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. As always, please feel free to pass this update to others.

**MAG Foundation “Think About It Campaign”**  
The MAG Foundation has made great strides in the last few weeks even since our announcement of our partnership with Walgreens. Please see the attached press release (http://www.mag.org/news/articles/magf-walgreens) where 191 Walgreens stores will be placing our “Pill Bottle” piece warning patients of the dangers of prescription drug abuse. The “Pill Bottle” piece is attached to this email and will be distributed to over 125,000 patients in the next few weeks. In addition, we have commitments from various health systems and retail pharmacies that will also be utilizing our Think About It Campaign materials in the various patient access areas. A special thanks to MAG Foundation Board of Trustee member Dr. Ali Rahimi for his work on introducing us to various interested groups. If you would like more information on how you can support the campaign or you would like materials for your office, please contact Lori Murphy at lmurphy@mag.org.

**MAG-GHA Pilot: Physician Engagement in Solutions that Promote Care Coordination, Reduce Harm, and Improve Health Outcomes in Georgia**  
Resolution 115A was passed at 2013 House of Delegate establishing policy for a structure for regular communication and collaboration with the Georgia Hospital Association (GHA) on matters related to creating a high performing health care system in Georgia. MAG was awarded funding by the GHA under its Hospital Engagement Network (HEN) contract with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in response to an unsolicited proposal from the Department of Health Policy and Third Party Payer Advocacy. MAG’s pilot objective includes promoting local participation by selected MAG physicians in clinical and practice management efforts designed to focus on care coordination using the framework of the patient centered medical home, including integration between and among healthcare and community resources. This nine month project began this spring and will end December, 2014. At present, we have 3 physician pilots across Georgia who are working directly with their respective hospitals to align transition and discharge management protocols and systems. These pilot practices represent the primary care practice spectrum from small, to mid-sized, to large. Each is a recognized PCMHs or members of an ACO and are versed in the principles of care coordination.

The strategic aim of the pilot is to test and evaluate a replicable and sustainable model for physician engagement in solutions that promote care coordination, reduce harm and improve health outcomes for Georgians by utilizing the proven organizational structure of the Medical Association of Georgia to engage physician participation in support of the ambitious goals of HHS’s Partnership for Patients. For more information, please contact Susan Moore at smoore@mag.org.

**Commissioner of Insurance and 90 Day Grace Period**  
The Georgia Commissioner of Insurance, Ralph T. Hudgens, has released a directive regarding the duties required under the federal PPACA grace period (45 CFR § 156.270(d)(3)) and Georgia law. The directive provides a summary of the federal law relating to grace periods and guidance for Georgia issuers of QHP under Georgia law.
Under PPACA, if a policyholder of a Qualified Health Plan (QHP) pays at least one month’s full premium, the QHP issuer must provide a grace period of three consecutive months. All claims from the first month must be paid, whereas claims from the second and third month may be pended by the issuer. The issuer of the QHP must notify provider of denied claims when an enrollee is in the second and third months of the grace period. Under Georgia law, an issuer of a QHP must provide adequate notice to providers. This means that notice must be provided prior to medical services rendered from day 31-90 or the claim cannot be pended. Thus, the notice of the grace period starts day 1 of the second month. Also, while a claim may be pended assuming adequate notice, it cannot be recouped through post-claim audits. The directive also explains that Georgia’s Prompt Pay law will not apply to these plans, in that no interest will accrue while claims are pending. For more information, please contact Trish Yeatts at pyeatts@mag.org.

Physician Advocacy Institute (PAI) and National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)
Please see the attached letter (www.mag.org/news/articles/naic) from PAI to NAIC addressing narrow networks and proposed model legislation. This letter addresses network adequacy concerns of physicians and health care providers in the health insurance exchanges.

Medicaid Expansion Report
Please see the attached report (www.mag.org/news/articles/medicaid-report) from U.S. Council of Economic Advisors comparing the potential losses/gains assumed by states by opposing/supporting Medicaid expansion. According to the report, those states expanding Medicaid can expect the following:
- Improved access to care;
- Greater financial security;
- Better mental health;
- Better overall health;
- Greater overall economic activity.

Georgia Congressional Races
AMPAC supports candidates in Georgia’s congressional races based upon recommendations from MAG/GAMPAC. AMPAC is supporting the following candidates in the July 22 runoff:
- Jack Kingston – U.S. Senate;
- Dr. Bob Johnson – 1st Congressional District; and
- Mike Collins – 10th Congressional District.

MAG Medical Reserve Corp
At its October 2013 House of Delegate’s Session, delegates unanimously supported House Resolution 112A.13 which resolved to establish a MRC within the Medical Association of Georgia for the purpose of training physicians and coordinating physician medical assistance through MAG to effectively respond to declared emergency response events in the state of Georgia. Under the combined team effort of the Medical Association of Georgia and the Georgia Department of Public Health, we are proposing that the Medical Association of Georgia become the sponsor of the MAG Medical Reserve Corps (MAGMRC), providing an opportunity for citizen volunteers, health professionals and others, to supplement existing local medical, public health and emergency services resources across the State of Georgia. The MAG MRC Unit will have
one primary and two secondary responsibilities. Its primary role will be to set up the mobile hospital systems. The MAG MRC volunteers may also provide an important “surge” capability to perform some functions usually performed by emergency medical response teams who have been mobilized. MAG MRC volunteers can also augment medical and support staff shortages at local medical or emergency facilities. As to the current status of this effort, the Registration Application has been completed and MAG is looking for funding sources before proceeding further with the approval process required by the Office of the Surgeon General, DHHS.

**MAG/Home Town Health**

MAG was invited to participate on June’s 2 day *Rural Physician Outreach Bus Tour*. The tour was coordinated by Home Town Health with the aim if bringing a suite of provider resources to Georgia’s rural physicians and practice managers to provide much needed help in the form of technical assistance and education. Experts from GA- HITEC, Department of Community Health, HP Medicaid, GA Health Information Network (Ga-HIN), and Home Town Health were present to assess practice status in the MU attestation process, provide assistance with Medicaid Incentive payments, and to offer assistance with Provider enrollment and reimbursement issues.

**Mercy Care Services**

I just had the opportunity to meet with Tom Andrews and Bonnie Hardage of Mercy Care Services which has locations in metro Atlanta. Mercy Care services is a free clinic and is in need of specialty care from physicians and providers. The top ten physicians and providers needed include the following:

- Orthopedics
- Urology
- Podiatry
- Gynecology
- General Surgery
- ENT/Allergy
- Gastroenterology
- Cardiology
- Nephrology
- Pediatric Subspecialties

This is a great cause. If you are interested, please contact Bonnie Hardage at bhardage@mercyatlanta.org. More information can be found at [www.mercycareservices.org](http://www.mercycareservices.org).

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

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