



# Physician *Newsletter*

March/April 2010

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## **Progressing Through Change: Register Today for the 2010 Annual Meeting!**

Please join us for the 2010 Wyoming Medical Society Annual Meeting, June 10-12, 2010 at the Jackson Lake Lodge in Moran, WY.

Please visit the WMS website at [www.wyomed.org](http://www.wyomed.org) download the registration form. ■

This year's meeting brings you 15 hours of Category 1 CME, and includes topics such as:

- Antibiotic and Infectious Disease Updates from Laurel Preheim, MD
- Human Genome - Robert Superko, MD
- Rx Drug Abuse - half day seminar featuring multiple health leaders

The 2010 WMS will provide the perfect opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the Grand Teton Mountains while taking advantage of valuable CME training.

### Room Reservation Information

Book a room directly with the Jackson Lake Lodge by calling 1-800-628-9988 and be sure to ask for the Wyoming Medical Society room block.

Special group room rates of \$224 per night's stay are available for attendees.

Room Cut off date is May 9 so make your reservations TODAY!

## **SGR - What Can Wyoming Physicians Do?**

President Obama recently signed into law the "Continuing Extension Act of 2010." This law extends the zero percent update to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) until May 31, 2010. The law is retroactive to April 1, 2010 and thus effective immediately.

### *Special Insert:*

While it is good news that physicians didn't experience the cut April 1, Congress didn't send an overwhelming message of confidence by only temporarily delaying the ensuing panic.

### *WMS Election Ballot 2010*

State medical societies across the nation have decided it's time for each of us to stand up for ourselves and say enough is enough. Doctors want to take care of Medicare patients and Congress is forcing doctors to limit the number of Medicare patients they see.

### *Final Legislative Summary*

If you believe Congress must fix Medicare and implement a rational Medicare physician payment system that automatically keeps up with the cost of running a practice and is backed by a fair, stable funding formula... go online and sign this petition today! <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/meltdown> ■



# WYOMING MEDICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING - 2010

## Prospering Through Change

**MEETING DATES:** The 2010 Annual Meeting will kick-off the morning of Thursday, June 10, at 8:30 and will conclude at noon on Saturday, June 12.

**MEETING INFORMATION:** Register today by visiting [www.wyomed.org/annualmeeting.asp](http://www.wyomed.org/annualmeeting.asp) to join your colleagues at the foot of the Tetons for quality CME and relaxation. Questions? Call the WMS staff at 307.635.2424

### CME LECTURE SERIES AGENDA:

DAY	Time	Speaker	Presentation
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>			
	1:00	Board Meeting	
	6:30	Board Dinner	
<b>THURSDAY</b>			
	8:30	Bob Doherty	Health Reform
	9:30	Robert Superko, MD	Genome Project
	10:30	Break	
	11:00	Bob Murray, MD	Child Nutrition
	12:00	Member luncheon	
	2:00	Preheim, MD	Infectious Diseases
	3:00	W. Curran, H. Frankel, MD & B. Sherard, MD	Health Technology Panel
	5:30	Welcome to the Tetons Reception	
<b>FRIDAY</b>			
	8:15	Kelly Rankin, U.S. Attorney	Rx Drug Abuse
	9:15	Steve Herman	Rx Drug Abuse
	9:15	Mark Walter, MD - Psychiatrist	Rx Drug Abuse
	10:00	Break	
	10:15	Mary Kay Walker, Pharm. D	Rx Drug Abuse
	11:15	Kevin Bohnenblust, JD	Rx Drug Abuse
	12:15	Strolling Vendor Lunch	
	2:00	Carl Kunkleman - Istonish	Rec Resources & EMR Incentives
	3:00	Paul Orth	Reimbursement Update/RAC
	5:30	2010 President's Reception	
	6:30	2010 President's Dinner ~ <i>ReThink</i>	
<b>SATURDAY</b>			
	7:00	WYOPAC Breakfast	Gubernatorial Forum
	8:30	Jackie Nelson, MD and Al Mehl, MD	Early Hearing Education
	9:30	Laurel Preheim, MD	Latest in Antibiotics
	10:30	Break	
	10:45	Alan Arbuckle, MD	Pediatric Dermatology
	11:45	Anne Ladd	Business Coalition on Health



## Director's Checkup

~ Health Reform, We're at the Beginning~

Sheila Bush, WMS Executive Director

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010 was signed into law by President Obama on March 23. This legislation elicited much debate among policy experts and the public alike as to whether or not it was the best path forward for America's health care system. Uncertainty abounds and no one knows exactly how this new complex law will play out.

The most important thing for WMS members to remember is that your organization is closely following the details of this legislation and will be your voice every step of the way. Now that the bill has been signed, the fun part of promulgating the rules and regulations starts. This is the time to know that you have advocates working on your behalf to keep you informed and engaged in areas where you can make a difference.

A variety of promises were made to the American people and to health care providers throughout the debate of the health reform legislation. One of these promises that seems to be getting a great deal of buzz in Wyoming is the promise to improve access to primary care.

The following is an excerpt from an article submitted by Bob Doherty of the American College of Physicians that I thought was particularly helpful.

"The United States is projected to face a shortage of 35 000 to 44 000 primary care physicians for adults by 2025. Population growth and aging will increase the workloads of family physicians and general internists by 29% between 2005 and 2025. As more people obtain health insurance under the new law, the demand for primary care physicians will probably increase, exacerbating the primary care shortage.

The PPACA aims to ameliorate the primary care shortage through increased funding for National Health Services Corps and Title VII health professions programs and creates a new program to provide grants and graduate medical education dollars to primary care residency programs at teaching health centers. The law requires residency programs to redistribute at least 65% of unfilled slots in non-primary care programs to primary care residency or general surgery residency programs. The PPACA also establishes the Primary Care Extension Program to support best practices in primary care and will train more advance-practice nurses, although states will continue to govern the services that they can provide.

Financial incentives for primary care include increased Medicare payments for primary care encounters by 10% starting in 2011 and continuing through 2016, and increased Medicaid payments for visits and vaccines by primary care physicians to no lower than the Medicare rates for years 2013 and 2014. The PPACA also accelerates pilot testing and implementation of new models like the patient-centered medical home, which will reimburse primary care physicians in qualified practices for instituting best practices to improve outcomes for patients with chronic illnesses.

These programs, over time, may help increase the availability of primary care clinicians. But the long training pipeline means that it will be at least 4 years before one might see an appreciable increase in the numbers of graduating primary care physicians. As a result, newly insured patients can anticipate difficulties gaining access to primary care, particularly in underserved communities. The PPACA will not solve the primary care crisis. Further changes are necessary

to ensure adequate access to primary care physicians."

Wyoming Medical Society hopes that the legislation signed by President Obama in late March will advance key policies on coverage, workforce, and payment and delivery system reform. Questions still surround whether or not government can implement legislation of this magnitude without getting too heavily involved in the practice of medicine and the relationships between train physicians and their patients. WMS members are hardly of one mind with regard to health reform, but whether we agree or not we're all in this together and together, with the leadership of WMS, we will be able to fight to change the things that must be changed and embrace the changes that are uncomfortable but potentially for a currently unforeseen greater good.

The health reform law is a work in progress. We're not at the end of the story, we're merely at the beginning. As it is implemented, changes will be inevitable so now is not the time to sit back with an attitude of "c'est la vie." Get engaged and make sure your questions are being answered and your voice is being heard. Please contact the WMS office with any comments, questions or concerns. We can't promise to have all of the answers but we can certainly always work to find out the best resources and ways to obtaining the answers we need. ■

## Istonish Signed to Bring IT Support to Wyoming

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (A.R.R.A.) appropriated \$44B to encourage hospitals, clinics and physicians to transition to electronic medical records (E.M.R.). As these healthcare stakeholders move from paper charts and records to electronic medical records, a real problem exists: on-going IT Support.

“Three years ago the State of Wyoming asked the WyHIO to survey the Wyoming medical community to understand the challenges involved in transitioning to electronic medical records”, said Larry Biggio, Executive Director of WyHIO. “The study’s top three conclusions were: 1) the need for EMR funding, 2) a tele-health network to share physician expertise and, 3) on-going IT Support at the local level.”

Biggio goes on to say, “The A.R.R.A.’s healthcare appropriations attend to the funding issue. Last year the State of Wyoming funded the telehealth network through an agreement with the WyHIO. Today, we’ve partnered with Istonish to address the third, and arguably the most important issue of the Study’s conclusions, IT Support for local hospitals, clinics and physician offices.”

As WyHIO members, hospitals, clinics and physicians will now receive these important services. WyHIO creates a network of support services to healthcare providers as they prepare to capture and exchange critical medical information across the State of Wyoming. This guarantees

that doctors have access to important patient information wherever they are in Wyoming.

“We’re pleased to partner with WyHIO to provide critical IT Support across the State”, said Carl Kunkleman, Chief Marketing Officer at Istonish. “This partnership leverages our rural IT Support model already deployed elsewhere to bring superior on-going IT support services to rural healthcare providers and communities in Wyoming.”

Questions? Please contact Larry Biggio, WyHIO Executive Director, at 307-432-4025 in Cheyenne or Istonish Chief Marketing Officer, Carl Kunkleman, at 07-432-4032. ■

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## WMS Makes a Big Move and Calls for Physician Art

Wyoming Medical Society headquarters made a big move in March. President Reed Shafer, MD and Vice President Gerrie Gardner, DO signed closing documents on the purchase of new office space in downtown Cheyenne for WMS staff to call home on March 8. WMS staff scurried to get settled in the new space at 122 E. 17th Street throughout the month of March. If any members experienced difficulty reaching the office or didn't receive response to emails or letters in a timely fashion during the month of March, we apologize. WMS is now settled in and it is back to business as usual here in downtown Cheyenne.

### *A little history...*

In the late 1970s WMS built a building on the corner of 20th and Evans. Shortly after the construction was complete WMS found itself in a bit of financial strain due to poor staff leadership in the organization at the time. WMS board members quickly alleviated the staff issues and hired new staff to turn WMS around, and that they did. Soon after new staff was hired, a partnership agreement was established with Dr. Sloan Hales to help WMS stay in the building the organization had worked so hard to build. Sloan and Annamarie purchased 1920 Evans Avenue and then rented office space back to WMS for nearly 30 years.

### *The future*

WMS is proud of the new building and excited to announce a new opportunity for members and their families. We

would like to feature member art or art from member's families in the WMS building. So many of our members and their spouses or children have incredible talents that WMS would like to highlight.

### *Call for artwork*

Do you have framed photography, paintings, drawings or mounted sculptures that you would like to loan or donate to the Wyoming Medical Society for display in the office in Cheyenne? If so, we would be honored to be given the opportunity to showcase your contribution. Donated art pieces will be labeled with brass plates to denote the member artist, date of membership initiation and whether or not they served in a leadership role in their membership life with WMS. If the artist is a spouse or child of the member the artist's name will be listed as well as a listing of the WMS member to whom they are related.

Please consider participating in this unique opportunity and contact Sheila Bush in the WMS office for more specific details. ■

## stability matters.

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## WY Needs Your Help

The Governor's Office and the WY e-Health Partnership have asked WMS for physician office input on:

- The use of a statewide health information exchange to share health records between physicians, hospitals, labs, etc.
- How to support physician efforts to obtain incentive payments.

WMS is a member of the e-Health Partnership and we believe this is a great opportunity to help shape Wyoming's planning efforts.

In the coming weeks please expect to see a short survey that will help fill in the missing blanks for the various organizations invested in this project to plan appropriately for the future. With your help we can better understand what it is Wyoming needs most and how to accomplish our shared goals together.

When you receive the survey whether electronically or hard copy, please consider asking your office staff to take the short amount of time necessary to fill it out. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Sheila Bush at the WMS office at 307-635-2424. ■

## TDC Announces 2010 Dividend for WY Members

The Doctors Company, the largest national insurer of physician and surgeon medical liability in the U.S. and exclusive endorsed partner of the Wyoming Medical Society, is pleased to announce a \$16 million dividend to reward member physicians for their loyalty and dedication to advancing the practice of good medicine.

Since 1976, over \$184 million in dividends has been paid to members. The 2010 dividend credit, approved by The Doctors Company's Board of Governors, will be applied as a 7 percent premium reduction to eligible Wyoming Medical Society members on policy renewals on or after July 1, 2010.

Eligible members of the American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery, the American College of Physicians, and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons® may also receive a dividend credit in addition to their extensive program benefits.

Wyoming Medical Society members insured by The Doctors Company receive a unique combination of coverage features, aggressive claims handling, industry-leading patient safety programs, and tangible economic benefits.

For more information about The Doctors Company's 2010 membership dividend, visit [www.thedoctors.com/dividend](http://www.thedoctors.com/dividend). ■



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### *Nominations for Election to Leadership*

The WMS Nominating Committee has recommended a slate of candidates for election to Society leadership positions for one-year terms beginning July 1, 2010.

The finalized slate of candidates is *enclosed for all WMS members by official ballot*. Make sure to submit your vote and have your ballot returned to the WMS office by May 22! You can vote by mail, fax, or e-mail.

Start thinking now about 2011! Any WMS member interested in participating in a greater capacity within the WMS leadership should contact the WMS office prior to February 2011. ■

**PRESIDENT**  
Gerrie Gardner, DO ~ Cheyenne

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Cynthia Casey, MD ~ Sundance

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Michael Tracy, MD ~ Powell

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