More than 140 physicians gathered in Brainerd in September to attend the MMA’s reinvigorated Annual Conference. The number is significant because it’s more than have attended the annual get-together in several years.

Organizers were hopeful but cautious about their ability to attract members to the reinvigorated event. For one thing, it was being held more than two hours outside of the metro area. In addition, it did not include the House of Delegates, which has been a mainstay of the event for more than 100 years.

“We weren’t sure what to expect in terms of attendance, given the changes we’ve made,” says Donald Jacobs, M.D., FACS, who was ushered in as the MMA’s 148th president during the conference. “But at the same time, we were confident that these changes would attract a more diverse group of members.” Jacobs is chief of clinical operations for the Hennepin Healthcare System in Minneapolis.

At last year’s meeting, the House of Delegates voted to suspend its activities for three years to allow the MMA time to experiment with other methods to attract a larger, more diverse membership.

The changes this year included partnering with the Minnesota Hospital Association and LeadingAge Minnesota for the first morning’s keynote addresses by national speakers.

On Friday afternoon, the MMA hosted policy forums on telehealth expansion, the future of Minnesota’s health care workforce and an

Lynne Fiscus, M.D., a presenter on Saturday, took in the Friday morning general session on leadership.
open-issues discussion featuring topics ranging from creating pain management standards to fighting prescription opioid abuse to prohibiting tobacco and e-cigarette sales to those under 21 years of age.

Saturday morning featured educational programming. Tracks covered digital innovations in medicine, effective leadership, and enhancing physician wellness and preventing burnout.

“It was a great mix of programming,” Jacobs said. “We combined some of the old such as the inaugural dinner with a lot of the new. I think everyone was pleased with the result.”

**MMA Foundation Awards presented**

At the inaugural dinner, the MMA and its members recognized a handful of special individuals with MMA Foundation Awards. They included:

**Distinguished Service Award**
The MMA’s highest honor is awarded annually to a physician who has made outstanding contributions to medicine and the MMA during his or her career. This year, the MMA’s Distinguished Service Award went to **Paul Matson, M.D.**, an orthopedic surgeon with The Orthopaedic and Fracture Clinic in Mankato.

Matson has been an active member of the MMA for more than 30 years. During that time, he has shared his time, wisdom and energy on several committees and held leadership positions with the MMA, MEDPAC, AMA and his component medical society.

**President’s Award**
The President’s Award went to **Beth Baker, M.D.**, a staff physician at Specialists in O-E-M of St. Paul. Baker is also president of Medical and Toxicology Consulting Services, associate medical director for the Canadian Pacific Railroad and a physician advisor for State Fund Mutual Insurance.

Baker has been a member of the MMA for nearly 30 years, the last nine of which she has served on the Board of Trustees. Baker also has served on the MMA’s public health committee, the environmental health committee, the governance committee, the board effectiveness committee and the opioid management task force.

In addition to working with the MMA, she has been a longtime member of the board of Northland Occupational Medicine and of the Board of Directors of the American College of Occupational Medicine.

**Community Service Award**
The MMA honored two brothers—**Ken Carter, M.D.**, and **Darrell Carter, M.D.**, family physicians based in Granite Falls—with the
Community Service Award. Together, they have more than 80 years of medical experience.

Darrell played a crucial part in the development of CALS training for the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians back in 1996. CALS (comprehensive advanced life support) is an educational program designed for the emergency medical training needs of rural health care teams. Darrell was named Minnesota Rural Health Hero in 2001, Physician of the Year in 2001 by the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians, and Physician of the Year in 2003 by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Ken played a key role in initiating Home Health Care through Granite Falls Municipal Hospital and Manor. He has also served as a lab director, a hospice director and the Yellow Medicine County coroner. He developed a telestroke protocol, in which physicians at a rural hospital connect in real time with a tertiary care center in the Twin Cities when dealing with a stroke patient. The protocol has improved the care of stroke patients in rural areas. He has also taken on the role of physician champion for Stratis Health’s Rural Palliative Care Community Development Project.

**James H. Sova Memorial Award**

Rep. Tom Huntley received the James H. Sova Memorial Award, which honors a nonmedical professional who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of medicine. This is the second time the lawmaker has received the award, which is named after a long-time lobbyist for the MMA who died in 1981.

During his 22 years in the state Legislature, Huntley has been a champion of health care legislation including the Freedom to Breathe Act that outlawed smoking in public places such as restaurants and bars. More recently, he had a hand in expanding Medical Assistance, which led to more Minnesotans getting access to health care.

David Matson, a student at the University of Minnesota Medical School, took the "People’s Choice Award" for his poster on "Thoracic Volume Modeling of Growing Spine Interventions in Early Onset Scoliosis."