This issue's Member Spotlight shines on M. Natalie Achong, MD. Dr. Achong, an OB-GYN based in Farmington, serves as a CSMS Councilor and as Chair of the CSMS Health Equity Committee.

In a conversation with Action News, she shared her thoughts about the intersection of healthcare policy and the practice of medicine, and the importance of physician leadership.

A proud New Yorker and graduate of New York City Public Schools, Dr. Achong’s parents held academic achievement in high regard and encouraged her interest in science and math.

When the time came to think about college, she learned about the highly-regarded accelerated BS/MD program at the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at City College of New York (CCNY). Established in the 1970s, the School’s mission is to increase medical services in underserved areas and increase the availability of primary care physicians. Students earn both undergraduate and medical degrees in the seven-year program.

That is how Dr. Achong began her path to medicine at the age of 16. She recalled celebrating her seventeenth birthday by dissecting a cadaver in the basement of CCNY. “It was amazing to think they let me do that,” she laughed. She credits her faith and the support of her family for sustaining her through a grueling seven years of undergrad and medical school, as she spent four hours each day commuting by bus and train from Queens into the city.

(cont’d on page 4)

The Opioid Epidemic: CSMS Responds

In 2016, state and national headlines have been dominated by the opioid crisis. Here in Connecticut, we have seen significant increases in overdose deaths from both heroin and opioid pills.

CSMS has taken an active role in addressing this epidemic, working with US Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT-03) and US Senator Richard Blumenthal, as well as with other members of the state’s Congressional delegation, the federal government, and state elected officials to address the epidemic of opioid abuse.

In February of this year, CSMS was honored to host Michael Botticelli, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, for a special meeting on opioid prescribing and addiction.

(cont’d on page 5)
CSMS EVP/CEO Matthew Katz’s response to an op-ed by the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association was featured in CT News Junkie.

It was hard to know whether to laugh or cry at the recent op-ed from Neil Ferstand, executive director of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association.

At a time when Connecticut physicians are working diligently to provide the highest quality of patient care, and actively seeking to partner with policy makers and other stakeholders (trial bar included) for a closer look at our broken liability system, Mr. Ferstand’s piece seems to come out of out of left field.

Here in Connecticut, the liability system serves only a small percentage of patients, and diverts a tremendous amount of resources away from our healthcare system to the legal system. A significant portion of every settlement or court verdict goes directly to trial attorneys. How does that help improve quality or control costs?

According to the Connecticut Insurance Department, more than $797 million was transferred from the health care system to the legal system on 1,389 claims between 2010 and 2014. During that same four-year period, 1,702 claims were closed without a finding of indemnity. Yet it cost approximately $52 million to defend those cases, with an average defense cost of over $50,000 per claim.

Working For You

We are delighted to announce that lawyer and author Steven Brill has been confirmed as our keynote speaker. Known most recently for his 2015 Time Magazine cover story, Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills Are Killing Us, Brill is an astute observer of the economics of healthcare reform and its impact on patient care.

Another exciting feature of the 2016 Annual Meeting will be provided by the Physicians Foundation. Physicians Foundation President Walker Ray, MD, Executive Director (and former CSMS EVP) Timothy Norbeck, and Board Member (and CSMS Council member) Gary Price, MD will be on hand to present an advance look at data from the 2016 Physicians Foundation national physician survey. They will also facilitate an open discussion of the survey results with CSMS members.

The 224th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut State Medical Society will take place on Wednesday, September 28 from 4 – 9 pm at the Omni New Haven.

A New Look for the Annual Meeting

The 2015 House of Delegates (HOD) approved a number of changes to the CSMS Bylaws, including a transition from the HOD structure with Delegate-only voting, to an Annual Meeting where all CSMS members in good standing are eligible to vote. As a result of this transition, the 2016 Annual Meeting will provide opportunities for members to voice their opinions directly to leadership; it will also be more educational, informational, and social. CSMS officers will still be elected at the Annual Meeting, and bylaws changes will be voted on by the membership. As we enter our third century, these changes will make CSMS a more nimble, responsive, and inclusive organization.

Stay tuned for Annual Meeting updates in the Weekly E-News and on the CSMS website.
Physicians’ Day at the Capitol 2016

This year’s day of physician advocacy was a busy – and successful – one for CSMS physicians and their CT ACS colleagues.

The day kicked off with breakfast and networking. State Sen. Kevin Witkos and State Rep. J.P. Sredzinski stopped by to say hello, and stayed to talk with physicians about a range of healthcare issues.

After breakfast, physicians had time to visit with their state legislators. Many chose to visit the elected officials from the districts where they practice, as well as from their home districts. In between meetings, CSMS invited State Healthcare Advocate Victoria Veltri to provide an update on the State Innovation Model (SIM) grant and other state efforts to address patient care disparities. Also on hand was Andrea Ravitz, Marketing Director for Access Health CT, the state insurance exchange, who discussed enrollment trends.

The working lunch opened with remarks from State Rep. Prasad Srinivasan, MD, the only physician in the General Assembly. In emphasizing the importance of physician advocacy, Dr. Srinivasan noted that “[e]veryone here wants to do the right thing, no matter which side of the aisle we are on.” He pointed out that the trial lawyers are a regular presence at the Capitol, and encouraged physicians to be equally vigorous advocates. Dr. Srinivasan reminded physicians to “open your CSMS emails every week,” stay informed about pending bills, and reach out to legislators with information to help them make the best decisions.

CSMS President Henry Jacobs, MD, JD, then introduced our keynote speaker, Commissioner of the CT Department of Consumer Protection Jonathan Harris. Mr. Harris began by describing a “new day” at DCP, with new approaches to regulation and enforcement. He talked about the DCP’s interest in developing a more collaborative relationship with physicians, and “keeping regulation and oversight as simple and fair as possible.”

Commissioner Harris discussed the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) and the medical marijuana program. He then took questions from the audience, and stayed after the meeting to talk with physicians.

Many thanks to all the CSMS and CTACS physicians who participated in this year’s program.
Dr. Achong matched to several schools for her clinical rotations, and chose NYU. “I had not met a fellow black physician until my last months of med school,” she said. Her favorite rotation: obstetrics and gynecology at Bellevue Hospital. Her patients included many immigrant families, and she learned the importance of combining compassion with clinical skills. “Preventive care, especially in OB-GYN, can have an impact on the health of an entire generation.”

After completing her residency at Yale, Dr. Achong transitioned to academic practice and began a growing involvement with organized medicine. In addition to her service with CSMS, she also worked to establish the first National Medical Association chapter in Connecticut and continues to provide leadership to its members. The NMA is the largest and oldest organization representing physicians of African descent and their patients in the United States.

Dr. Achong credits her experiences with CSMS, including being the inaugural recipient of the 2013 Connecticut Medicine Healthcare Leader and Innovator Award, in broadening her vision of what medicine is really about. A CSMS Physician Leadership Program at Yale sparked her interest in healthcare policy development and applications. “Physicians have the ability to affect care far beyond the exam room,” she observed.

This led her to the Executive Master of Healthcare Leadership program at Brown University, a two-year program that combines distance learning with blocks of on-campus time. The EHML program differs from the traditional MBA or MPH program, offering a strong focus on healthcare policy and leading transformative change. Dr. Achong’s classmates come from a variety of professional backgrounds, including government, non-profits, insurance, and the pharmaceutical industry. The curriculum addresses topics such as strategic planning, finance, IT, marketing and regulatory environments, providing students with the tools, skills and perspective to lead effective healthcare change. Dr. Achong’s capstone project at Brown was honored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) at its 2015 annual forum. Her project was one of three presented at the IHI’s first dedicated Health Equity track.

Dr. Achong will graduate from the EMHL program in May 2016. She is enthusiastic about the opportunity to be in “the space between the application of medicine, and the translation of science and innovation into effective programs and policies.”

Whether that leads to the public sector, the corporate world, or a think tank, Dr. Achong remains conscious of the privilege of being a physician, and the need to operate with integrity: “The Hippocratic Oath is our underpinning. We do the right thing, even when no one is watching. We continue to fight for our patients, even without credit or awards.”

When not working or studying, Dr. Achong enjoys time with her family, as well as antiquing, nature walks, and travel. She is also an active member of several national social/civic organizations, including The Links, Jack and Jill, and Girlfriends. Dr. Achong received the Woman of Year Award from the State of Connecticut for her civic work and contributions to the Connecticut’s healthcare community.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – M. NATALIE ACHONG, MD

(contin’d from page 1)

Too much of the physician voice is being taken away. CSMS makes sure that our voices are heard, and brings physicians to the table.”

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REGISTER TODAY!

2016 Connecticut State Medical Society
C. Robert Biondino Memorial Golf Classic
Monday, July 25, 2016 – Wallingford Country Club

All proceeds benefit

For more information, go to www.csms.org/Golf2016 or contact John Bermudez at 203-865-0587 x122 or jbermudez@csms.org
tion issues with a multidisciplinary group of practicing Connecticut physicians. Director Botticelli was joined by Rep. DeLauro for an opportunity to hear directly from these front-line physicians about their challenges, and their recommendations for federal support.

Director Botticelli noted that Connecticut has been at the forefront of opioid efforts, and applauded our state’s efforts on issues like prescriber education and the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP).

Many thanks to these Connecticut physicians for participating in the discussion, which was facilitated by CSMS President Henry Jacobs, MD, JD:

- Michael Carius, MD*
- Gail D’Onofrio, MD, MS*
- David Fiellin, MD
- Brian Keyes, MD* – President, NHCMA
- Mark Kraus, MD* – Chair, CSMS Addiction Medicine Committee
- Dean Mariano, DO
- Robert Russo, MD* – Immediate Past President, CSMS
- Michael Saffir, MD* – Past President, CSMS
- Samuel Silverman, MD*
- Steven Wolfson, MD* – Chair, CSMS Council

*CSMS members

CSMS has been also working with Rep. DeLauro and Sen. Blumenthal as they develop national opioid legislation. In April, Rep. DeLauro invited CSMS President Henry Jacobs, MD, JD and CSMS Addiction Task Force member Dean Mariano, DO to participate in an opioid panel discussion at the Community Health Center in Middletown. Rep. DeLauro has introduced legislation calling for a $1 billion investment in a grant program to expand access to substance abuse treatment services. Rep. DeLauro has been a strong physician ally on a number of public health issues, including breast cancer screening and awareness, melanoma, and e-cigarette use among youth.

Also in April, Sen. Blumenthal invited CSMS President Henry Jacobs, MD, JD and CSMS Councilor Gregory Shangold, MD to join him at the State Capitol in support of the PROP bill, which Sen. Blumenthal has co-sponsored. The bill would eliminate the relationship between HCAHPS patient satisfaction questions on pain management, and physician and hospital Medicare reimbursement. CSMS appreciates Sen. Blumenthal’s willingness to incorporate physician recommendations in the PROP Bill.

CSMS presented a very successful CME program on Interdisciplinary Approaches to Opioid Prescribing at Middlesex Hospital on April 27.

Jointly hosted by CSMS, the Connecticut Pain Society, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and Middlesex Hospital, the program was standing-room only, with 125 attendees.

CSMS President Henry Jacobs, MD, JD welcomed everyone to the program, and introduced keynote speaker Seddon Savage, MD, MS.

Dr. Savage is a clinician, educator, and policy advocate in the fields of addiction medicine and pain medicine. She is the medical director of the Chronic Pain and Recovery Center at Silver Hill Hospital here in Connecticut, and director of the Dartmouth Center on Addiction Recovery and Education.

CSMS Addiction Medicine Committee Chair Mark Kraus, MD served as moderator for the program, which included a case study with role-play by CSMS Opioid Task Force members Lucien Parrillo, MD and Dean Mariano, DO. This was followed by a panel discussion; CSMS Councilor and Opioid Task Force member Greg Shangold, MD was a panelist and CSMS Addiction Committee member Sam Silverman, MD served as panel moderator.
According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, Connecticut ranks 4th nationally when it comes to training residents and fellows, but we drop to 45th when it comes to keeping those new physicians in the state. Liability costs are a major part of this retention problem: Connecticut primary care physicians, general surgeons and obstetrician-gynecologists have been found to have some of the highest medical liability rates in the country (Medical Professional Liability Insurance Premiums: An Overview of Data from 2005 to 2014). At a time when we desperately need more physicians to provide patients with access to quality care, it’s hard to see how Mr. Ferstand’s inflammatory statements will help improve the situation.

“Talk to your doctor.” It’s good advice, and Mr. Ferstand should give it a try. His doctor (any doctor, in fact) could tell him in great detail about the mind-numbing level of audits, reviews, pre-authorizations that must be obtained before providing medically-necessary services for patients, and restrictive drug formularies that allow only specified medications, even when a different drug might be better suited to a patient’s needs.

Both public and private insurers specify standards of quality care, and they are increasingly adjusting reimbursements based on those standards. Medicare has already started reducing payments to physicians who don’t participate in national quality reporting programs; those reductions will only get steeper over time. Insurance companies are making information on physician quality and cost available to the public. Patients with high-deductible plans are increasingly required to “shop around,” knowing that they will have to pay out-of-pocket for charges that are above the norm.

Bottom line? The reality of medical practice today bears no relation to Mr. Ferstand’s fantasy of unfettered, cash-driven physicians.

Connecticut physicians have been up front and consistent in asking our elected officials to step back and consider the entire liability system (including tort law and alternative dispute mechanisms, such as health courts). Much has changed since the last review in 2005, so it is simply common sense to ask for another systemic look at our state’s liability system. Picking away at a system piecemeal, or accusing an entire profession of fraudulent behavior, won’t help solve the problem.

In a rapidly-changing healthcare environment, Connecticut physicians are taking the lead in healthcare quality and safety programs. You can find CSMS members actively engaged in patient-centered medical home models, volunteering their time and expertise with the Connecticut State Innovation Model (SIM), working to address racial and ethnic disparities in patient care, and serving on national quality committees.

We invite elected officials, regulators, and the trial lawyers to join with us in a good faith effort to improve our liability system. This would help to improve healthcare quality, patient safety, and access to care for everyone.

http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/op-ed_lawyers_need_to_talk_to_their_doctors/

**CT DPH Genomics Resource**

With the rise of personalized medicine, and rapid advances in genomic sequencing technology and diagnostic testing, healthcare providers and consumers have an increased need for accurate information about genetic testing, genomics, and heritable conditions.

In response to these information needs, the Connecticut Department of Public Health Genomics Office has published a new version of Cancer Genomics Best Practices for Connecticut Healthcare Providers. In a concise format, the booklet provides information and resources for healthcare providers, patients, and patient family members about Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC) Syndrome and Lynch Syndrome (LS, formerly called Hereditary Non-Polyposis Colorectal Cancer Syndrome). Booklet contents include:

- Information sheets for providers; information sheets for patients and their families (Spanish versions available for download online);
- Summaries of the current, evidence-based clinical practice guidelines on genetic susceptibility testing for HBOC syndrome and LS;
- State data on potential cases of hereditary cancer syndromes; and
- A list of cancer genetic counselors in Connecticut.

**PQRS Reporting**

**Background**

The Medicare Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) program continues, with higher penalties for non-participation in 2016. A number of Connecticut physicians who failed to report 2014 PQRS data have already felt a 2% bite on their 2016 Medicare reimbursements.

Failure to report 2015 data will incur that same -2% in 2017 Medicare payments, plus it will trigger an automatic Value Modifier payment adjustment of -2% to -4%, depending on practice size.

**Plan Your 2016 Reporting with MYQRUR**

*Don’t wait – start planning your 2016 reporting now, so you can avoid significant payment adjustments in 2018.*

Use your 2015 Mid-Year Quality and Resource Use Report (MYQRUR) data to help evaluate the quality of care you provide to your Medicare patients. MYQRUR reports are now available, and provide a snapshot of 2015 cost and quality measure data for your Medicare patients. MYQRUR data can show your practice strengths, as well as potential areas for improvement, before the 2016 reporting year ends on December 31.

CSMS has developed *Decoding MYQRUR 2016*, a free webinar, and will host two live sessions on May 25 and June 2. The webinar will help you use MYQRUR data to evaluate the quality of care you provide. Details and registration links are available at csms.org/webinars. After June 2, the webinar will be archived and available for on-demand download in your choice of PDF file or .wmv recording.

In addition to MYQRUR, CSMS offers a series of free, on-demand webinars on the basics of Medicare quality reporting programs. Topics include *PQRS: What You Need to Know in 2016, Decoding MYQRUR, Understanding the Value-Based Payment Modifier (VM), and Understanding Annual Quality and Resource Use Reports (AQRUR)*. All webinars are available for download at csms.org/webinars as PDFs or .wmv recordings – no log-in required.

[csms.org/webinars](http://csms.org/webinars)

**Connecticut Pharmaceutical Forum**

The skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs has created hardship for families, employers, and states.

CSMS is pleased to join with Connecticut Comptroller Kevin Lembo for a discussion of ways to improve patient access to affordable prescription drugs.

The forum will bring together physicians, academicians, pharmaceutical companies, national quality groups and state officials to explore value- and outcome-based purchasing programs. The public is welcome, and there is no charge to attend. Learn more at [csms.org/pharmaforum](http://csms.org/pharmaforum).

**Zika Virus**

*With Zika virus in the news*, the CSMS Disaster Preparedness Committee has created a dedicated Zika virus webpage ([csms.org/zika](http://csms.org/zika)). The page includes information from the CDC, CT DPH, and other health authorities; it is updated as new materials become available.

Whether it’s infectious disease, snowstorms, hurricanes or other emergencies, the CSMS Disaster Preparedness Committee invites you to visit [csms.org/preparedness](http://csms.org/preparedness) for resources to help prepare your practice for the unexpected.
CSMS and the Hartford County Medical Association (HCMA) were well-represented at the *Hartford Business Journal* Health Care Heroes Awards ceremony: award finalists Pauline Olsen, MD, William Petit, Jr., MD, Jack Ross, MD, Hank Schwartz, MD, and Prasad Srinivasan, MD are all accomplished professionals who have demonstrated tireless commitment to the communities they serve.

**Dr. Olsen** was the winner of the 2016 *Health Care Heroes Volunteer Award*. She is one of the founders of Malta House of Care, which utilizes a mobile medical van and volunteer health providers to deliver primary health care to vulnerable communities in the Greater Hartford region.

**Dr. Ross** was the winner of the 2016 *Health Care Heroes Physician Award*. He is the director of Hartford Hospital’s Infectious Diseases, Epidemiology and HIV Program. A long-time advocate for patient safety, Dr. Ross has developed highly successful hand hygiene protocols and other strategies to reduce hospital-acquired infections.

The Clinical Research Forum recognized Gail D’Onofrio, MD with a Clinical Research Achievement Award for producing one of the year’s ten most outstanding research papers. CSMS member Steven L. Bernstein, MD was part of the award-winning research team.

Congratulations to CSMS Councilor Joe Feuerstein, MD on his new book, *Dr. Joe’s Man Diet*.

Congratulations to Kevin McGrath, MD, who received the Distinguished Fellow Award from the American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI). The ACAAI presents the Award in recognition of the achievement and continuous interest in the specialty of treating allergic disease.

Robert McLean, MD recently testified before the US House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health regarding transition to MACRA payment models. Dr. McLean is a Governor of the American College of Physicians.

Governor Malloy named Gary Price, MD to the state’s Certificate of Need Task Force. The task force will review how the state regulates health care facilities and organizations.

Thomas Raskauskas, MD, MMM is a member of the Health Care Payment Learning and Action Network (HCP LAN) Population-Based Payment (PBP) Work Group, which has released draft white papers on Patient Attribution & Financial Benchmarking for Population-Based Payment Models. Dr. Raskauskas was a presenter for the recent LAN States Listening Session.

Congratulations to John Rodis, MD who was named President of St. Francis Hospital. Dr. Rodis is the first physician to hold that position.

State Representative Prasad Srinivasan, MD has been named to serve as National Co-Chair of The Health Policy Council. A relatively new organization, the Health Policy Council was established to serve as a non-partisan forum to promote the exchange and sharing of ideas between physicians serving in our state legislatures. It currently has 41 physician legislator members representing 27 states.

Theodore Zanker, MD has been invited to serve as Chair of Reference Committee E (Science and Technology) at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates.

Congratulations to Sandra Hughes, MD on her installation as the new President of the Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Hughes practices at Mansfield Family Practice.
Physician Resiliency and Burnout

CSMS and HCMA are pleased to introduce a new educational series from the American Medical Association, focusing on the growing issues of physician burnout and resiliency.

The three-part series began with Improving Physician Resiliency on March 2, led by nationally-known speaker Bruce Bagley, MD. This 30-minute webinar provided strategies to build resilience in your clinical practice:

• Simple, evidence-based solutions to enhance your joy in practice and mitigate stress
• A list of resources to help you further develop resiliency

A summary and link to Dr. Bagley’s presentation are available at csms.org/resiliencywebinar1.

Dr. Bagley will also lead Provider Work Life and Wellness on May 24. This live CME event at Hartford Hospital will address topics to help successfully eliminate burnout and adopt wellness approaches in your practice:

• Seven key steps to help prevent provider burnout
• Ten-item survey (Mini-Z) designed to assess burnout at your practice or facility
• Examples of successful burnout prevention programs in a variety of practice/organization settings

The series culminates with Physician Resiliency Assessment and Response, a webinar led by Christine Sinsky, MD on July 20. Building on topics from the earlier Provider Work Life and Wellness event, Dr. Sinsky will discuss:

• Interpreting organizational results of the Mini-Z Burnout Survey (administered to 5/24 program attendees)
• Building momentum for change by selecting interventions to reach the greatest satisfaction in the shortest amount of time
• Accessing implementation support from the AMA

Attendance at all three programs is not required, but it is recommended. Space is still available for the May and July events – visit csms.org/resiliency for details.

Decoding MYQRUR: Put your data to work for you

CSMS will offer two live sessions of our Decoding MYQRUR webinar on May 25 at 12:15 pm and June 2 at 4 pm. Join us for this free webinar and learn how to use MYQRUR data to evaluate the quality of care you provide. Visit csms.org/webinar for details and registration links.

Are You Plugged In? Connect with CSMS.
Do we have your email?

Go to www.csms.org and sign up for our e-newsletter. It’s time to be well-informed on all the latest medical news and events.
Who Pneu? 2016 Adult Pneumococcal Vaccine Timing

Following up on earlier guidance regarding pneumococcal vaccination in adults, the Connecticut Immunization Coalition has developed a new handout with the algorithm for the two pneumococcal vaccines in circulation (13-Valent Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine and 23-Valent Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine).

The Connecticut Immunization Coalition has also provided these additional resources:

- September 4, 2015 MMWR highlighting the intervals between the two vaccines: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6434a4.htm?s_cid=mm6434a4_w
- September 19, 2014 MMWR highlighting the use of the two pneumococcal vaccines among adults: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6337a4.htm?s_cid=mm6337a4_w
Affinity Partner Update

CSMS is pleased to announce two new Affinity Partners: Approved Storage & Waste Hauling, Inc., and FAIRHealth.

Approved is a fully licensed and insured regional medical waste disposal company providing environmentally responsible management of regulated medical waste to over 8,000 facilities throughout the northeast since 1996. Utilizing local infrastructure, Approved can help limit your practice's liability and reduce your cost by a minimum of 10%.

FAIRHealth is a national, independent, nonprofit corporation whose mission is to bring transparency to healthcare costs and health insurance information through comprehensive data products, consumer resources and the support of health services research. Using a database of billions of billed medical and dental services, FAIR Health enables consumers to estimate and plan their medical and dental expenditures. FAIR Health also creates data products, custom analytics and interactive data dashboards for physicians, businesses, government agencies, policy makers, healthcare providers, researchers and others.

CSMS Staff – Hail and Farewell

After 23 years as the Director of CSMS Marketing and Special Projects, Rhonda Hawes retired in December 2015. Rhonda was the mainstay of the annual Biondino Golf Classic, which benefits the CSMS Charitable Trust. She also worked closely with Chair Bill Petit, Jr., MD on the CSMS Charitable Trust. In addition to these efforts, Rhonda served as CSMS staff liaison to the SportsMed and Quality of Care Committees. CSMS wishes Rhonda the best, and we know she will stay busy traveling with her husband Bob and volunteering for the Petit Family Foundation.

Please join CSMS in welcoming our new Director of Marketing and Member Outreach, John Bermudez. John most recently worked in the pharmaceutical industry and prior to that, in the health field in general. He has an MS in Clinical Nutrition, and an undergraduate degree in Political Science. He looks forward to meeting physicians around the state and sharing the ways CSMS can make a difference for practices.

Going Social

Did you know that CSMS has added a Sermo page to our current Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn platforms? Join the conversation and share your thoughts.
5 Tips to Spring Clean Your Finances

Brian Vendig, CPA
President & Managing Executive of MJP Wealth Advisors, a CSMS Affinity Partner

Spring is the perfect time to get your financial house in order. Now that spring has arrived, it's a great time to spruce up your home and clean up your finances. Here are five tips to get your started:

1. Organize your spending.
   Are you hitting your weekly, monthly or quarterly savings target? Do you have an emergency fund of cash? If not, then it may be time to review your spending activities and create a budget. Consider opening a savings account with a competitive interest rate verses one at your local bank. Also, automate savings by setting up automatic contributions to a retirement or regular savings account. As life events occur, you'll need to refresh your budget to meet current needs, as well as short and long-term savings goals.

2. Tidy up your investments.
   We all know the expression, “don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” Review your investments to ensure you have a well-diversified portfolio, taking into consideration the various asset classes, as well as U.S. versus non-U.S. investments that could be part of your portfolio strategy. Knowing that market returns move in cycles and last year’s winners are not guaranteed to repeat in following years, assess your investment holdings to make sure they are balanced.

   Take a moment to evaluate how much you are contributing for retirement. Are you prioritizing your retirement over other financial commitments? If you have a 401(k) plan, have you reviewed your account and the investment options offered in your plan? If not, now may be a good time to look at your portfolio and reallocate your account to make certain you are still on track. Also, keep in mind that contributing to retirement accounts can potentially yield a tax benefit and help to offset a tax liability, for example, from an increase in annual income.

4. Review your insurance coverage.
   Look at the range of protection you have in place (life, disability, long-term care, property & casualty, health care, auto, etc.) and assess your coverage. Are your policies still appropriate based on where you are in your lifecycle? Are they mitigating the right risks for you, your family or your practice? Are you overlooking a short or longer-term risk that should be covered? Pull copies of your policy documents to confirm you have adequate coverage in all areas.

5. Freshen up your estate documents
   Do you have a Will, Power of Attorney and Health Care Directive? Set a goal this month to review these documents to ensure they are aligned to your objectives, beneficiary preferences, appointed decision-makers, and overall estate tax goals. If you do not have estate documents then make it a priority to get these established.

MJP Wealth Advisors, 790 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, CT 06032
Phone: 860.677.7755  Email: advice@mjpassociates.com

Did you know? Physicians today are being squeezed between rising costs and shrinking reimbursements. CSMS offers 30+ Affinity Partners in the areas of Banking and Financial Services, Insurance Products, Practice Resources, Supplies, and Travel/Lifestyle. CSMS Affinity Partners help members keep more money in their pockets and in their practices. Go to csms.org for more details.
Take Action (and Connecticut Medicine, too)

Although CSMS publications are written for member physicians, the articles and information they contain are also often helpful to medical staff members. Please pass your CSMS publication along to your colleagues and staff, rather than just “reading and tossing.”
Insurance Mergers: Bigger Isn’t Better for Patients, Physicians

Amid growing concern over the effects of a proposed Anthem/Cigna merger, CSMS has joined the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut and the Connecticut Citizen Action Group to form the Connecticut Campaign for Consumer Choice (Connecticut CFCC).

The coalition delivered a letter to CT Insurance Commissioner Katharine Wade, requesting the following actions to ensure that consumer voices are heard during the merger review process:

• Require that the public hearing be held at a venue and time that allows for maximum public participation.
• Grant interested parties’ intervenor status to allow for an adequate review of the proposed merger.
• Commission a study that will analyze the potential impact on cost, access, and the Connecticut economy, including jobs, as part of the deliberations.

The group also held a media call to announce the coalition and discuss the impact of the proposed merger on Connecticut patients and physicians. Media coverage has been robust: CT Mirror, CT News Junkie, Hartford Courant (picked up by Bloomberg News), CT by the Numbers, Hartford Business Journal, Register-Citizen, CT Post (also Stamford Advocate).

Look for more from the Connecticut CFCC – follow them on Twitter (@ConnecticutCFCC) and Facebook (Connecticut Campaign for Consumer Choice).

In April, the Connecticut CFCC presented Insurance Mergers: What You Need to Know, a public forum on the proposed Anthem-Cigna mergers. Hosted by State Rep. Greg Haddad, State Rep. Linda Orange, State Rep. Susan Johnson, and State Sen. Mae Flexner, the forum was held at the Mansfield Public Library. CSMS EVP/CEO Matthew Katz was a panelist at the forum, and was also interviewed about the Campaign on WTIC’s Ray Dunaway Show and Healthy Rounds, hosted by CSMS member Anthony Alessi, MD.

At this time, Commissioner Wade has not yet been scheduled a public hearing. CSMS will provide Connecticut CFCC updates on the website and in the weekly e-news as they become available.
The Connecticut State Medical Society is accepting nominations for the

2016 Paul K. Maloney Distinguished Service Award
and the

2016 Healthcare Leader / Innovator Award

The 2016 Paul K. Maloney Distinguished Service Award

The award is given annually in memory of Paul K. Maloney Jr., M.D. to a member physician who has exemplified Dr. Maloney’s intense commitment to community service.

The 2016 award will be presented on September 28, 2016 at the CSMS 224th Annual Meeting.

Nominations must be submitted in writing no later than July 15, 2016.

Submit to: Paul K. Maloney Distinguished Service Award
Connecticut State Medical Society
127 Washington Avenue, East Building, Third Floor
North Haven, CT 06473

or Email to: jbermudez@csms.org

Submissions should include your contact information, the nominee’s contact information, and an explanation (no more than three pages) of why you feel the physician should be considered for this award.

The Connecticut State Medical Society and Connecticut Medicine are pleased to present the

2016 Healthcare Leader / Innovator Award

This award will recognize physicians at all stages of practice who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to leadership / innovation.

The award will be presented at the CSMS 224th Annual Meeting on September 28, 2016.

Nominations from fellow physicians are being accepted through July 15, 2016.

Submit to: Healthcare Leader / Innovator Award
Connecticut State Medical Society
127 Washington Avenue, East Building, Third Floor
North Haven, CT 06473

or Email to: pdumond@csms.org

Submissions should include your contact information, the nominee’s contact information, and an explanation (no more than three pages) of why you feel the physician should be considered for this award.

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