Dear all:

Please allow this to be an update of MAG activities over the last few weeks. As always, my previous updates can be found at www.mag.org/executivedirector.

**Aetna-CVS Merger**

As you may recall, the Commissioner of Insurance held a hearing on the Aetna-CVS proposed merger in October. MAG and the Georgia Pharmacy Association worked together in opposition to the proposed merger submitting comments and preparing testimony. Last week, the Commissioner of Insurance approved the merger but did set out conditions that benefit patients, physicians and providers.

For example, one of the most important conditions requires CVS and Aetna to comply with the Georgia Any Willing Provider law (O.C.G.A. § 33-20-16) in all provider contracting allowing patients to use the provider of their choice as long as the provider is appropriately licensed to practice, is in good standing with the state, and is willing to accept the same pricing and terms and conditions that CVS or Aetna have established for other participating providers or pharmacies serving Georgia patients. The merged insurer is also required to ensure that their network provides adequate access for insurers. This is to be accomplished through the solicitation of non-CVS owned pharmacies and providers to participate in the networks and insureds must be allowed free choice of pharmacies and providers within their respective networks.

Please note that the Commissioner of Insurance’s conditions are significant as Georgia is the one of the few states that are imposing conditions. Great to work with the Georgia Pharmacy Association on this important issue. The order can be found at https://www.oci.ga.gov/ExternalResources/Documents/Enforcement/Final%20Order%20CVS%20Aetna.pdf.

**Georgia Composite Medical Board**

Please note another reminder that the GCMB is beginning to discipline those physicians that have not registered for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. Please register if you have not done so. More information can be found at https://www.mag.org/georgia/Public/News/News_Articles/GCMB_to_begin_disciplining_physicians_who_haven_t_registered_with_PDMP____.aspx.

**Top Docs Radio Show**

Please listen to the latest Top Docs Show featuring Piedmont cardiologist, Amin Yehya, MD discussing congestive heart failure. Great show that can be found at https://www.mag.org/georgia/Public/News/News_Articles/Leading_cardiologist_discusses_heart_failure_care_on__Top_Docs_Radio____.aspx. Dr. Yehya is also a member of the MAG Institute for Excellence in Medicine’s Board of Directors.

**HealtheParadigm**

MAG’s HealtheParadigm is joining six other physician-led health information exchanges to identify & reduce health disparities amongst its states populations. MAG member, Dr. Amin Yehya; an advanced heart failure, mechanical circulatory support and heart transplant Cardiologist at Piedmont Heart Institute, joined representatives from Connecticut, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, & South
Carolina state medical societies in Baltimore, Maryland to formulate a campaign on how to collect and use sensitive health information in a way that will have a positive impact on each state’s health equity.

These state HIE’s will participate in collecting the self-reported information on patient race, ethnicity and primary language other than English and share patient information in an affordable, secure and accessible way that can help to improve patient care and outcomes. Research shows that near real-time use of clinical data, like that available in MAG’s HealtheParadigm platform, can help drive quality improvements and impact health disparities.

If you are interested in this campaign or would like more information, please contact MAG’s HealtheParadigm Director, Ryan M. Larosa, at rlarosa@mag.org.

**MAG Foundation and Amazon**
Please see the following regarding MAG Foundation and Amazon –

![Cyber Monday hack](image)

*This Cyber Monday, do your regular Amazon shopping at smile.amazon.com/ch/58-6066431 and AmazonSmile donates to Medical Association of Georgia Foundation, Inc.*

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

Donald

Donald J. Palmisano, Jr. J.D. I Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer
Medical Association of Georgia
1849 The Exchange Suite 200 I Atlanta, Georgia 30339
678-303-9290 (Phone) I 404-312-9030 (Mobile)
dpalmisano@mag.org I www.mag.org

*Help physicians in Georgia impacted by Hurricane Michael*