

March 2010



BENTON FRANKLIN COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

The Society Pages

Update from Olympia

Governor Gregoire's "Book 2" budget released in January restores \$779 million of spending for health care services that was cut in her December supplemental budget proposal, but its accompanying revenue package provides only \$105 million in additional state funds. For now, she seems to be counting on funds from the federal government to make up the \$674 million difference.

Behind the scenes budget negotiations are underway. Some lawmakers supportive of a larger – or broader – tax increase to plug the holes in the supplemental budget took heart from the recent approval of Oregon voters for tax increases to support their social services programs. Others remain opposed – or at least strongly interested in letting someone else take an ugly tax vote first as the November elections loom ever closer.

WSMA's Olympia team is working with legislators daily to seek funding for BHP, GAU, various Medicaid and other health care related cuts that otherwise would decimate this part of our social service safety net. Once things clarify – and the state has staked a lot on potential federal help – we will report on the budget issues and what may need to be done (*look for updates on the WSMA website- www.wsma.org or in the WSMA Membership Memo*)

The governor's second budget proposal did not restore funding to the interpreter services program. Reports DSHS, the agency does not track the number of clients for whom interpreter services are provided, but does track the number of encounters (an encounter is a single interaction that an interpreter has with a client/patient and a provider or DSHS social service program staff). In fiscal year 2009, the program provided (and paid for) approximately 233,000 encounters, of which 85-90% were for medical appointments. Asking physicians to subsidize this service is a non-starter for many and threatens access to care for Medicaid patients – and another Rx for increased demands on other community services.

Call to Action: We ask that you email your legislators today about the need to restore funding for interpreter services. They need to hear from you, their constituents, on how this cut will be devastating, not only to your practice's ability to serve patients, but to non-English speaking patients' access to care in your communities. To send a message to your legislators, go to <http://capwiz.com/wsma/home/> This link will be posted on the BFCMS website at bentonfranklincms.com

AMA Update– Medicare Payment Cut Delayed

Late in the evening on March 2, the Senate voted 78-19 to pass H.R. 4691, the "Temporary Extension Act of 2010," which included provisions to extend 2009 Medicare physician payment rates through the end of the month. As a result, the 21% payment cut that took effect on March 1 has been postponed until April 1.

The bill passed the House on February 25, only to encounter opposition on the Senate floor by Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY), who objected to the legislation being considered as an emergency measure that would not require budgetary offsets. In addition to postponing Medicare physician payment cuts, the bill extended a variety of other expiring programs including unemployment insurance and premium subsidies for COBRA continuation coverage for those whose employment was involuntarily terminated.

Discussions are still underway in the House and Senate on the next steps that will be taken to address the Medicare payment crisis. Proposals are being circulated that would implement still another short-term patch to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, including proposals that would postpone cuts for 90 days, 7 months, or through the end of 2010. The AMA and those currently attending its 2010 National Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, continue to press for permanent repeal of the SGR, rather than repeating the pattern of short-term remedies that serve to make future payment cuts more severe and increase the cost of permanent Medicare payment reform.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

6:30-7:00 pm, Social Hour

7:00-8:30 Membership Business and
Presentation

All Meetings are at Meadow Springs

Country Club

March 16, 2010

Dr. Lewis Zirkle and Jeanne Dillner from SIGN (Surgical Implant Generation Network) will be joining us to share their experiences with the rescue effort following the Haiti earthquake and also updating us on the work SIGN is doing all over the world.

April 20, 2010

Detective Bill Dramis with the Kennewick Police Department will be talking to us about prescription medication abuse in our community and how the police are working with physicians in our community to prevent this problem.

May 18, 2010

Members of the Medical Quality Assurance Commission will be traveling our meeting to discuss the role of the commission and seek feedback on how they can accomplish their mission better.

Attention Office Managers-

We are interested in providing practice management offerings this summer and need your help.

If you have particular subjects that you would be interested in (coding, billing, etc.) please email the office at

bfmedsoc@charterinternet.com or call

582-2866 and talk to Nicole.

Thank you for your help!

Final dues invoices will be sent out this week and will be due by April 15th for those members who haven't paid yet.

As a reminder, you will be paying your county dues directly to us,

NOT to the WSMA.

We are now able to accept credit cards (Visa and MasterCard). Please call the office if you have any questions.

(Continued from page 1) AMA update

Members of the Federation are urged to keep up the pressure, especially in the Senate, for enacting legislation to permanently resolve the Medicare physician payment crisis. Use the AMA's Grassroots Hotline: 1-800-833-6354.

To see how your Senator voted on passing H.R. 4961, visit

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=2&vote=00032

This link will be posted on the BFCMS website, at bentonfranklincms.com

Applications for Membership

First Notice:

Cheta Nand MD

Board Certified Psychiatry and Sleep Medicine

Medical School: Fiji School of Medicine (1987)

Internship: Lautoka Fiji

Residency: Albany Medical Hospital, Albany NY

Second Notice:

Michael Turner MD

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (Board Certification Pending)

Medical School: Harvard (2005)

Internship: Mayo Clinic

Residency: Mayo Clinic

Welcome to our newest members:

Basir Haque MD

Board Certified Internal Medicine, Eligible Hematology/Oncology

Medical School: King Edward Medical College, Lahore (1998)

Internship: Brooklyn Hospital Centre, NY

Residency: Brooklyn Hospital Centre, NY

Recommended by: Sheila Rege MD, Thomas Rado MD

Richard Lorenzo DO

Board Certified OB/GYN

Medical School: Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (1996)

Internship: Western Pennsylvania Hospital

Residency: Western Pennsylvania Hospital

Recommended by: Alex Ortolano MD and Kevin Turner MD

Jay Klarnet MD

Board Certified Hematology/Oncology

Medical School: State University of NY at Buffalo (1980)

Internship: Millard Gilmore Hospital, Buffalo, NY

Residency: Millard Gilmore Hospital, Buffalo, NY

Recommended by: Sheila Rege MD and Thomas Rado MD

I am sad to report that Dr. John Drosch has resigned as President of our Society. We appreciate his years on our Board and wish him the best!

Effective immediately, Dr. Stan Ling will move into the President position. The Vice-President position will remain vacant until November.

Benton Franklin County Medical Society
PO Box 5998
Kennewick, WA 99336

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PD
KENNEWICK, WA
PERMIT NO. 75

Return Service Requested

**BENTON FRANKLIN COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY**

PO Box 5998
711 S. Auburn Street, Suite F
Kennewick, WA 99336
Phone: 582-2866
Fax: 582-3318
Email: bfmedsoc@charterinternet.com
www.bentonfranklincms.com

2010 Board of Directors

Stan Ling MD	President
Vacant	Vice-President
Donald Dicken MD	Secretary-Treasurer
Heather Phipps, DO	Past President
Richard Long, MD	Past President

Trustees

David Fischer, MD, John Henriques, MD
Larry Jecha, MD, MPH
Sheila Rege, MD AMA Delegate

The objectives of the Benton Franklin County Medical Society are to promote the art, science and practice of medicine and the practitioners who pursue these goals; to promote the care and well being of the patients of Benton and Franklin Counties; to protect and improve the health of the public; to provide medical education and to provide leadership for the members of the Society.

Please contact Nicole Austin with any questions, comments or information you would like added to the Newsletter.