AMA HOUSE OF DELEGATES REPORT

Following are reports of Connecticut’s AMA Delegation activities since the 2014 CSMS Annual Meeting of the House of Delegates:

AMA 2014 Interim House of Delegates Meeting, Dallas, Texas
November 7-11, 2014

The 2014 Interim Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates (HOD) meeting was held at the Antole Hotel in Dallas, Texas. This is the shorter of the two yearly AMA meetings, where resolutions are restricted to advocacy, medical ethics, and matters pertaining directly to physician practice.

The CSMS resolution which had the support of the New England Delegation entitled “Burdensome Impact of Medicare’s Face-to-Face Form Requirements” was reaffirmed as AMA policy. The House continued to support geographic adjustments to telemedicine payments, which was actively supported by the Connecticut Delegation. Other major policy decisions included referral of the modernization of the AMA’s “Code of Medical Ethics,” after extensive input from the Reference Committee and House itself. Other major issues included: expert lectures on Ebola, adoption of principles of maintenance of certification, a presentation by VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald asking for physicians’ help on caring for veterans, passage of public health policy on Ebola and e-cigarettes, AMA support for the interstate compact to streamline medical licensure, new policy calling for adequate networks for patient access and choice, and renewed request for the suspension of meaningful use penalties by CMA, among numerous other issues.

A full summary of the meeting can be found on the AMA website: www.ama-assn.org.

All members of the Connecticut contingency were active in the affairs of the AMA Interim meeting.

Congratulations to Shady Henien, MD who successfully campaigned for the position of chair-elect of the Resident Fellow Section (RFS). This is a very important position in the House as it is the main focus of representation of all resident and fellow members of the AMA. He also was re-elected as the section delegate to the HOD and had two resolutions passed in the RFS Assembly. Andrew Goldsmith, medical student from UConn, attended as did Yale Residents, Kavitha Gopalratnam, Kevin Woodson, Jamin Lebatch, Louie Gangcuagco, Alex Norcott, Jessica Deslauriers (who was on the RFS Rules Committee) and Julio Alvarenga.

Al Herzog, MD (D-Hartford) a member of the Council on Long Range Planning and Development was on the House Reference Committee F, participated on a Panel on Health Trends and was
active in the American Psychiatric Association (APA) section council. Ted Zanker, MD (D-New Haven) continued his support of the APA section council meetings and testified on several resolutions at the HOD meeting. Michael Carius, MD (AD-Fairfield) organized our delegation seating at the House as our “Delegation Whip,” chaired the New England Delegation (NED) Reference Committee on Constitution and Bylaws (CCB), attended the Section on Emergency Medicine, and testified on several resolutions before the House. Seyed Aleali, MD (D-Fairfield) was re-appointed to the Council on Legislation for which congratulations are due. Donald Timmerman, MD (AD-Middlesex) represented us at the Organized Medical Staff Section (OMSS) and on the NED Reference Committee J, as well as at the meetings of the AAFP. Gary Price, MD, (AD-New Haven) chaired NED Reference Committee B on advocacy and led our testimony on access and equity in telemedicine payments. Bollepalli Subbarao, MD (AD-Hartford) was active in the APA and supported the delegation. Michael Deren, MD (D-New London) was elected chair of the Surgical Caucus and testified on behalf of the caucus. Other Connecticut physicians who participated in the meeting were: Neil Brooks, MD (D-AAFP) who sat on the House Reference Committee on CCB, Katherine Harvey, MD (Yale Resident) who is a member of the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA), Michael Aronow, MD (AD-American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society), Steven Fleischman, MD (D-ACOG), and Courtland Lewis, MD (D-American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons).

A large number of resolutions were discussed and passed by the House in a very expeditious manner at the business portion of the HOD meeting which lasted only four hours total, thus ending the meeting a half day early! This was a testament to our Speaker and Vice Speaker as well as all the members of the House.

The entire delegation wishes to thank the dedicated staff of the CSMS for their assistance in organizing the meeting and helping all the delegation members in a variety of tasks. Special thanks to Ken Ferrucci who attended the meeting.

AMA 2015 Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois
June 5-10, 2015

The Connecticut Delegation to the AMA continues to play a very active role in House of Delegate proceedings. Following is a summary of the activities of the members of the delegation at the June 2015 AMA HOD meeting, as well as a website that gives a summary of ten top issues that resulted from the deliberations of the House. All of the CSMS delegates to the AMA did a fantastic job representing Connecticut physicians at this meeting.

Ted Zanker, MD, Delegate from New Haven County, was a featured speaker at the AMA Litigation Center meeting. He discussed the lawsuit filed against Anthem by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in which he is a named plaintiff. The CSMS and the AMA filed an amicus brief supporting the APA suit relating to mental health parity. Dr. Zanker highlighted Connecticut physician advocacy at its finest.
Seyed Aleali, MD, Delegate from Fairfield County, started his second term on the AMA Council on Legislation (COL), where he initiates and develops legislative policy for the Board of Trustees and the House of Delegates of the AMA. Dr. Aleali is the vice chair of the CSMS Delegation and was placed on the AMA COL executive committee.

Al Herzog, MD, Delegate from Hartford County, participated in developing AMA policy serving on the AMA Council on Long-Range Planning and Development (CLRPD). Dr. Herzog also worked in the APA caucus to introduce and pass policy on psychiatric issues at the AMA HOD.

Michael M. Deren, MD, Delegate from New London County, chaired the Surgical Caucus of the AMA (SCAMA) in its Handbook Review meeting and its executive committee meeting, and moderated the SCAMA educational forum on surgical quality on the state and national level. Scott Ellner, DO, CSMS member from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, was the highlighted speaker. Dr. Ellner discussed the very successful Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative that he and Dr. Phil Corvo, CSMS member, coordinate in Connecticut. Dr. Deren continued as the chair of the CSMS delegation.

Courtland Lewis, MD, from Hartford County, Delegate from the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgery, did a heroic job chairing AMA House Reference Committee G, with few extractions from the final report that contained a long list of resolutions and reports presented to the House. This was Dr. Lewis’ last meeting. We thank him for his excellent service over the past years.

Katherine Harvey, MD, from New Haven County, completed her term as the young physician member of the Council of Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA). She has been the only physician from Connecticut to have been appointed to CEJA in recent memory. Katherine has decided to remain in Connecticut and is practicing both in Torrington and in New Haven tied to Smilow Cancer Center. Congratulations on a superb job, well done.

Steve Fleischman, MD, from New Haven County, Delegate from the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), represented his specialty at a variety of meetings including the HOD, SCAMA and at his specialty society caucus and meeting as the Vice Chair of the ACOG Delegation to the AMA. Dr. Fleischman sits on the AMA Political Action Committee (AMPAC).

Neil Brooks, MD, from Tolland County, Delegate from the American Academy of Family Physicians, actively participated in reference committee hearings and the HOD discussions, especially in areas concerning family practice.

Michael Aronow, MD, from Hartford County, Delegate from the American Academy of Foot and Ankle Society, attended the AMA HOD and discussed the development of a resolution for the fall HOD meeting addressing issues of surgery and scope of practice, given recent national issues tied to ankle surgery.
Shady Henien, MD, Resident and Fellow Section (RFS) Delegate, is now the sitting chair of the RFS Section and presented three resolutions to the AMA HOD from the RFS, all of which passed and became AMA policy. Kudos to Dr. Henien on an excellent job.

Donald Timmerman, MD, Alternate Delegate from Middlesex County, represented Connecticut at the Organized Medical Staff Section Meeting as our State Chair and participated in reference committee hearings and the HOD discussions.

Bollepalli Subbarao, MD, Alternate Delegate from Hartford County, served on AMA HOD Reference Committee D on Public Health, meeting late into the evening in order to present a consent report which passed the HOD with very few extractions.

Michael Carius, MD, Alternate Delegate from Fairfield County, again performed duties as the Delegation “Whip” and made out a schedule for our representation at the AMA HOD. Dr. Carius also participated in the Emergency Physician Section.

Gary Price, MD, Alternate Delegate from New Haven County, was unable to attend due to a previous commitment.

Henry Jacobs, MD, CSMS President-Elect, attended the meeting as an alternate delegate in place of the CSMS president and engaged in both the AMA reference committees and New England Delegation Caucus, as well as the AMA HOD activities.

Jeff Weinreb, University of Connecticut School of Medicine, was elected as a delegate to the AMA Medical Student Section (MSS) representing Region 7, providing CSMS with further voice at the AMA.

Myron Genel, MD, Emeritus Professor, Yale University School of Medicine, continues to represent Yale and Connecticut at the AMA Medical School Section.

CSMS EVP/CEO Matthew Katz gave a presentation on the CSMS United Healthcare settlement to the Organization of State Medical Association Presidents (OSMAP) at this AMA Meeting.

CSMS General Counsel Layne Gakos, JD gave an update on the Chiropractic Board lawsuit and hearing tied to physicals for motor vehicle licensure in light of the Supreme Court ruling on the North Carolina Dental Board decision at the American Society of Medical Association Counsel (ASMAC) during the AMA meeting.

The top ten stories/actions in this session of the AMA House of Delegates can be found at the following web site:

In brief, these issues included: more transparent, physician-friendly maintenance of certification focus of new policy, the “innovation ecosystem” for shaping medicine’s future, a call for a two-year grace period for ICD-10 implementation, solutions for the overdose epidemic, new public health policies, graduate medical education funding, exemptions for vaccinations, and research on violence against physicians.

The Connecticut AMA Delegation continues to be an active force in the AMA with 10 delegates, nine of whom are voting (CEJA members do not vote on policy or in elections). We currently have four members who sit on one of the eight elected or appointed Councils of the HOD. Our delegates and alternates all actively participate in a variety of committees, sections, and specialty society functions. All participate in the New England Delegation (NED) caucus meetings, discussing resolutions and working on political campaigns. The resident and fellow participation has been outstanding, as has been our medical student involvement. Support and participation by CSMS staff has also been outstanding.

All members of the delegation are active and continue to increase our influence on the national level. They have helped pass a number of critical pieces of policy benefiting Connecticut physicians and patients, including requests for delays of ICD10-CM and changes to telemedicine policies.

Michael M. Deren, MD
Delegation Chair