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 http://www.mag.org/resources/executive-directors-message.

**Health Insurance Mergers**

MAG, the AMA and organized medicine have been openly opposed to the Anthem (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia)-CIGNA and Aetna-Humana health insurance mergers. We have voiced our opposition to the Commissioner of Insurance office on a monthly basis and filed many position papers with his office. These letters and various others can be found at http://www.mag.org/advocacy/insurance-merger. We are anticipating a hearing before the Commissioner of Insurance in the very near future and we are prepared with our witnesses to testify as to the dangers of these mergers. We have organized at the state level as well as the national level with organized medicine and many consumer groups. The AMA continues to work closely with MAG and provide invaluable insight and expertise.

In some states, the health insurance mergers were immediately approved by the state regulator with some questioning the issue of proper notice for a comment period. However, we have had some favorable news in the last two weeks:

- Just yesterday, the California insurance commissioner called for the U.S. Department of Justice to block the Anthem/CIGNA merger - http://www.mag.org/news/articles/ca-insurance-merger-block
- Earlier this month, the Missouri insurance commissioner moved to block the Aetna-Humana merger - http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/newsletters/washington-health-policy-in-review/2016/may/may-31-2016/missouri-regulator-moves-to-block-aetna-humana-deal
- Connecticut is investigating whether the insurance commissioner had a conflict of interest with personal and family ties to CIGNA - http://www.wsj.com/articles/panel-examines-if-connecticut-official-has-conflict-in-review-of-anthem-cigna-deal-1466119897
- Colorado is being pressured to have closer scrutiny of the Anthem-CIGNA merger - http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/news/2016/05/31/colorado-groups-press-for-closer-look-at-anthem.html

At this time, we need to continue to send letters to the Commissioner of Insurance requesting he block the mergers. Dr. John Harvey, MAG President, continues to request that you send your opposition to the Commissioner of Insurance office at mergercomments@oci.ga.gov.

The health insurance mergers will be discussed at the Summer Legislative Seminar on July 29 and July 30. Please do not miss this opportunity to further discuss your concerns with elected officials. More information can be found at http://www.mag.org/news/articles/summer-legislative-seminar.

**Amicus Brief – Expert Witness**

MAG joined the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Georgia Obstetrical and Gynecological Society in filing an amicus brief to support the Atlanta Women’s Health Group in a lawsuit that is pending in the State Court of DeKalb County involving expert testimony. More information can be found at http://www.mag.org/news/articles/smithvbrasswell.

**MACRA**
The comment period for the proposed MACRA rules will conclude at the end of this month. The AMA, national specialty societies and organized medicine are in the process of preparing comments. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has made a concerted effort to speak with practicing physicians of the impact of these proposed rules on their practices. MAG met with CMS a few weeks ago while they were in Atlanta to express concerns. The AMA has prepared a toolkit to assist physicians in understanding the rules that can be found at http://www.mag.org/news/articles/macra-action-kit.

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

Donald

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