

Board Briefs
July 28, 2008

St. Bernardine Medical Center's (SBMC) Vice President of Operations Andrew Roberston, M.D. reported plans to recruit cardiologists, implement new technology, and expansion. The goals of SBMC are to improve quality and service for patients and physicians, provide as many services possible in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, and to work collaboratively with other health organizations.

The SBCMS Alliance gathered for their Annual Luncheon on June 4, 2008 at the SBCMS conference center. Lorene Sponsler, Jeannine Lutz and Linda Letson were elected to oversee the revenue and projects supported by our Alliance. The CMA Alliance was represented by Debbie Ricks, President; Siggie Stillman, Past President; and Judy Corless. The SBCMS Alliance presented Executive Director Linda Stratton with a \$7,000 check to Inland Wellness Information Network to support the Healthy Lifestyles program for elementary student grades k-6. The Alliance will continue to support the program annually.

AMA Delegate Victor Ching, MD reported on the 2008 AMA annual meeting. The most important issue was HR 6331 that stopped the Medicare cuts. Rebecca Patchin, MD was elected Chair-Elect of the AMA Board. Other key actions included the defeat of a resolution that would require disclosure of financial relationships between physicians and pharmaceutical; adoption of resolutions for the promotion of better pain care, a rating system for processed foods and elimination of the 48-hour signature rule.

CMA President-Elect Dev GnanaDev, MD reported physicians were able to protect access to care for California's 5 million seniors and military families by stopping the 15% Medicare physician payment cuts. This is an enormous achievement for physicians, and now we must build on this momentum to enact long-term reforms to the Medicare payment system to sustain those physicians struggling to maintain a practice and to attract new young physicians to California. HR 6331 will provide an 18-month Medicare physician payment fix to give Congress time to develop and enact a long-term payment system reform.

On September 2, 2008, Palmetto GBA will take over as the Medicare fiscal intermediary for Part B in California through a phased implementation. In order ensure that a members' transition to Palmetto is successful and efficient, it is very important that all submitters transition their claim submissions to Palmetto immediately and to carefully review their website often for updates.

Using data obtained under the Knox Keene Act, the CMA released a report that breaks down how private health insurance companies spend their revenues. According to the report, private health insurance companies regulated by the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) spend \$6 billion each year on administration and divert an additional \$4.3 billion to profit. Currently private health insurance companies regulated under Knox Keene, representing about 60% of the health insurance market, are required to spend no more than 15% of their revenues on administrative costs. CMA and other advocates believe the statute includes profits as administrative costs; health insurance companies exclude profits from the 15%, allowing them to spend as little as they want on actual health care. SB 1440, a bill authored by Senator Kuehl and sponsored by CMA, would require insurance companies to spend 85% of their revenues on health care, driving down health care costs for consumers and potentially making coverage more affordable. The Knox Keene report is available on the CMA website, www.cmanet.org/upload/knox_keene_08.pdf.

SBCMS Treasurer Leroy Ounanian reported for the 12-month period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 the society's total revenue: \$526,406. Total expenses: \$519,712. Excess revenue over expenses: \$6,694 after depreciation. The board approved the financial report as submitted.

The board approved the 2008/2009 SBCMS committee assignments which will be published on the SBCMS web site. Doctor Victor Ching was appointed to fill the vacant Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care board seat. Doctor Albert Arteaga's nomination for two CMA-Foundation Awards – the Ethnic Physician Leadership Award and the Adarsh S. Mahal, MD Leadership Award - was approved.

The final criteria and application for the Ronald Bangasser, MD Medical Student Scholarship Fund were presented and approved by the board. The scholarships will be used to assist medical students at LLUSM and UCR medical school. The intent of the fund is to defray tuition for the scholarship recipient(s). Marketing will begin November 1, 2008 with a deadline of March 1, 2009. Susan Bangasser will meet with key contacts at the two medical schools to market the scholarship to the medical students. The first award of \$2,000 will be given out at the June 2009 installation of officers and outstanding awards dinner.

The SBCMS' 2007/2008 Annual Report was distributed to the board and is now posted on the SBCMS web site. The report will be used in recruitment packets and retention letters to members who are delinquent.

Our Medical Reserve Corps received the American Red Cross Humanitarian Award at a recognition breakfast on June 19 at the San Bernardino Hilton. This is the Red Cross' highest award which honored the MRC for its commitment and contributions made during the 2007 wildfires. SBCMS will co-sponsor with RCMA an Eastern Mediterranean Cruise 7/6/09-7/17-09. 20 hours of CME credit will be available for attendees.