Additional health care laws

In addition to the MMA’s legislative priorities, the Legislature passed several other bills that pertain to health care in Minnesota. Here’s a quick review of some of them.

**Diversion of Controlled Substances:** Under a new law, employers of licensed health care practitioners must report to those practitioners’ licensing boards if they have knowledge that a practitioner has diverted narcotics or other controlled substances for personal use. This law is designed to address the problem of a physician, nurse or other provider being fired by their employer but not being reported to their licensing board.

**Funding for Regenerative Medicine:** The Legislature provided $4.5 million to fund a partnership between the University of Minnesota and Mayo Clinic for regenerative medicine research, clinical translation and commercialization. The partners also will work with representatives from private industry who have expertise in this area. Going forward, the initiative will receive $4.35 million annually.

**Dense Breast Notification:** Under provisions that were incorporated into the Health and Human Services omnibus policy bill, facilities that perform mammograms will be required to alert patients if their tests indicate that the patient has heterogeneously dense or extremely dense breasts based on the Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System established by the American College of Radiology.

**Efforts to Combat Synthetic Drug Use:** Continuing an ongoing legislative effort to fight the growing use of synthetic drugs, lawmakers and the governor approved new measures to shut down retailers selling these dangerous products. The state’s Board of Pharmacy is authorized to issue cease-and-desist orders to retailers selling non-FDA-approved chemicals whose effects mimic those of Schedule I and II drugs. The bill also provides for a public education campaign to raise awareness of the risk of synthetic drug use.

Minnesota named the healthiest state for seniors

For the second year in a row, Minnesota has been named the healthiest state for seniors.

A report by America’s Health Rankings analyzes seniors’ health on a national and state-by-state basis across 34 measures. It draws on data from more than a dozen government agencies and research organizations. The report indicated Minnesota had:

- The highest percentage (68.2 percent) of able-bodied seniors
- The highest percentage (89.6 percent) of seniors with prescription drug coverage
- The fourth-lowest number (1,585) of premature deaths per 100,000 population.

The findings weren’t all good, however. Some areas of concern:

- Obesity among Minnesota seniors increased from 23.7 percent in 2013 to 26.3 percent in 2014
- Health disparities persist—59.2 percent of Minnesota seniors with a college education reported excellent or very good health, while only 25.2 percent of those with less than a high school education reported excellent or very good health
- Minnesota ranked 37th in community support for impoverished seniors (dollars per adult 65 or older in poverty).

Digital branding topic of Annual Conference talk

Farris Timimi, M.D., medical director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media, will discuss creating and managing your digital brand at this year’s Annual Conference, September 19 and 20, at Madden’s on Gull Lake in Brainerd.

A digital brand is what patients see online (social media, patient review sites, etc.). Timimi will discuss how it can help or hurt your practice. He also will address the top three things physicians do online that can pose a liability risk and how to minimize that risk.

For more on the Annual Conference, visit www.mnmed.org/AC2014.
Minnesota docs contribute $21 billion to state economy
Minnesota’s more than 13,000 physicians play a vital role in the state’s economy by supporting more than 143,000 jobs and generating $21 billion in economic activity, according to an economic impact study released in mid-April by the American Medical Association.

“Through the care we provide our patients, physicians have a tremendous impact on keeping Minnesotans among the healthiest people in the nation. But as this study shows, our role goes well beyond providing care. We also play a significant role in the state’s overall economy,” says MMA President Cindy Firkins Smith, M.D. “This data really illustrate that doctors are strong economic drivers in this state and the nation as a whole.”

The study, prepared by Alexandria, Virginia-based IMS Health, estimated the total economic impact of patient care offered by physicians at the national level and for each of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., based on output, jobs, wages and benefits, and state and local tax revenue.

In Minnesota, each physician supported:
• An average of 10.67 jobs, and contributed to a total of 143,356 jobs statewide
• An average of $1.56 million in economic output, and contributed to a total of $21 billion in economic output statewide
• An average of $890,000 in total wages and benefits, and contributed to a total of $11.9 billion in wages and benefits statewide
• Supported $68,016 in local and state tax revenues, and contributed to a total of $913.4 million in local and state tax revenues statewide.

The study focused on the roughly 720,000 physicians who primarily engage in patient care activities (as opposed to research or teaching). Nationally, these physicians support $1.6 trillion in total economic output ($2.2 million per physician) and 10 million jobs (an average of 13.84 jobs per physician).

The study also found:
• Physicians support $775.5 billion in wages and benefits at the national level
• Physicians contribute $65.2 billion in total state and local taxes nationally (or $90,449 in local and state tax revenue per physician).

Upcoming MMA Events

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident Roundtable Discussion on Grassroots Advocacy</td>
<td>July 28</td>
<td>MMA Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single Payer Forum</td>
<td>August 19</td>
<td>U of M Continuing Education and Conference Center, St. Paul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Conference</td>
<td>September 19-20</td>
<td>Madden’s on Gull Lake, Brainerd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Diabetes Conference</td>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Ramada Plaza Minneapolis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality Measurement Summit</td>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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Check MMA’s website (www.mnmed.org/events) for more information and registration.

Discussing Minnesota Disparities
About 75 physicians, residents, medical students and public health workers gathered in June to discuss Minnesota’s problematic health care disparities and to help inform the MMA’s efforts to encourage and support physician leadership in reducing racial and ethnic health disparities. The event, titled “Closing the Gap: Addressing Minnesota’s Health Disparities,” featured keynote speaker Edward Ehlinger, M.D., Minnesota Commissioner of Health, and a panel of physicians, who shared their perspectives on working with underserved and minority populations.
MMA seeking volunteers for committees

The MMA is seeking volunteers to serve on its committees for three-year terms beginning January 1, 2015. The application deadline is July 15.

As a committee member you can influence the MMA’s direction, acquire leadership skills and network with physicians who care about the same issues as you.

The committees are: Administration and Finance; Ethics and Medical-Legal Affairs; Health Care Access, Financing and Delivery (formerly Medical Practice and Planning); Membership and Communications; Public Health; and Quality.

Membership only takes three to six evenings a year. You can attend in person or remotely by an audio or video connection.

For specific committee assignments, visit the website at www.mnmed.org/committee.

The application process varies for each committee. If you are interested, send an email mma@mnmed.org and indicate the committee in which you are interested. An MMA staff person will follow-up with you.

Bloomington member is tops in ophthalmology

MMA member Richard Lindstrom, M.D., has been named the fourth-most influential person in the field of ophthalmology internationally, and the most influential in the United States, by the United Kingdom-based publication The Ophthalmologist.

Lindstrom is a founder and attending surgeon at Bloomington-based Minnesota Eye Consultants. He is also an adjunct professor emeritus in the University of Minnesota’s department of ophthalmology and an internationally recognized leader in corneal, cataract, refractive and laser surgery.

The publication accepts nominations from around the globe and issues its “Power 100” list each year based on a rigorous judging process.

MMA in action

Cindy Firkins Smith, M.D., MMA president, Dave Renner, director of state and federal legislation, Terry Ruane, director of membership, marketing and communications, and Kathleen Baumbach, manager of physician outreach, visited the Mankato Clinic in late May to provide physicians with a legislative wrap-up and discuss current health care issues.

Baumbach and Ruane attended the Transition to Practice event for residents and fellows at the University of Minnesota in mid-May. Baumbach and Mandy Rubenstein, manager of physician outreach, also hosted a social gathering for residents and fellows at Pinstripes in Edina.

Renner, Smith, MMA president-elect Don Jacobs, M.D., and Teresa Knoedler, MMA policy counsel, attended the AMA House of Delegates in Chicago along with the MMA’s Minnesota delegation in mid-June. Renner also provided a legislative update to the Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital in Grand Rapids in June.

Eric Dick joined the Minnesota Orthopaedic Society for its Annual Meeting in mid-May in Minneapolis, where he shared an update on the legislative session and discussed issues of importance to physicians, particularly orthopaedic surgeons.

Rubenstein and Patrick Zook, M.D., met with the Central Minnesota Clinic Managers group in St. Cloud in May. Zook talked about the Circle of Health’s Medication Safety program and Rubenstein discussed the MMA’s Speaker Series and Annual Conference.

Brian Strub, manager of physician outreach, participated in career day at the Hmong College Prep Academy in St. Paul in mid-May. There, he shared information about the MMA’s Medical Student Section and talked about the education and training required to be a physician.

In June, Strub and Barbara Daiker, manager of quality, attended the “Hot Topics in Pediatrics” conference, hosted by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in Bloomington. Daiker also served on a review panel to certify Health Information Exchange service providers in late May. In mid-June, Daiker moderated a session at the Minnesota e-Health Summit.