Dear all:

There has been a lot of news since my last MAG BOD Update. Please see a summary below.

Elections
Last night, Mark Newton, MD won the seat for House District 123. GAMPAC supported Dr. Newton and this makes the fourth physician that will be serving in the General Assembly – Senator Dean Burke, Senator Ben Watson and Representative Betty Price. As part of our Strategic Plan, MAG set a goal to have four physicians in the General Assembly. I am happy to report we have achieved that goal.

Health Insurance Mergers (Great News)
The Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Regulation just issued an Order addressing the Aetna-Humana proposed merger. In a 43 page opinion, the state regulator found the proposed merger violated the competitive standards in Missouri and these companies would have to cease doing business in the State of Missouri if the acquisition occurs. However, the state regulator is giving Aetna and Humana additional time to propose corrective action. This is great news for organized medicine. We will keep you updated as this matter develops. Please see [http://insurance.mo.gov/documents/findings-fact-5-24-16.pdf](http://insurance.mo.gov/documents/findings-fact-5-24-16.pdf) for the opinion. We anticipate the Commissioner of Insurance for the State of Georgia will have a hearing date set soon. A big congratulations to the American Medical Association and the Missouri State Medical Association for their work in opposing the mergers.

Advance Practice Registered Nurses
Please see the note from AMA on a recent proposed rule by the Veterans Health Administration. We plan to support the comments of the AMA.

Yesterday the Veterans Health Administration published a Proposed Rule that would give full authority to four categories of APRNs: Certified Nurse practitioner (CNP), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), or Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM). The Proposed Rule defines “full practice authority” to mean that an APRN working within the scope of VA employment would be authorized to provide services without the clinical oversight of a physician, regardless of State or local law restrictions on that authority. APRNs working outside of VA facilities would remain subject to state laws on APRN scope of practice. Federal preemption will be used to sidestep state medical licensure laws such that APRNs who work for the VA will have full authority inside the VA.

As we know, the VA is under tremendous pressure to reduce the wait times for appointments that veterans are experiencing. Consequently this Proposed Rule was anticipated, and was the subject of conversations with VA and AMA physician leadership, including Dr. Barbe and Dr. Ehrenfeld.

We will be issuing a press release to express our disappointment in the direction the VA has proposed. We also intend to comment on this Proposed Rule consistent with longstanding AMA policy opposing APRN independent practice, and to encourage the
Federation to engage their membership and communicate to the VA their opposition as well. The deadline to submit comments on the Proposed Rule is Monday, July 25.

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

Donald

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