, public speaking, and other leadership skills rounded out the program.

The Riverside/San Bernardino Joint Physicians' Well-Being Committee hosted the 18th Annual Western States Regional Conference on **Physicians' Well-Being** on May 18, 2006 at the UC Riverside Extension Center. This series of annual meetings featuring speakers and workshops tackled the tough topic of physician addiction and recovery.

### ***Medical Student Activities***

38 medical students met with Dr. Robert Hertzka, immediate past president of the CMA, who presented an "**Introduction to the Politics of Medicine**," on August 28, 2005 at Loma Linda Children's Hospital. He discussed the American political and legislative system, including how laws are made, the unique challenges, how bills become law, and our electoral system: how districts are drawn and what that means for democracy. He also covered how the legislature is organized and what that means for students as potential policy advocates. Six students debated the Single Payer Health Care System, followed by a two-part lecture on the history of the US health care system.



124 medical students attended a special meeting October 26, 2005 at the Loma Linda University Alumni Hall Amphitheater with **Robert E. Hertzka, MD**, CMA Immediate Past President. Dr. Hertzka discussed "Medicine and the California Special Election."

Representatives of the SBCMS/Loma Linda University chapter of the AMA/CMA-Medical Student Section participated in a **voter registration drive** for the November 8th election during the noon hour outside the University Church in Loma Linda on October 11, 2005. The students provided information on ballot Propositions 73, 78, and 79.

Nearly 150 **medical students** attended the January 19th meeting with Duane M. Cady, MD, Chairman of the AMA Board of Trustees. The gathering was held in the Amphitheater of the Alumni Hall for Basic Science at Loma Linda University.

The Loma Linda University School of Medicine AMA/CMA-Medical Student Section and SBCMS sponsored a meeting, "**Future Financing of Medicine**," on March 1, 2006. Dustin Corcoran, CMA VP of Government Relations, was the guest speaker. 150 students attended the luncheon at Alumni Hall Amphitheater.

### ***Legislative Advocacy***

On October 4, 2005, SBCMS leadership and Legislative Committee members met with **Dustin Corcoran**, CMA's Vice President of Government Affairs in the Inland Empire Medicine Conference Room. Mr. Corcoran presented an insider's look at the opportunities and challenges facing the practice of medicine. He also discussed the political forces at play in the State Capitol as CMA prepares for the 2006 Legislative Session.

The Legislative Commission/LOPAC Committee conducted **legislative candidate interviews** on February 7 and 15, 2006. The panel interviewed candidates for the Assembly Districts 61, 62 and 65 and Senate District 32. The Legislative Committee's recommendations for local elections were accepted. Local expertise and assistance is needed to be successful in identifying those candidates who will help physicians and patients and protect MICRA in difficult times.



San Bernardino County Medical Society was part of a group of more than 500 physicians from throughout California who gathered in Sacramento at the Sheraton Grand Hotel as part of CMA's 32nd Annual **Legislative Leadership Conference** on April 4. Our county's group included 12 physicians and 20 medical students. The day began with a legislative overview by CMA Government Relations Vice President, Dustin Corcoran. He moderated a legislative panel with Senators Denise Moreno Ducheny and George Runner, who addressed health care issues being addressed by the Legislature this year. They were followed by the very popular "Political Pundits Panel" which featured two of California's leading political strategists, with Greg Lucas of the Sacramento Bureau Chief for the San Francisco Chronicle moderating their discussion. The luncheon keynote speaker was Daniel Zingale, Chief of Staff for First Lady Maria Shriver and founding director of the Department of Managed Health Care.

After lunch, the SBCMS contingent met with 12 of our legislators and their staff to review major legislative issues affecting patients and physicians in California. This year our visit focused on: Informed Consent and Off-Label Prescriptions (AB 2856) and increasing Medi-Cal provider rates (budget). After the legislative appointments, they were treated to a tour of the Assembly and Senatorial floors by Assemblyman Russ Bogh.

## **Community Advocacy**

Dr. Damodara Rajasekhar represented SBCMS on a task force to assess and discuss **health care issues in the High Desert**. Bill Postmus, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, called this meeting for October 12, 2005 because of the dramatic growth of the High Desert and its impact on health care delivery.

The Medical Society supported Public Health Officer Dr. Eric Frykman's request for assistance in administering no cost **Flu Mist vaccinations** in all county school districts. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors accepted liability to administer the vaccine to as many as 430,000 children in 400 schools in San Bernardino County during December and January. The medical society forwarded to the DPH contact information on those people interested in staffing a nasal vaccine clinic.

In an effort to improve the delivery of health care services to limited-English proficient (LEP) Californians, SBCMS renewed its participation in a collaborative of 28 physician and medical organizations from across the state to create **The Medical Leadership Council on Cultural Proficiency**. Led by The California Endowment and convened by the California Academy of Family Physicians, the Council meets biannually and will seek out strategies to improve cultural proficiency and care to minority and medically underserved communities.



Our **Southern California Medical Museum** celebrated its 9th annual open house and lecture, "*The Feeding of Babies & Invalids through the Ages*" on Sunday, April 30, 2006. Marilyn Herber, MD; Hans Davidson, MD, PhD; and Dee Gibson, RN, CNM exhibited items from their personal collections and traced the fascinating history of feeding devices used for infants and the sick. Exhibits included terra cotta clay feeders of ancient Egypt, cow horn feeders used in the Middle Ages, pewter feeding bottles and pap boats of 17th century Europe, ceramic and glass suckling bottles of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and turtle bottles. The event also included refreshments, free admission, a silent auction, and docent tours of the museum. The museum is an ongoing project of the SBCMS Historical Committee.

The inaugural meeting of the **Child, Adolescent and Maternal Health Committee** was held on April 27, 2005. The Committee was established to promote open communication between school nurses and pediatricians to better serve the needs of students. Meetings are held quarterly at the Inland Empire

Health Plan (IEHP) offices in San Bernardino. 2005-2006 meetings were held on 4/27/05, 10/21/05, 1/18/06, and 5/31/06.

The first project was to create uniformity in the medication request forms for asthma and diabetes as well as general medication, currently in use at the schools and by pediatricians. Members submitted medication sheets from each school as well as those used by endocrinologists. IEHP collected the forms and drafted a standardized medication form. A subcommittee of pediatricians and nurses was appointed.

Discussion included new legislation that reduces the age of students who are permitted to carry Epi-pens and inhalers for immediate access when necessary. Former legislation required these medications to be dispensed at the discretion of the school nurse if the student was below middle school age. The establishment of a protocol for PCP notification when a student has had multiple asthma-related incidents on campus was discussed as an early intervention tool.

Other committee activities included: providing website address for asthma tool kits; obtaining and distributing copies of the California Department of Education's policies and procedures booklet for medication; sharing obesity programs that have been established; providing copies of Education Code for Physician Education; collecting sample forms and creating drafts for standardized forms; designating a specific Asthma Action Plan and formulating a version that is fax friendly; training key staff and physicians on adolescent care; implementing teen friendly interventions.

### ***Medical Reserve Corp***

SBC MRC responded to a call from the Office of the Surgeon General to assist with medical response for the **Hurricane Katrina relief efforts**. Locally, our MRC was in communication with MRC volunteers about opportunities to provide disaster relief and responded to requests from over 20 other physicians and healthcare professionals regarding volunteer opportunities related to Hurricane Katrina. Before Hurricane Katrina hit, our local MRC Executive Committee members participated in a conference call to discuss the situation with the Hurricane approaching and how we could respond. We received a flurry of email from the National MRC Office, and exchanged emails with MRC Executive team members, ICEMA (Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency), and the San Bernardino County Dept. of Public Health.

Dr. Dev GnanaDev took a team of 10 physicians, 2 radiology techs, and 3 mental health counselors from Arrowhead Regional Medical Center to Houston on Sept. 10th. They provided staffing to clinics at the Astrodome and Reliant Center; and a field hospital-clinic at Reliant Arena. The **ARMC team** provided the majority of physician staffing for all three areas during their stay, treating an average of 400 patients per day in the three areas combined. For the first few days, the ARMC Behavior Health team was the only one providing Mental Health Services at the Astrodome.

In July, September, January, February, March, April, and June, MRC volunteers attended **training sessions** and unit meetings at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, covering simple triage and rapid treatment, general disaster preparedness and Avian Flu, bioterrorism preparedness - including CDC Category A agents, non-conventional weapons and risk assessment, and chemical and radiological agents. On September 17, 2005, SBC MRC volunteers staffed the MRC Booth during the **Route 66 Rendezvous®** in San Bernardino.



Heather Shover, M.D., Training Officer for the San Bernardino County MRC, attended the fourth annual **Medical Reserve Corps National Leadership and Training Conference**, hosted by the Office of the Surgeon General, in Dallas, Texas April 18-21, 2006. More than 450 MRC leaders from across the country attended this conference, designed to better equip MRC units with the tools they need to effectively respond to a public health emergency in their area. They attended presentations from the U.S. Surgeon General, V ADM Richard H. Carmona, MRC Leaders, and other key stakeholders.

### ***Inland Wellness Information Network (IWIN)***

**Live & Then Give** (LTG), our organ and tissue donor awareness program, is a collaborative partner of the Southern California Donate Life Network (SCDLN). A major role of LTG this year was promoting the state's first online organ registry. April 2006 marked the first anniversary and the Donate Life California Organ and Tissue Donor Registry signed up a quarter million Californians. This set a national record for state registries and exceeded projections by 70%.

Activities of LTG and SCDLN include promoting National Minority Donor Awareness Day, and collaborating with the Blood Bank of San Bernardino & Riverside Counties to promote Donate Life at the Healthy Heritage Wellness Conference - An Interactive Afro-Centric Health Conference at Cal Baptist University. LTG was promoted through attendance and advertising in the United Organ Transplant Association's Gala program, the Riverside Adams Kart Track program, and brochures that were placed in physicians' offices throughout the year. The Donate Life Rose Parade Float supports the public awareness goals of the donation and transplantation community and sends an uplifting message of hope that inspires people worldwide to "Donate Life."

LTG collaborated with the Blood Bank and UOTA to have display booths at four local Saturn dealers to promote Saturn's National Donor Day on February 14, 2006. LTG saluted National Donor Month (April) and collaborated with SCDLN Partners for a presentation at Riverside Downtown Partnership, providing

promotional items to about 50 downtown businesses.



In April, LTG collaborated with SCDLN for the annual event at the Rancho Cucamonga Epicenter Quakes game and also provided VA Healthcare Systems with promotional items for their annual health fair display booth.

### ***African American Health Institute (AAHI)***

The AAHI's official name is now **African American Health Institute of San Bernardino County, Inc.** They received their Articles of Incorporation from the California Secretary of State and anticipate receiving their 501(c)(3) status in the near future. V. Diane Woods, Dr. P.H., MSN, RN, is the President/CEO, and Deborah Pickett is Administrative Assistant. AAHI's offices are located at: 1800 N. Western Avenue, Suite 100, San Bernardino. Their phone number is (909) 880-2600.

The AAHI's Founding Board of Directors are Alton Garrett, Chairman; Veatrice Jews, Secretary; Dr. Craig Jackson (JD), Chief Financial Officer; Kim Carter, Patricia Green, and Vicki Y. Height, MD. San Bernardino County's Public Health Officer and the SBCMS advocated with IWIN to establish this initiative in 1999.

### ***Communications***

On July 29, 2005, **KCSB TV 3 - Inland Empire Alive** interviewed Frank Randolph, MD about the Medical Reserve Corps.

As a benefit of membership, the SBCMS has compiled a 147-page booklet with the **UPIN numbers** of physicians practicing in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. It is free to members; non-members pay \$50,00.

The transition of webmaster duties from Jay Razzouk to Linda Sue Myers has progressed smoothly over this last year. Jay, attending law school at Pepperdine University, remains involved as a consultant and assists when needed.

The addition in 2005 of a video conferencing system now shared between SBCMS and RCMA will further open communication between members, county medical societies and hospitals, July, August and September of 2005 we conducted system tests successfully with CMA. January 13, 2006 we successfully re-tested the system using various methods (video conference and webcams) to connect with the following county medical societies: LACMA, CMA Sacramento allowed conference traffic through to CMA San Francisco, RCMA and SBCMS used webcams, and San Diego County Medical Society connected through CMA San Francisco. A future goal for communication is to place webcams in each hospital

thereby providing a low cost solution to video conferencing rather than investing thousands of dollars for a big system in hospitals.

SBCMS supports the **Telehealth Educational Center Loma Linda University Telehealth Initiative.**

This is a joint effort to engage in telemedicine and telehealth provider education through LLU's Learning Center. Dr. Rodney Willard is the Medical Society's advisor to LLU.

Earl W. Ferguson, M.D., Director of Telemedicine Services at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital and a member of Loma Linda University Strategic Planning Working Group gave a presentation to the **Electronic Communications Committee** on February 22, 2006. Dr. Ferguson discussed the merging of IT and telemedicine, and how this process will give access to healthcare information wherever and whenever needed for healthcare decision making. Medical Informatics is evidence-based decision-making and will allow early detection/intervention in processes that lead to disease; thus preventing disease before it occurs. Mr. Paul Simms, Administrative Director of the Telehealth Initiative at Loma Linda University attended the meeting to help answer any questions committee members may have regarding the Telehealth Initiative.

Members continue to receive our bi-monthly Fax Facts newsletter containing up-to-the-minute legislative and organizational events and issues and the monthly *Southern California Physician* magazine.