MMA leaders meet with Minnesota Congress members

While attending the AMA’s National Advocacy Conference in early March, several MMA members met with Minnesota’s Congressional representatives to push for the repeal of the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate formula.


U of M report: health care homes deliver quality, lower costs

A recent University of Minnesota study shows that the MMA-backed health care home concept, which emphasizes preventive and coordinated care, is transforming primary care in Minnesota.

Researchers from the U of M’s School of Public Health have found that health care home-style clinics reduced Medicaid costs and outperformed other clinics on quality measures during a three-year period. Furthermore, researchers found that health care home clinics outperformed non-health care home clinics during 2010 to 2012 on measures of care related to cancer screening, asthma, diabetes, vascular care and depression.

In addition, health care homes are providing access to care for Medicaid enrollees with more severe conditions and from disadvantaged populations.

According to a report from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Human Services, 43 percent of all primary care clinics in Minnesota are now certified as health care homes. These clinics serve nearly 3.3 million Minnesotans.

The MMA urged the inclusion of health care homes in the 2008 health care reform bill. In fact, the MMA included the concept in its 2005 Physicians Plan for a Healthy Minnesota.

“It’s great to see the solid results by the U of M study,” says Janet Silversmith, MMA director of health policy. “It proves that we can improve the patient experience and improve quality while lowering costs.”

MMA leadership nomination process continues

The nomination process for the MMA’s 2014-15 leadership continues through April 25.

The following needs to be filled: the president-elect position, three board of trustees positions, and two AMA delegate and two alternate delegate positions. One of the trustees must be from the North Central Trustees district; the other two can be from anywhere in the state.

In order to keep a representative balance on the board, the nominating committee will seek nominees from non-primary care specialties and large groups.

The nominating committee will meet in early May and recommend a slate of candidates for each position in July. The MMA’s first member-wide electronic election will occur in mid-July and close 30 days later. Results will be announced at the 2014 Annual Meeting in Brainerd in September.

Contact Shari Nelson (at snelson@mnmed.org) with questions or to submit your nominations by April 25.

MMA launches contest to promote Choosing Wisely

On April 1, the MMA launched a video contest. The idea is for members to create short videos to promote the Choosing Wisely campaign to a physician audience.

Members are asked to submit videos, five minutes or shorter, by July 1. Winners will be chosen by the MMA’s Choosing Wisely Task Force. The top three will receive $100, $200 or $300 gift cards. In addition, MMA members will be able to vote for their favorite video. The winner of this People’s Choice award will receive $100.

For more details on the contest, go to www.mnmed.org/ChoosingWisely.
Annual Meeting new and improved in 2014

A new, updated MMA Annual Meeting will replace the suspended House of Delegates this year. The MMA is planning a completely revamped event for Friday and Saturday, September 19 and 20, at Madden’s on Gull Lake in Brainerd.

It will feature national speakers; a gubernatorial debate; CME programs that are relevant to practicing physicians; activities for young physicians, students, residents and fellows; policy discussions and a meeting of the new Policy Council.

Mark your calendar and watch for more details. It’s an event you won’t want to miss.

For more information, visit www.mnmed.org/AbouttheMMA/AnnualMeeting.

Duluth student receives medical award

Fourth-year medical student Mark Bergstrand received the MMA Foundation’s 2013 Medical Student Leadership Award. Bergstrand, a student at the University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth campus, was nominated by Ruth Westra, D.O., M.P.H., chair of the department of family medicine and community health Duluth, and Ray Christensen, M.D., associate dean for rural health.

Bergstrand, chair of the MMA’s Medical Student Section, comes from a family of physicians. He and his wife, Maria, will both graduate from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 2014. His sister is also enrolled at the University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth campus. Their father, Paul Bergstrand, M.D., is a family physician in Alexandria. The family was featured in “A family tradition” in the January 2014 edition of Minnesota Medicine.

The Medical Student Leadership Award has been presented annually by the MMA Foundation since 2003.

MMA in action

Barbara Daiker, MMA manager of quality, presented “Reaching the Triple Aim: How to measure what is important to your practice” at the Minnesota Medical Group Management Association’s winter conference in Minneapolis in early March. The conference was also attended by Terry Ruane, MMA director of membership, marketing and communications, and MMA managers of physician outreach Mandy Rubenstein, Kathleen Baumbach and Brian Strub.

Teresa Knoedler, MMA policy counsel, attended the March meeting of the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice.

Robert Meiches, M.D., MMA president, Dave Renner, MMA director of state and federal legislation, Juan Bowen, M.D., president of the Zumbro Valley Medical Society (ZVMS) and John Shonyo, ZVMS executive director, met with Mayo Clinic leadership in late February.

In early March, Meiches, Dave Thorson, M.D., MMA board chair, Daiker and Janet Silversmith, MMA director of health policy, met with AMA leadership and Minnesota Community Measurement to discuss a pre-diabetes measure.

In mid-February, the MMA and Twin Cities Medical Society (TCMS) co-hosted a lunch-and-learn on “What we know and what to tell patients about e-cigarettes” at the University of Minnesota Medical School, Twin Cities campus. Staff attending included Juliana Milhofer, MMA policy analyst, Evelyn Clark, MMA manager of grassroots and political engagement, Strub, Baumbach and the TCMS’s Nancy Bauer.

In late February, Rubenstein and Baumbach met with Steve Gerberding and Terry Tone, clinic administrators at Affiliated Community Medical Centers in Willmar.

In separate meetings, Rubenstein met with Mary Hondl, clinic administrator at Regional Diagnostic Radiology in Sartell, and William Worzala, clinic administrator at St. Cloud Orthopedics in Sartell. She and Patrick Zook, M.D., president of the Stearns Benton Medical Society, attended a seminar at St. Cloud Hospital to learn about funding options for the Central Minnesota Circle of Health. They also met with Central Minnesota Circle of Health to discuss the launch of their medication safety campaign for 2014-2015.