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 along this update to others.

**James Magazine Top Trade/Business Associations and Top Lobbyists**
The 2014 James Magazine Top Lobbyists and Top Trade/Business Associations rankings just came out and MAG is listed in the Top 2 Trade/Business Associations. Additionally, Marcus Downs was recognized as a Rising Star. This is a big honor for the organization and Marcus. Just another example of what team work produces. Please note that we were not ranked for many years prior to 2012. In 2012, MAG was recognized in the top 10 as a top association and we moved to number three in 2013. We have now climbed the ranks to number two. I am confident we can attribute our success to the diversity within our organization and the active member involvement on issues. Additionally, MAG has become a forum to address the difficult issues that impact patients and physicians. Thank you for making this happen. I have attached the rankings to this email. More information can be found at [http://www.mag.org/news/articles/james-mag-honor2014](http://www.mag.org/news/articles/james-mag-honor2014) and [http://insideradvantage.com/james-magazine/2014-09/](http://insideradvantage.com/james-magazine/2014-09/).

**MAG Medical Reserve Corps**
The registration for the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) was approved by Health and Human Services on October 21, 2014. This unique medical society led MAG MRC will serve as a state resource with the ability to collaborate with any local MRC upon request and approval of MAG MRC leadership and under the direction of the GA Department of Public Health. The MAG MRC is an “all-hazards” statewide specialty MRC, similar to a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) in organization and function; however, it is a state and not a federalized resource. The primary role of the MAG MRC is to support the GA Department of Public Health Mobile Surge Unit System. The MAG MRC’s personnel and resources may also be assigned to area hospitals, public health agencies or mass care facilities to augment and assist the staff of these health care facilities. Dr. John Harvey, MAG President-Elect, presented a request for funding this past week to the Georgia Trauma Commission and we should know in the next few months the status of the funding.

**Sustainable Growth Rate**
As you may recall, Congress failed to fix the SGR for the 17th straight time (HR 4015/S 2000) in March and extended another “patch” for one year. The current “patch” is set to expire at the end of March, 2015 and physicians would face over 20% in payment cuts in the Medicare program. However, we have been informed there is a potential desire to pass HR 4015/S 2000, the compromise policy language that nearly all of organized medicine supported in the current “lame duck” session. Dr. Manoj Shah, MAG President, sent an alert to all members last week to contact Congress and urge them to pass HR 4015/S 2000 in its current form. Please continue to contact members of Congress to pass these bills. More information can be found at [http://www.mag.org/news/articles/sgr-repeal-4015](http://www.mag.org/news/articles/sgr-repeal-4015).

**2015 Legislative Priorities**
Just a reminder, our 2015 Legislative Priorities can be found on our website at [http://www.mag.org/advocacy/take-action/legislative-priorities](http://www.mag.org/advocacy/take-action/legislative-priorities). Additionally, our JMAG will feature an article outlining our 2015 Legislative Priorities. The JMAG should be available at the end of December.
MAG v. Wellpoint (Blue Cross Blue Shield)
This litigation has been ongoing since 2010. In fact, we have been deposed for hours on the issues that are the subject of this litigation. The underlying allegation are “that the insurers knowingly created and used flawed data to record “usual, customary and reasonable,” or UCR, reimbursement rates for out-of-network health services, beginning in 2006.” We, along with a few medical societies, have been involved in this litigation. Rather than go into the whole procedural history, there is a split in the courts about whether we can proceed with this litigation based on our 2005 settlement with Wellpoint for previous managed care violations. Over the last few years, MAG and the medical societies have been in contempt of court because we have not dismissed our lawsuit and have had to pay fines. Now, the case is in the posture to be heard by the US Supreme Court. The issues surrounding this case involve antitrust, RICO, ERISA and others. I have attached an article for your review which gives a great summary of the posture of the case.

Town Hall Forum
On December 2, we will host another Town Hall Forum on patient collections. The call is expected to last 30 minutes. For more information, please see http://www.mag.org/news/articles/collections-th.

Physicians’ Day at the Capitol
Please mark your calendars as we will have our annual Physicians’ Day at the Capitol on January 28. MAG and a number of county and specialty medical societies participate in this annual event. This is your opportunity to speak to the members of the General Assembly on issues important to you and your patients. For more information, please go to http://www.mag.org/news/articles/whitecoat-2015.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Happy Thanksgiving to all.

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)

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