Dear all:

Please allow this to be an update of MAG’s activities over the last few weeks. My previous updates can be found at [http://www.mag.org/resources/executive-directors-message](http://www.mag.org/resources/executive-directors-message). As always, please feel free to pass on this update to others.

**Summer Legislative Seminar**
Please reserve your rooms for the Summer Legislative Seminar that will be held in Jekyll Island on July 25-26. This is a joint effort with between MAG and the specialty and county medical societies. More information can be found at [http://www.mag.org/news/articles/jekyll-savedate#overlay-context=news/articles/stsimons-savedate](http://www.mag.org/news/articles/jekyll-savedate#overlay-context=news/articles/stsimons-savedate).

**Blue Cross Blue Shield (Update)**
We continue our efforts towards resolving our issues with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia. BCBBS responded to our complaints and agreed to a number of process improvements going forward. We are forming a Physician Advisory Committee and will submit a plan to BCBS detailing a process with recommendations in the next few weeks. We are also reaching out to the other Georgia insurers to receive other important information impacting your practice that will be easily accessible by your offices. The information can be found at [http://www.mag.org/advocacy/issues/georgia-insurers](http://www.mag.org/advocacy/issues/georgia-insurers) and also includes the BCBS response to our initial letter. Any other questions can be directed to Susan Moore at smoore@mag.org.

**POLST Town Hall Forum**
MAG hosted a Town Hall Forum on Physician’s Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST). Dr. Richard Cohen and Dr. Adrienne Mims led the discussion on this ever important topic. Dr. Cohen, Dr. Mims and Wellstar Health System are recognized leaders on the POLST initiative in Georgia. The recording can be found at [http://www.mag.org/news/articles/polst-recording](http://www.mag.org/news/articles/polst-recording).

**GAMPAC Get Out the Vote**
We just wanted to remind you to vote in the primary elections that will take place across Georgia on Tuesday, May 20. The primary process allows voters to pick the candidates that they believe will represent best their party and their constituents during the general election in November. It is critical for every physician in the state to participate in the electoral process to ensure that the candidates that are elected into office – whether they are a Republican or a Democrat – support a favorable practice environment to ensure that Georgians continue to access to the physicians they need for their medical care. Please go to [http://mvp.sos.state.ga.us/LoginPage.aspx](http://mvp.sos.state.ga.us/LoginPage.aspx) to locate the polling station in your district. Please contact Marcus Downs at mdowns@mag.org or Ryan Larosa at rlarosa@mag.org in the event you have any questions related to the legislators or candidates in your district.
County Medical Society Meetings
The last few weeks have been rather busy with attending county medical society meetings. We have attended Cobb County Medical Society, Ogeechee River Medical Society, Bibb County Medical Society, Crawford Long Medical Society and Georgia Medical Society. I would like to highlight one county medical society event. Last night, the Georgia Medical Society hosted an event open to the public to discuss the Affordable Care Act. The panelists included Rep. Ben Watson, Dr. Diane Weems (Director of the Coastal Health District), Maggie Gill (Memorial Health Hospital/CEO), Michael Kleinpeter (Optim Health/CEO), David Rubnitz (Ebenconcepts-Savannah/CEO) and myself. The purpose of the event was to address the fact from fiction associated with the Affordable Care Act from the people and professions directly dealing with these issues. The event was well attended and clearly fit within the purpose and role of the county medical society. Congratulations to Dr. Mark Murphy and Ca Rita Connor for pulling this event together.

Board of Directors/Executive Committee Meeting – Actions
The Board of Directors met on May 3 and the following actions were taken:

- MAG would oppose any state ban on the FDA approved prescription drug Zohydro as the decision to prescribe a drug falls within the practice of medicine; however, we have recently learned that Zohydro may be moved to a Schedule I in Georgia so any feedback is greatly appreciated;
- Appointed the following members to the GAMPAC Board of Directors: Stephen Jarrard, M.D., of Clayton, Elizabeth Morgan, M.D., of Atlanta, Randy F. Rizor, M.D., Marietta, James L. Smith, M.D., of Lawrenceville, and Michelle Zeanah, M.D., of Statesboro;
- Approved the selection of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah on October 15-18 for the time and place for the 2015 annual session;
- Appointed, until October 2014, Matthews W. Gwynn, M.D., of Atlanta, to serve as Secretary;
- Adopted the 2013 audit as submitted by Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC;
- Approved that MAG write a letter to the Federal Drug Administration in support of its programs on drug testing, and additionally a more robust testing of generic drugs (House of Delegates Resolution 103A-13);
- Approved that MAG 1) should continue to monitor the antitrust lawsuit filed by the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons in the U.S. District Court with the option to file an amicus brief in the future, and 2) that MAG send a letter to component societies soliciting their positions on the American Board of Medical Specialties Maintenance of Certification (ABMS MOC) program with any recommendations for adjustments to MOC (House of Delegates Resolution 402F-13);
- Approved as recommended that MAG’s Council on Legislation continue its process to meet every other week during the session and three times following
the legislative session and before the end of each calendar year (House of Delegates Resolution 703S-13);

- Edmund Donoghue, M.D., of Savannah plans to run for Vice Speaker of the House of Delegates this 2014 HOD;
- Stan Sherman, M.D., of Decatur, will not seek the office of the Chairman of the Board. Term limit has been reached.

**Interesting News**

Dr. Katrina Nalovic recently received a letter from a patient that had expressed her deep gratitude for the “courtesy, sympathy and understanding” her office exhibited. The patient received the EOB from Medicare showing the amount Dr. Nalovic’s office received in payment. The patient was taken aback at the overall reduced payment Dr. Nalovic’s received and made a voluntary donation to Dr. Nalovic’s foundation as a sign of appreciation. I bring this to your attention because as patients become more involved in their healthcare gives physicians an opportunity to dispel the myths about physicians “ever increasing income.”

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

Donald

Donald J. Palmisano, Jr.
Executive Director/CEO
Medical Association of Georgia
1849 The Exchange
Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30339
678-303-9290 (Phone)
678-303-3732 (Fax)
404-312-9030 (Mobile)

*The leading voice for the medical profession in Georgia...every physician in every specialty.*