

PaACEP News

PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS
OCTOBER 2004

Executive Privilege

Getting the Prom Date

by Marilyn Heine, MD
President, PaACEP



You can't expect someone to go the prom with you on the first date. First you give flowers, let the relationship blossom, and then hope to get

the prom date."

This was advice not from Dear Abby but rather from an educator in political science. He was emphasizing the following—it is vital to build a relationship with your legislator.

Legislation increasingly impacts our practice of medicine. If you are concerned where medical practice is heading, remember physicians can effect change. Such change should not be limited to the "science" of medicine. It should also include the "politics" of medicine.

You are familiar with the tools of medical practice—ranging from treating an acute MI, to using advances in airway management, to ED ultrasound. Are you equally familiar with the political tools? Just like doing a lumbar puncture or reducing a dislocated shoulder, practice leads to proficiency. The steps are simple.

First, do you know who represents you in Harrisburg and Washington, DC? Meet with your legislators. Educate them about issues of concern to you and your patients. Attend or host a fundraiser for your candidate. Invite friends to the event and amplify your message. Participate in PEP-PAC and NEMPAC, political action committees that support friends of emergency medicine at the state and federal levels. Invite your legislators to your ED. Vote.

Physicians are a potentially powerful force in electoral politics. We are recognized as respected brokers of information, especially about healthcare. We have impact when we speak with colleagues and patients. Write a letter to the editor and share your views with the public.

It is easy for legislative staff to access records of who has registered to vote. They also know who has contributed significantly to the campaign. Your message comes across more strongly if you have shown commitment to the process.

Become an active member of ACEP's 911 Legislative Network. Receive breaking news on legislation and regulation affecting emergency medicine. Respond to calls to action when an urgent response is needed. An exciting way to learn more about the political process is to attend PaACEP's annual meeting in Harrisburg this coming April, or ACEP's Leadership and Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC.

Unlike our approach to emergency medicine that often involves rapid turn around; physicians need to persevere in the political process. We will not have a victory with every legislative vote or election. Being ultimately successful depends on our dedication. It's a battle for the long haul, like treating a chronic illness.

Once you have caught the political bug, you may wish to run for office yourself. The American Medical Association PAC holds two excellent programs annually for physicians interested in being candidates or working actively on campaigns. For information check out <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/6277.html>.

The secrets to success in the political arena are simple—communication and participation—things you do daily with your patients. You have the skills. Why not use them?

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Chapter Goes to the Members

Pennsylvania ACEP is on the move. On August 24, chapter leaders traveled to Erie to meet emergency physicians in northwest Pennsylvania. On November 15, PaACEP will hold a meeting in Johnstown and another meeting is scheduled on November 22 in the Wilkes/Barre Scranton area to reach out to members.

“Our goal for these regional meetings is to raise awareness that PaACEP is here to serve the emergency physicians in Pennsylvania. We are the strongest voice they have,” said Ronald Strony, MD, FACEP, the Chapter secretary who organized the Erie meeting. “It’s very difficult for some members to get to Harrisburg or Philadelphia for PaACEP meetings, so we are bringing the chapter to them.”

The Erie meeting was held at the Hamot Heart Institute. Dr. Strony was accompanied by Chapter President Marilyn Heine, MD, and Executive Director

David Blunk. “We had an excellent CME program that involved a lecture on patient safety and an update on the health care environment in Pennsylvania,” Dr. Strony said. “The lectures stimulated some significant discussions during the post meeting dinner. At the dinner we had the opportunity to network and our leaders got to know physicians from this part of the state.”

In a brief survey the attendees indicated that they concurred with PaACEP leaders on the chapter priority issues: addressing the medical liability crisis, obtaining fair

and equitable reimbursement, and helping to resolve ED overcrowding.

“To make our organization stronger, we need more involvement from every emergency physician – whether they work in a tertiary care center or a small community hospital,” Dr. Strony said. “Through these meetings, we want to show that everyone’s input and assistance is welcomed.”

Dr. Heine said the meeting was “well received and thanks go to Dr. Strony for an excellent job of organizing the event.” ■

Executive Privilege

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Tip O’Neil, the late former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, was once quoted as saying, “All politics is local.” Never underestimate the power of a politician’s constituency. The votes back home are what really matter. One thing all legislators do exceptionally well is “count.” Physicians should not allow themselves to be left out of the political equation any longer. ■

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Dr. Roberts Honored by the Emergency Medicine Residency Association

James R. Roberts, MD, FACEP, FACMT, Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Mercy Hospital of Philadelphia, has been named one of the 30 most influential physicians in the history and development of American academic emergency medicine. The designation, conferred by the Emergency Medicine Residency Association (EMRA), a branch of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), honors Dr. Roberts for his contributions to the specialty and to the education of emergency medicine physicians. As a founding member of the association, Dr. Roberts was the first resident representative to ACEP, an organization that now has over 23,000 members.

The award recognizes the academic significance of his landmark text, “*Clinical Procedures in Emergency Medicine*,” now in its fourth edition, as well as his contributions as chair of the editorial board of “*Emergency Medicine News*,” a national publication circulating to more than 23,000 emergency medicine physicians. Dr. Roberts was honored at the October ACEP Scientific Assembly in San Francisco. ■

Colors are Beautiful

by Rani Kumar, MD, FACP, FAAP



I walked through the park one quiet summer morn,
At first I was dragging and felt somewhat worn

Then suddenly I noticed the colorful butterfly
Stealing nectar from flowers, before leaping in the sky
Orange, purple, pink and yellow, the rows of flowers tall

One color outshined the other in this nature's mall
The garden-----
colors are beautiful.

One bright summer day, I was lost in a book
I felt a wonderful presence, and lifted up to look
The beauty of the sky, it took my breath away
I fell in a daze, as on the grass I lay.

The clear blue sky, was like a deep dark sea
Forms and shapes of clouds, they truly amazed me
Sky-----
colors are beautiful.

I drove through the rain, then stopped to step out
To let the nature wet me, in joyful mood I shout
Red droplets on the roses, carnations bright yellow
Green pearls on the grass, the birds a tad mellow
The thunder and the lightening heard from far and near
Beautiful rainbow colors, showed me all was clear

Rain-----
colors are beautiful.

My friends and I decided to take an evening walk
As sun was heading west, not much before the dark

The earth and sky were merging a little bit ahead

The sky was a deep orange, the sun a bright, bright red
The red and orange colors indeed were breath taking

The painter in the sky was thoughtful in this making
Sunset-----
colors are beautiful.

If colors of nature reflect, true beauty of its kind
What are your thoughts my friends, on colors of mankind

White, brown, and black skin is just an earthly game
The emotions of true love, a heart that beats is same

Tears, laughter, sorrow and joy are just the start

Feelings are the same, you just can't tell apart
If colors of nature speak, of messages from above

The colors of mankind are God's gift of love
Mankind-----
colors are beautiful.

Rani K. Kumar, MD, FACP, FAAP is chair of the Emergency Department, UPMC McKeesport, McKeesport, PA. She initiated and presided for the 2000 Unity Rally, in the International Village of McKeesport, PA. This became an annual event, renamed the "Colors of Love" rally, focusing on acceptance and tolerance of diversity in America. It is attended by state legislators and Members of Congress. This poem was written for the 2003 celebration. Dr. Kumar is a member of the UPMC Diversity Committee, working to enhance diversity issues in work places. ■

Classified Ads

Pennsylvania, Greenville/Sharon: UPMC Horizon -- with hospital sites in Greenville, Pa., and Farrell, Pa. -- serves Mercer County and counties adjacent to it in northwestern Pennsylvania. UPMC Horizon offers a full range of services at both the Greenville and Shenango Valley campuses. The Greenville Campus Emergency Department has an annual visit volume of 18,000 with 24 hours of physician coverage and 10 hours of physician extender coverage. The Shenango Valley Campus Emergency Department has an annual visit volume of 15,000 with single coverage (12-hour shifts). Salary with full benefits. Board certification in IM or FP with experience OR board certification/eligibility in EM required. Call Dr. Robert Maha at 888-647-9077/ Fax 412-432-7480 or email at mahar@upmc.edu.

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Pennsylvania, McKeesport (Pittsburgh): UPMC McKeesport is a full-service community-based teaching hospital 15 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, near the Monongahela River. The Emergency Department has an annual visit volume of 30,000 patients with 39 hours of physician coverage and 10 hours of physician extender coverage. Board certification in IM or FP with experience OR board certification/eligibility in EM required. Call Dr. Robert Maha at 888-647-9077/ Fax 412-432-7480 or email at mahar@upmc.edu.

Dealing with Reimbursement — Denials for Critical Care Services

by Steven Brunetti, DO, FACEP,
Chair, Medical Economics Committee



If Highmark Blue Shield denials are getting you down, and finding a strategy to combat this problem peaks your interest, Pennsylvania ACEP just may have a solution.

Historically across the Commonwealth, Highmark Blue Shield denies payment to emergency physicians for critical care services. The main reason for denials is that the place of service – the emergency department – is not considered a designated place for critical care services. This situation leaves many emergency physicians without any reimbursement after performing lifesaving care.

While this problem seems unfathomable, it is all too common. It is not that Highmark Blue Shield does not want to pay emergency physicians. The problem

lies in contract wording. Highmark Blue Shield has over 1,000 different products across the Commonwealth. Some Highmark Blue Shield contracts do not allow a patient to receive inpatient care in an outpatient setting, such as the emergency department. To change this situation, Highmark Blue Shield would have to rewrite contracts with more than 25 million patients. Since this is virtually impossible, PaACEP's Medical Economics Committee has come up with the following strategy to remedy this situation.

Whenever Highmark Blue Shield denies a claim, review the EOB carefully. Note if it reads, "The patient's coverage does not provide for this intensive care service when provided in the place of service reported. Therefore, no payment can be made." It is important for emergency medicine billers to continue reading. Look under the heading, "Member Liability Code." If code H1 is listed, it means, "Rejected billable non-covered service." When this occurs, you are en-

titled to balance bill the patient for your charges. The patient should then submit their payment to you, and in turn, bill their major medical.

Having your billing specialist take this small extra step will improve your bottom line. If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this or any other reimbursement issue, please feel free to contact me at sbrunetti@cprcoding.com.

(Editor's note: Dr. Brunetti's suggestions are based on a conversation with Dr. Brent O'Connell, medical director of Highmark Blue Shield.) ■

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NEMPAC Increases Emergency Medicine's Political Clout

The National Emergency Medicine Political Action Committee (NEMPAC) plays an integral role in strengthening ACEP's presence on Washington's Capitol Hill. The national PAC helps elect to Congress candidates from both parties who share our views. It also fosters key contacts between members and legislators through participation at political fundraising events.

Recently, chapter Vice President Alex Rosenau, DO, FACEP, represented the specialty at a fundraiser for Charles

Dent (R), currently a state senator, who is a candidate for the US Congress. Dr. Rosenau presented Senator Dent with NEMPAC check. In addition he reviewed key ACEP issues noting, "Charlie Dent and I discussed ACEP priority advocacy objectives including patient access to emergency care and how the medical liability crisis is affecting the specialty. He promised to read the ACEP position papers I presented to him."

As the political year draws to a close, NEMPAC and the chapter's political



L: Dr. Rosenau, R: Senator Dent

action committee, PEP-PAC will prepare for the next legislative session. National ACEP and chapter leaders recognize the importance of our advocacy agenda. Our goals can be best achieved if we have an involved grassroots membership and a strong PAC at the national and state level.

Dr. Rosenau notes, "Being present at the reception with Charlie Dent was good for the stature of ACEP. It shows our commitment to being involved in the political process and supporting candidates who are responsive to our concerns." ■

ACEP News

Chapter Members Named to ACEP Committees

Congratulations to the following chapter members who were appointed to serve on ACEP committees during the term of ACEP President Robert Seuter, MD, FACEP.

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Academic Affairs Committee

Academic Affairs Committee

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Educational Meetings Committee

Educational Meetings Committee

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Scientific Review Committee

Scientific Review Committee

National/Chapter Relations Committee

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EDIS Celebrates 10 Years of Excellence

The Chapter's highly touted National Symposium on Emergency Department Information Systems celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, and the 2004 seminar promises to be the best one yet. The symposium — How to Computerize Your ED the Right Way — will be held December 5-8 at the Chicago Hilton.

"For 10 years, the PaACEP EDIS Symposium has been THE place to shop or just learn about ED information systems. Once a year it assembles the top EDIS faculty for four days to cover the basics, review the current market, and ponder the future of ED information systems. This year will be no exception," commented Todd B. Taylor, MD, FACEP, chief medical officer of MediServe Information Systems MediLinks® ED, who will be the opening speaker at the symposium.

"New players will emerge in this market space, and perhaps a few will disappear, but we will be one year closer to getting what we really need to provide quality emergency care in an ever increasing complex specialty. Anyone looking for an EDIS or just interested in informatics will find the symposium useful if not fascinating," Dr. Taylor added. "Increasingly, hospitals have taken a team approach to this meeting sending nurse managers, physicians, IS personnel, and administrators. Chicago in December is the place to be for EDIS!"

On December 5, attendees can benefit from a special pre-conference workshop — Return on Investment (ROI) — presented by Alan Vierling, RN, director of ORS at Carillion Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke, VA. "What's the return on our investment?" will be the single most important question you get from the C-suite (CEO, COO, CFO). How do you intend to get your corporation's money back out of this project? How will implementing this technology save money? Learn how put on paper what you know to be true. Get the nuts and bolts of writing an ROI to give you the bottom-line proof of your system's financial value. You'll receive a pre-conference tool to help gather needed information. Registration is limited so sign up as soon as possible!

PaACEP has reserved a block of rooms at the Hilton Chicago for the discounted rate of \$125 per night. To book a room, call 877-865-5320 no later than Friday, November 19 and mention the PaACEP Emergency Department Information Systems Symposium. For more information about the symposium agenda, faculty, costs, and CME, simply visit the Pennsylvania ACEP web site, www.paacep.org. While on our web site, you can also register using our secure online process.



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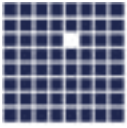
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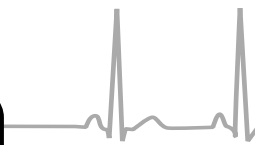
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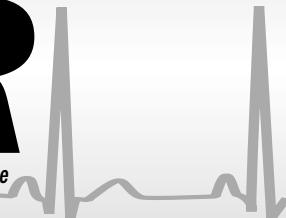
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