MMA members make an impact at AMA meeting

The MMA was well-represented at June's AMA Annual Meeting in Chicago. Member Maya Babu, MD, won a second term on the Board of Trustees and member Steven Meister, MD, led a discussion on physician autonomy regarding the Avera Marshall Medical Center staff.

Babu and Meister were just two of many MMA members at the meeting. Others included: President Donald Jacobs, MD, Immediate Past President Cindy Firkins Smith, MD, Sally Trippel, MD, Will Nicholson, MD, Ray Christensen, MD, David Luehr, MD, Stephen Darrow, MD, Paul Matson, MD, Benjamin Whitten, MD, Dione Hart, MD, Ken Crabb, MD, Blanton Bessinger, MD, Peter Amadio, MD, Eric Tangalos, MD, Laura Dean, MD, Gary Bryant, MD, Lyell Jones, MD, Daniel Brown, MD, and John Abenstein, MD. In addition, Sagar Chawla and Elizabeth Fracica attended as medical student delegates, and Kerri Chung, DO, went as the RFS delegate.

MMA staff attending included: CEO Robert Meiches, MD, Dave Renner, director of state and federal legislation, Janet Silversmith, director of health policy, and Teresa Knoedler, JD, policy counsel.

Renner gave a presentation on the MMA's prior authorization reform efforts.

Opioids seminars scheduled for Mankato, Duluth

The MMA will host two free REMS (risk evaluation and mitigation strategy) seminars on opioids for physicians who prescribe extended-release and long-acting opioid medications.

The first event will take place August 13 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Mankato; the second will take place October 1 at the Black Woods Banquet Center in Duluth. Both events will take place from 5:30 to 8 p.m. and will feature food and a cash bar. This activity has been approved for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Both seminars will be led by MMA member Charles Reznikoff, MD, an addiction medicine specialist. Visit the events section on the MMA website for more information.

Physicians could get reimbursed for talking about end-of-life with Medicare patients

In early July, the federal government proposed paying physicians, nurse practitioners and other health-care providers for discussing end-of-life care with their Medicare patients. The proposed rule would build on the current Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ payment to physicians for advance care planning discussions that occur during a patient’s annual wellness visit. This new proposal would allow reimbursement for advance care planning consultations regardless of when they occur.

MMA in Action

MMA President Donald Jacobs, MD, met with new Interim Fairview Chief Medical Officer, Lisbeth Thomas, MD. He also met with Minnesota Hospital Association Medical Director Rahul Koranne, MD, Jacobs, Robert Meiches, MD, MMA CEO, and Kathleen Baumbach, manager of physician outreach, also met the physician members of Ear, Nose and Throat Specialty Care of Minnesota.

Immediate Past President Cindy Firkins Smith, MD, Meiches and Baumbach met with leaders at Hutchinson Health in late June.

Meiches, Trustee Marilyn Peitso, MD, and Mandy Rubenstein, manager of physician outreach, met with CentraCare CEO Ken Holmen, MD, in June.

Meiches, Dave Renner, director of state and federal legislation, Eric Dick, manager of state legislative affairs, Julianna Milhofer, MMA policy analyst, Teresa Knoedler, JD, MMA policy counsel, and Janet Silversmith, director of health policy, met with staff from the Minnesota Hospital Association in June to discuss post-legislative topics, including the all-payer claims database, the new Health Care Financing Task Force, telemedicine, the interstate licensure compact, medical cannabis and prior authorization.

Dick also traveled to Sanford Health’s Bemidji Clinic in July to present a review of the 2015 legislative session and field questions about the state’s medical cannabis program.

In late June, Rubenstein attended the Minnesota Rural Health Conference in Duluth.

In late July, Dennis Kelly, MMA Foundation CEO, met with the leadership of Westside Community Health Services in St. Paul to discuss the Foundation’s Physician Volunteerism Program.