

Dear all:

Please allow this to be an update of MAG's activities over the last few weeks. As always, my previous updates can be found at <http://www.mag.org/resources/executive-directors-message>.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia and ER Policy

Organized medicine continues to push BCBS to rescind the new ER policy which places patients at risk. Last week, organized medicine did a press release calling for BCBS to rescind the policy which can be found at <http://www.mag.org/news/article/MAG-calls-for-Blue-Cross-to-disclose-data-it-used-as-basis-for-retrospective-ER-policy>. In addition, we continue to keep the General Assembly up to date on this policy and the potential impact it will have on patients. Rest assured, we will continue to pursue BCBS on this issue.

Health Care Reform

This week has proven to be a busy week for the United States Senate on attempts to "repeal and replace" to "skinny repeal" the Affordable Care Act. The AMA released multiple statements on the various amendments put forth, which can be found at <http://www.mag.org/news/articles/AMA-urges-Senators-to-consider-impact-to-Americans-during-health-care-debate>.

Prior to the Senate discussing the amendments, we did a survey to gauge the opinions of our members. I want to thank you for answering the survey. In reviewing the survey responses, the membership was split on whether MAG should support or oppose the bill. During this period, we notified Senators Isakson and Perdue on the concerns with heard from the members. Please see the concerns we discussed with our Senators - <http://www.mag.org/news/articles/MAG-carefully-watching-health-care-legislation>.

Opioid Epidemic

MAG and organized medicine continue to take the lead in addressing the opioid epidemic. The AMA graciously appeared on our sponsored Top Docs program sending the immediate past chair of the Board of Directors, Patrice Harris, MD. Dr. Harris did a fantastic job discussing the opioid epidemic and what organized medicine is doing to address this issue. The program can be found at <http://businessradiox.com/podcast/midtown/86428/>.

Additionally, Dr. Debi Dalton has led an impressive effort at Wellstar Health System. Here is an update from Dr. Dalton:

WellStar has established a patient centered system opioid strategy through its WHS Opioid Management Committee. Based on the Center for Disease Controls research showing that the majority of opioid addiction is related to overutilization of prescription opioids, WellStar Health System will utilize a multifaceted approach focusing on prescription opioids. The initial strategies will focus on Primary Prevention that includes safe practices managing prescription processes, auditing charts to identify high volume prescribers, raising awareness with provider and patient education and medication take back programs to safely take back/ discard expired and unused medications. All medical staff members are to view a video regarding the statistics, identification, evaluation and treatment of opioid users and abusers as part of our Safety First Program. Order sets which include opioid medications will be re-evaluated and modified to decrease standing orders for these medications. Wellstar will also utilize ERAS protocols for surgical patients. Notification for PDMP registration will be distributed within

the week and reminders will be sent out periodically until all medical staff members have registered (before the end of the year). Education about the value and strategies of the PDMP will be included in these communications.

If your practice, system or institution is addressing the opioid epidemic and would like for MAG to share, please contact Lori Murphy at lmurphy@mag.org.

As always, if you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

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