



Vincent Calamia, MD, *President*

President's Perspective

As the holidays approach this is generally a time our thoughts turn to family and friends.

It is also a time to put the year in perspective. As physicians we have experienced an inordinate amount of obstacles in the past year. We struggle to meet our office expenses with rising costs including malpractice premiums accompanied by diminishing revenue and marked increase in the "hassle factor" as we deal with ever demanding insurance company mandates and regulatory scrutiny.

We exist in an environment in which local press believes refusal of pro bono care is front-page news and major congressional leaders believe our behavior is influenced by free pens.

Couple this with trying to maintain some understanding of the impact on our patients and our practices of the potentially epic changes in the health care system. These are indeed challenging times for physicians.

Despite these challenges the Richmond County Medical Society has continued to attempt to meet these issues head on.

We have expanded our relationships and interactions with our political leadership and were successful in persuading the city to allocate additional capital for our local hospitals. It was gratifying to see political leaders of both parties working cooperatively with both hospital systems to produce this outcome. Given the shrinking resources available it is essential that these cooperative activities continue. We must extend these activities to advocate for collective bargaining rights with HMO's and ultimately relief in the area of tort reform.

We have likewise worked to educate ourselves, as well as the public on Healthcare reform. A joint comitia meeting with our colleagues in Brooklyn with expert speakers on the current healthcare reform proposals was highly informative.

In addition the Medical Society has participated in all of the town hall meetings that have taken place in our Congressional district. It is our hope that a fiscally responsible health insurance reform package with bipartisan support might emerge.

Despite these tribulations it is important to recognize that our cup is surely more than half full. Our profession has allowed us some security for ourselves and our families while many are suffering from unemployment and the effects of the current financial crisis. More importantly we continue to be a profession that has enormous ability to help others. As Dr. Frank Forte once asked 'In what other profession can our actions on any given day have a lifelong positive effect on the lives of others?' All too often we take this impact for granted.

As we approach the New Year on behalf of my family, my colleagues on the Comitia and our dedicated staff I wish a healthy and happy holiday season and ask that we all enjoy the comfort of our families and dwell on the great aspects of our profession that we are privileged to enjoy.

**RCMS
Welcomes New Members**

Dr. Rita Buckman-Khobab
Dr. Shawn Ciecko
Dr. Ron Chay
Dr. Kalpana Kumari
Dr. Michael Nejat
Dr. Jay Nfonoyim

Residents:

Dr. Shady Hassan
Dr. Abdel Salam R. Kaleel

Congratulations
to the 2009-2010 RCMS Organized
Medicine Fellowship Winners

Dr. Noah Guterrez from RUMC
Dr. Abdallah Geara from SIUH

Contact Us

**Richmond County Medical Society
Academy of Medicine of Richmond**

The Alliance with RCMS

460 Brielle Avenue
Administration Building
Room 202
Staten Island, NY 10314
phone: 718-442-7267
fax: 718-273-5306

OR

Follow us on our Facebook pages
**Richmond County Medical Society
&**

The Academy of Medicine of Richmond

Staten Island Advance Articles

Write an article for the Society and you may see it published in the local newspaper or on www.RCMS.org. The Society publishes an article each Monday in the Staten Island Advance in a section called "Doctor In The House" and any member may submit an article to be considered for publication. Articles should be submitted, via e-mail (execrcms@aol.com) to the Society office to be presented to the Editorial Review Board to ensure that it is between 700 and 800 words and is written for the lay public on timely issues of relevance to the community; is intended to enhance the image of the local physician in the community and demonstrates that the Richmond County Medical Society is anxious to reach out to the public on important health-related topics; is not self-promotional and not intended as a vehicle to market new products or services from any specific company or institution.

How to Prepare for the Conversion from ICD-9 to ICD-10

On January 16, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published a regulation requiring the replacement of the ICD-9 code set with ICD-10 as of October 1, 2013. All encounters and discharges on or after October 1, 2013 must use the ICD-10 codes. The regulation does not allow for use of the ICD-10 codes prior to the compliance date. To read an 11 page document that will help you to understand what you need to be doing now, visit the AMA at the following website.

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/399/icd9-icd10-conversion.pdf>

F Y I

Dr. Paul Deutsch is the National Government Services (NGS) Medical Director for Jurisdiction 13 & if you have reason to call the Medical Director to discuss claims denied due to non-medical necessity, he is required to return your call within 48 hours

Dinner and Educational Programs

THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SLEEP DISORDERS ON VARIOUS MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Dinner and Educational Program
Wednesday

December 16, 2009; 6:30 P.M.

SI Hilton Garden Inn

1100 South Avenue

Staten Island, New York

Program Co-Sponsors:

The Academy of Medicine of Richmond
& RCMS

2 Category 1 Credits

DELIVERING QUALITY CARE TO DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Dinner and Educational Program

Thursday

December 17, 2009; 6:00 P.M.

Gargiulo's Restaurant

2911 West 15th Street

Brooklyn, New York

Program Co-Sponsors: ACP, NY Chapter
Kings, Queens & Richmond County
Medical Society

Have You Laughed today?

Want to Play Doctor?

Two kids were trying to figure out what game to play. One of the kids suggested, "Let's play doctor." "Good idea" said the other kid . . . "You operate, and I'll sue."



Complicated Operation

A lawyer awoke in a hospital bed after a complicated operation, and found that the curtains were drawn around him. "Why are the curtains closed?" he asked. "Is it night?" A nurse replied, "No, it's just that there's a fire across the street, and we didn't want you waking up and thinking that the operation was unsuccessful."



The Academy of Medicine of Richmond

Below, attendees at the Conference on *A Practical Guide to Handling the FLU in Your Office*



Above, Dr. John Maese, President of the Academy (left) with Dr. Frank Scafuri, III, the presenter at the conference on FLU at Sipp auditorium on October 21.



Above, from left: Dr. Jay Nfonoyim, Chairman of the CME Committee, Dr. Tomasine Fodera, Dr. Vincent DeGennaro, immediate past president of the Academy, Dr. Maria Elena Fodera, Dr. Frank Scafuri, III, Vice chair of the Internal Medicine section Dr. John Maese, President of the Academy and Dr. Anthony Sgarlato, Chair of the Internal Medicine section posed for a picture following the conference on FLU.

Above, from left: Dr. Vincent DeGennaro, Dr. Lina Merlino, Dr. Anthony Sgarlato and Dr. John Maese, President of the Academy following an Academy CME meeting on October 29.

President's Ball November 14, 2009 Honoring Dr. Allan B. Perel Immediate Past President

Honorees, from left to right... Dr. Allan Perel, Assemblyman Lou Tobacco, Dr. Lina Merlino and Michael Schoppmann, Esq.



left, Susan & Allan Perel with their 3 children, Jackie, Harrison and Evan



right, Dr. Perel with his Mother, Naomi Perel

Dr. Vincent Calamia, President, was the Emcee for the evening



Pictured left are the past presidents who attended the dinner... standing from left: Drs. Thomas Vazzana, Ralph Messo, Joseph Motta, Allan Perel, Zoltan Brody. Seated from left: Drs. John Maese, Donna Seminara, Tano Carbonaro, Lina Merlino and Jack D'Angelo.



TAKE A COLLEAGUE TO LUNCH

Do you have a colleague who is not yet a member of RCMS?

MSSNY's Strategic Plan To Increase Membership

Dr. David Hannan, President of MSSNY, is asking that you take a colleague to lunch...or dinner, or just for a cup of coffee! Tell them about the benefits of Society membership and the importance of organized medicine. Encourage them to join the Medical Society. After you speak to your colleague, notify our Executive Director, Teresa Minichello, who will follow up with that physician.

MSSNY Grassroots Action Center

visit www.MSSNY.org, click on **Grassroots Action Center** and follow the links till you see tabs like this

TAKE ACTION

then follow the simple step by step directions that will urge legislators to support the bills that will help physicians and oppose those that could devastate your practice.

The Award Goes To . . .

Dr. Lina R. Merlino received the "Robert J. O'Connor, M.D. Award" from Richmond County Medical Society for her commitment to RCMS.



Dr. Jay Nfonoyim was honored by Richmond University Medical Center for his commitment to the hospital and community.

Dr. Donna Seminara received the "Friend to the Senior Community Award" from Staten Island Inter-Agency Council for Aging, Inc.. **Dr. Seminara** was also presented with the Henry & Krystyna Wisniewski Memorial Award for her help as a facilitator at the Borough President's Conference.

Dr. Richard Steinbruck was honored by Richmond University Medical Center for his commitment to the hospital and community.

Dr. Theodore Strange Was honored by the Wagner DaVinci Society and was also presented with the St. Roch's Community Health and Service Award.

For Some Practice Management Tips...

Visit www.ama-assn.org/go/pmtips for a complete list of tips. Email Amy Farouk at amy.farouk@ama-assn.org or call at (312) 464-5490 with any questions.

A Tool to Transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10...

October 1, 2013 is the compliance deadline for the transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10 Diagnosis Coding. The following website should be helpful to any physician or his/her office practice that is concerned about the transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10 Diagnosis coding: <http://www.aapc.com/icd-10/codes/>

Remember to Update Your Physician Profile

In order to update your profile on NYDoctorprofile.com call 888-338-6998

Profiles must be updated annually.

PQRI feed back reports

The following link will provide members with information about an alternative method of obtaining their PQRI feed back reports: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLN MattersArticles/downloads/SE0922.pdf>

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, December 1

Comitia Minora Dinner Meeting
7:30 PM

SI Hilton Garden Inn
1100 South Avenue

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Tuesday, December 8

Medicare Update for 2010
8:30 AM

SI Hilton Garden Inn
1100 South Avenue

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



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Tuesday, January 5

Comitia Minora Dinner Meeting
7:30 PM

SI Hilton Garden Inn
1100 South Avenue

Stated Meeting will immediately follow the Comitia Minora to approve the budget for 2010

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Tuesday, February 2

Comitia Minora Dinner Meeting
7:30 PM

SI Hilton Garden Inn
1100 South Avenue

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Tuesday, March 2

Comitia Minora Dinner Meeting
7:30 PM

SI Hilton Garden Inn
1100 South Avenue

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Tuesday, March 9

MSSNY's Annual Legislative Lobby Day in Albany

Tuesday, April 6

Comitia Minora Dinner Meeting
7:30 PM

SI Hilton Garden Inn
1100 South Avenue

Physician Legal Alert: Risk Management - One Day a Year

By: Michael J. Schoppmann, Esq.
Kern Augustine Conroy & Schoppmann, P.C.

In today's ever increasingly regulatory, prosecutorial and litigious medical-legal environment, there is no longer a logical or rational basis for physicians to not be actively, aggressively and perennially embracing risk management in order to protect their practices. No one program, no one on-line course or DVD series is sufficient any longer. Risk Management must now be a way of life, a routine part of the very culture of every medical practice. The risks are not simply from claims of medical malpractice; they emanate from every aspect of practice and flow through virtually every agency - at both the federal and state levels. Faced with such an investigation, the involved physician will also face an obligatory investigation by the state licensing authority and run the risk of loss of his or her professional license. Comparatively, a claim for medical malpractice seems inconsequential.

So, to begin such a collective transformation, I propose one day. One day a year. Let's call it Law in Medicine Day ("LMD" for short).

To make it easier, I also propose we make LMD an easy day to remember - the already dreaded, infamous April 15th, historically reserved in our national psyche as the deadline of filing our tax returns, now becomes a day for every physician, every medical practice, to comply with a number of other, critical legal obligations - a goal never more paramount for every physician.

So, what of LMD? What do we address in this new annual ritual?

HIPAA - Virtually every practice will admit, if asked, that it has not taken down its original HIPAA materials developed several years ago and placed on the shelf in the Office Manager's office. Unfortunately, since that time, HIPAA has moved on, been updated and grown even larger. HHS has issued regulations requiring health care providers, health plans, and other entities covered by HIPAA to notify individuals when their health information is breached. These "breach notification" regulations implement provisions of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, passed as part of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

RED FLAG REGULATIONS - These new identity theft regulations require every practice to develop and maintain a formal written program to identify, prevent and mitigate the risk of identity theft within the practices. At the very core of these new regulations is the requirement that the policies be routinely and continually updated.

REIMBURSEMENT CONTRACTS - Faced with the dramatically expanding use of investigative audits, every physician must review each of their payor relationships to determine (a) is the payor-contract to be continued and if so, (b) is the practice compliant with each of the payor's policies and procedures? If not, it is almost certain that the practice will face an adverse audit by the payor, seeking not only reimbursement but interest charges, costs and extrapolated damages.

MEDICAL PRACTICE POLICIES - Policies regarding infection control, proper sterilization of equipment, handling of medical waste and other practice protocols all need to be updated (as technology, disease and prevention measures all progress) and keeping staff abreast of such changes will be critical to preventing unintended, or unknowing, violations of these policies.

CREDENTIAL/PROFILE REVIEWS - An essential aspect of a physician's, or practice's, ability to protect itself, and its reputation, in today's climate is to be ever diligent in reviewing and re-reviewing their standing - both from a professional/credentialing perspective and a public/internet perspective. What specialty is designated in credentialing can dramatically change reimbursement models and what information a prospective patient can, and cannot, find on the internet may well dictate choice of physician - without the practice ever knowing it was harmed by either set of misinformation.

Risk Management, con't.

EMPLOYEE MANUAL – most practices do not even have an employee manual, but for those that do, and for those that now will, the laws pertaining to work place claims such as hostile work environment, sexual harassment and discrimination, along with the application of family leave acts, are ever changing and failure to be aware of, nonetheless comply with, new standards of law expose the practice to high levels of risk.

Each of these items, after being reviewed and updated, should be the subject of a training (or hopefully, re-training) session with the staff of the medical practice – including every physician. Attendance should be mandatory, attendance sheets should be completed and every employee should be required to sign a copy of the new policies, acknowledging they've been trained in same and that they understand their obligations under these new/updated policies. These signed policies should be retained by the practice for future protections.

As a physician and/or a practice weighs the need for LMD, consider this – those who regulate, supervise, prosecute and profit from making claims against physicians carry out their careers, plan their actions and pursue physicians every single day – all day. In contrast, all I ask is one day a year. LMD...it's time to protect yourself; its time has come.

Kern Augustine Conroy & Schoppmann, P.C., Attorneys to Health Professionals, www.drlaw.com has offices in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania and Illinois. The firms practice is solely devoted to the representation of health care professionals. Mr. Schoppmann may be contacted at 18004450954 or via email schoppmann@drlaw.com.

Richmond County District Attorney's Office and the Mayor's Office has asked for our HELP TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Does someone you love...

- Humiliate, criticize, or yell at you?
- Hurt you or threaten you?
- Threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- Control where you go or what you do?
- Force you to have sex when you do not want to?
- Control your money?

You have *the* right to a
healthy relationship

If someone you love is hurting you or if you are afraid of someone you love,
help is available in your language

Call **311** or
the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline
at **1-800-621-HOPE (4673)**.
In emergencies, call 911.



Mayor's Office to
Combat Domestic
Violence
Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
District Attorney
Richmond County
District Attorney's Office

In July of 2008 the Richmond County District Attorney's Office and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, announced a partnership to conduct a community assessment in regard to domestic violence.

The Staten Island community assessment has been moving along and one of the preliminary findings is that there is a lack of knowledge of the services available for domestic violence victims. The development of an appropriate public education poster and palm card is in the works and RCMS has been asked to help with distribution. The Comitia Minora has agreed to notify physicians of this program and to encourage RCMS members to consider displaying the poster and palm cards in their offices.

What you see on the left is a sample of how the poster will be worded. If you would be willing to participate by displaying the poster in your office, please call the Society office at 718-442-7267 or call Ed Hill, Fatalities Review Coordinator, Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence at 212-341-9097 or email him at EHill@cityhall.nyc.gov

IF YOU SHOP AT AMAZON.COM, REMEMBER TO USE THE LINK ON THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE
WWW.RCMS.ORG

New Office Openings

Dr. Frank Scafuri, III (Infectious Disease) has opened another office on the South Shore at 5091 Amboy Road. He will be available at this location on Wednesdays from 12:00 noon -7:00 PM. 718-370-3730. www.drscafuri.com

Dr. Sangita Parab Medical PC

Dr. Sangita Parab (Internal Medicine) has opened an office at 31 New Dorp Lane. 718 667 6500

Red Flags Rule

On October 30, 2009 the Federal Trade Commission announced that the Red Flags rule is delay until June 1, 2010. The AMA has been urging the FTC and Congress that physicians are not "creditors" and should not be subject to the rule. We are pleased that the FTC has granted another delay. For more information on the FTC's decision: <http://www2.ftc.gov/opa/2009/10/redflags.shtml>

Housecalls for the Homebound

Dr. Abdul Rehman, Past President of The Medical Society of the County of Kings, is available to make housecalls for homebound patients on Staten Island. He can be contacted at 718-556-1326

Office Space Available

New construction available at Richmond Road and Burgher Avenue. For more information, call Maguy Bastadijian at 917-968-2074

Medicare Fraud & Abuse Course

If you receive notice from an insurance company advising of an annual mandatory course everyone in your office will be required to take with respect to Medicare fraude and abuse, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) offers a web-based training module on Fraud and Abuse. Go to the following website: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo/> . Once on the page, scroll down Related Links Inside CMS and click on **Web Based Training (WBT) Modules**. When this page comes up, you'll see a box in the lower left-hand side of the screen. Scroll down to the item titled Medicare Fraud and Abuse – April 2007. This is CMS' training module for Fraud & Abuse, it is 85 minutes in duration, it is provided for free, it provides 1.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by the American Academy of Professional Coders. The course can be taken by various members of the practices' staff and it will provide a CMS certificate upon completion of the web-based course.

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Don't rush into the wrong liability coverage. No insurer in New York State Provides the protection and dependability of MLMIC. •Our dedicated underwriters, claims personnel, risk management consultants, and defense attorneys are always available and responsive to your needs. •For information about MLMIC coverage, call (800) 275-6564 (NYC), (800) 356-4056 (Syracuse), (877) 777-3560 (Long Island), or (800) 635-0666 (Albany area).•

NCSPlus Incorporated



Reasonable rates, high recovery percentage and great customer service represent the cornerstone of a new program providing collections on delinquent accounts for Richmond County Medical Society (RCMS) members. This new debt collection program is offered to members by NCSPlus Incorporated (NCS), one of the nation's leading collection service/account receivable management firms. NCS charges RCMS members a low flat fee only and incorporates telephone collections, letters, attorney contact, and debtor audits.

For more information, contact the RCMS at (718) 442-RCMS or Bill Spencer at NCS at (800) 363-7215 Ext. 6400. Or e-mail: wspencer@ncsplus.com

MUTUAL OF OMAHA COMPANIES



Offers discounted Disability and Long Term Care Insurance to Richmond County Medical Society Members. For information on how you can take advantage of this member benefit, contact Frank Ruggiero by phone at 201-288-0880 or 212-490-7979, ext.238; or by email at RuggieroF@aol.com



Group Purchasing Organization

MedTech For Solutions, Inc
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Dwight Ryan, President & CEO
dryan@medtech4solutions.com
914-924-1426

www.medtech4solutions.com

At **no cost to you**, you are invited to join our **Group Purchasing Organization (GPO)** which provides **services devoted to the needs of medical practices and facilities**.

Medical and Pharmacy Supplies - Typically practices can expect **savings of 10-50% on medical supplies for daily practice needs**. In addition, our **pharmacy program provides access to your everyday needs at significant savings**. If, like most practices, you use one of the major medical supply companies **you do not have to change your current supplier or ordering procedures to participate**. On your end nothing changes except an increase in your savings.

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Financing - in partnership with **Wells Fargo Leasing and Americorp Financial** we offer **specialized leasing and financing programs** designed for the needs of a physician practice.

Overnight Shipping – our relationship with **Federal Express** will **save you 50% or more** on all of your overnight shipping.

Patient Satisfaction Initiatives = Profitability: Take advantage of the **25% GPO Member Discount** and seek the help of KBC Consulting's proven tools to improve customer service and patient satisfaction which will lead to patient retention and new patient referrals. Check out their website at www.kbcconsult.com or call 917-363-0295

Billing, Collection and Practice Management - maximize charges, increase collection rates, decrease denials and minimize days outstanding in accounts receivable. **AthenaCollector, developed by AthenaHealth**, is the state-of-the-art web based system with no upfront costs for software or hardware that can reduce your billing and practice management costs while increasing your revenue.

Maintenance and Repair – Through an agreement with Masterplan, a national vendor providing a complete range of maintenance and repair services for biomedical and imaging equipment, you can save between 6% and 8% on their extremely competitive service fees.

IT Support Services – another extension of the **Staples** brand is **Staples Network Services by Thrive**. Through Thrive, your practice will receive a dedicated team of experts, specifically assigned to you, who become your on-site and/or remote IT manager.

We are always looking for new partners to expand our GPO services and increase your opportunity to save on all the products and services needed by your practice.

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