



# SCMA News Briefs

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SONOMA COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Editor: Steve Osborn | Executive Director: Cynthia Melody

707-525-4325 | [sosborn@scma.org](mailto:sosborn@scma.org) | [scma.org/news](http://scma.org/news)

## March 2010

- **Famed medical educator Dr. John Saultz to speak in Santa Rosa on March 17**
- **Nominations needed for SCMA election**
- **Residency and family practice center moving to Fountaingrove**
- **Dr. Kubota named regional medical director for Partnership HealthPlan**
- **Physicians urged to call Congress to support repealing SGR formula**
- **Early-bird registration for CMA Leadership Academy closes March 9**
- **RSVPs needed for April 27 Legislative Day in Sacramento**
- **CMA coalition receives \$31 Million EHR grant; EHR webinar on March 2**
- **PECOS enrollment policy delayed; CMA publishes enrollment guide**
- **Medicare participation status deadline is March 17**
- **PFMC grant deadline is April 1**
- **Healdsburg Hospital opens Women's Diagnostic Center**
- **CMA announces 2010 webinar series**
- **APPLICANTS**
- **CLASSIFIEDS**
- **ABOUT SCMA**
- **TO UNSUBSCRIBE**

### **Famed medical educator Dr. John Saultz to speak in Santa Rosa on March 17**

Dr. John Saultz, author of the *Textbook of Family Medicine* and editor of the journal *Family Medicine*, will be in Santa Rosa on St. Patrick's Day to deliver a free lecture on the future of primary care in Sonoma County. His speech begins at 6 p.m. in the Sonoma Community Room at Redwood Credit Union, 3033 Cleveland Ave., Santa Rosa. A light dinner will be provided, but reservations are required. To RSVP, contact Rachel Pandolfi by March 12 at [rachel@scma.org](mailto:rachel@scma.org) or 525-4375.

Dr. Saultz, chair of family medicine at Oregon Health & Science University, is the American Academy of Family Physicians visiting professor at the Santa Rosa Family Medicine Residency. His presentation is sponsored by the California Academy of Family Physicians,

Family Medicine Leadership Institute, Kaiser Permanente, Redwood Community Health Coalition, Redwood Credit Union, Sonoma County Medical Association, St. Joseph Health System, and Sutter Health.

### **Nominations needed for SCMA election**

In preparation for the upcoming SCMA election, all members are urged to submit nominations for leadership positions by March 19. Nominees must be SCMA members in good standing. Nominations are requested for the following positions:

- SCMA president-elect
- Individual SCMA board representatives from Santa Rosa (2) and West County (1)
- Three CMA delegates
- Three CMA alternate delegates

All positions require a three-year commitment, beginning July 1. Nominations can be e-mailed to [cynthia@scma.org](mailto:cynthia@scma.org), faxed to 525-4328, or mailed to SCMA, 3033 Cleveland Ave. #104, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Each nomination should include a brief statement about the nominee's qualifications.

For more details, contact Cynthia Melody at [cynthia@scma.org](mailto:cynthia@scma.org) or 525-4359.

### **Residency and family practice center moving to Fountaingrove**

The Santa Rosa Family Medicine Residency and the Chanate Family Practice Center will be moving to Fountaingrove later this year, pending renovation of a 42,500 square foot building recently purchased by Santa Rosa Community Health Centers. The building, located at 3569 Round Barn Circle, will become the seventh facility managed by Santa Rosa Health, which serves more than 25,000 patients annually at the Southwest Community Health Center and other locations. An additional 10,000 patients are expected to use the Fountaingrove facility during the next few years.

"The future health of our community is on much more solid ground with the purchase of this building," said Naomi Fuchs, CEO of Santa Rosa Health. Major contributors to the \$2.1 million capital campaign for the building include the County of Sonoma, Kaiser Permanente, St. Joseph Health, Sutter Medical Center, the Finley Foundation, and Frank and Kathleen Mayhew. Funds from the capital campaign will be used to leverage \$13.3 million in financing from the state.

Purchase of the Fountaingrove building caps 14 years of rapid growth for Santa Rosa Health, which was founded by Drs. Julio Porro, Roberto Azcarraga and other family medicine residents in 1996. What began as the Southwest Community Health Center in southwest Santa Rosa has since grown to encompass six other clinics and health centers throughout the city. Eighteen physicians now work full- or part-time for Santa Rosa Health. The 36 resident physicians in the Family Medicine Residency also work at Santa Rosa Health facilities.

### **Dr. Kubota named regional medical director for Partnership HealthPlan**

Dr. Marshall Kubota, a Santa Rosa family physician well known for his work in public health, has been named regional medical director for Partnership HealthPlan in Sonoma County. In that part-time role, he will be responsible for the quality and appropriateness of medical

care delivered by Partnership to the county's approximately 50,000 Medi-Cal enrollees. He will continue to work at HIV clinics in Sonoma and Lake counties.

Dr. Kubota, a graduate of the Santa Rosa Family Medicine Residency, rose to prominence during the 1980s for his pioneering work in providing HIV/AIDS care at a public health clinic in Guerneville. He subsequently became director of the residency and then medical director for the county's public health clinical services.

### **Physicians urged to call Congress to support repealing Medicare SGR formula**

Congress has been unable to resolve the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) issue during the two-month extension that prevented a 21% cut from taking effect on Jan. 1. At press time, the Senate was expected to extend current SGR payment levels an additional 30 days to prevent scheduled cuts from going into effect on Monday, March 1. This extension will be part of a larger package that addresses other expiring provisions that are considered "must pass" items, such as unemployment insurance and COBRA coverage. The House is expected to consider the package soon.

CMA is calling on all physicians to help repeal the SGR once and for all. Please contact Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Sen. Barbara Boxer and your local House Representative and urge them to:

- Stop the 21% Physician Cut before March 1.
- Repeal the Medicare SGR once and for all.
- Restore stability to the Medicare program.
- Protect access to doctors for seniors.

When contacting your representatives, give your name, specialty and practice location. Contact information:

- Sen. Feinstein - [Click Here](#) or use the AMA's grassroots hotline at 800-833-6354.
- Sen. Boxer - [Click Here](#) or use the AMA's grassroots hotline at 800-833-6354.
- House Representative - [Click Here](#) or use AMA's grassroots hotline at 800-833-6354.

In November, the House passed HR 3961, which repealed the current SGR as a pathway to improved reimbursement. The Senate, however, has not passed a bill to repeal the SGR, so Medicare payment problems remain unresolved.

CMA has prepared a flyer that you can use to get patients involved in the fight to protect Medicare. The flyer is available at [scma.org/resources](http://scma.org/resources).

### **Early-bird registration for CMA Leadership Academy closes March 9**

Registration is now open for CMA's annual Health Care Leadership Academy, scheduled for April 9-11 in San Diego. This year's conference will assess the status and impact of federal health reform efforts, including provider payment incentives that may change the organizational forms of medical practice.

SCMA gets a group discount, so you can save \$100 if you register with SCMA by March 9 rather than online. Early bird registration is \$645 for members, \$945 for nonmembers, and \$295 for allied health professionals. Early-bird tuition for practice managers and other non-MD staff is \$295 for CAMGMA members, \$395 for nonmembers.

The 2010 Academy, approved for 18.25 hours of Category 1 CME credit, will feature three main breakout tracks: health information technology, leadership skills development, and practice management.

To register, contact Rachel Pandolfi at 525-4375 or [rachel@scma.org](mailto:rachel@scma.org).

### **RSVPs needed for April 27 Legislative Day in Sacramento**

Local physicians interested in attending CMA's free Legislative Leadership Conference in Sacramento on April 27 should RSVP by April 2. SCMA will be renting a van to travel to Sacramento, so reservations are requested.

The annual conference, which last year drew more than 400 physicians and CMA Alliance members, allows doctors to meet with legislators and express their views on pending health legislation. The conference also includes a morning session featuring speakers from across the political spectrum. This year's presenters include Assembly Speaker John Perez, Speaker Emeritus Robert Herzberg, CMA President Dr. J. Brennan Cassidy, and CMA's new CEO, Dustin Corcoran.

To RSVP, contact Rachel Pandolfi at 525-4375 or [rachel@scma.org](mailto:rachel@scma.org).

### **CMA coalition receives \$31 Million EHR grant; EHR webinar on March 2**

CMA, the California Primary Care Association, and the California Association of Public Hospitals & Health Systems have been awarded \$31 million in federal grant money to help primary care providers implement electronic health records (EHRs). The grant will help make support services available throughout most of California, including Sonoma County.

The grant is one of many awarded nationwide as a result of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of February 2009. The HITECH act establishes both Regional Extension Centers (RECs) and Local Extension Centers (LECs) to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to help primary care providers select, implement and achieve "meaningful use" of certified EHR technology. SCMA will be collaborating with the LEC for Sonoma County.

"This is an exciting opportunity for California physicians and the patients they serve," said CMA President Dr. Brennan Cassidy. "There are many challenges physicians face in implementing EHRs. The Cal-REC services will be invaluable in helping physicians address these challenges and implement and use EHR systems."

The REC funding is in addition to incentive payments that providers can receive for demonstrating "meaningful use" of EHRs. For more information on the incentive payments, join CMA for a [members-only webinar](#) on March 2 from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. The webinar will walk physicians through the proposed rule and offer practical tips for receiving incentive payments in 2011. Registration is free, but space is limited. To reserve your spot, [click here](#) or visit [cmanet.org/calendar](http://cmanet.org/calendar).

### **PECOS enrollment policy delayed; CMA publishes enrollment guide**

With a nearly impossible April deadline looming, Medicare has delayed its PECOS enrollment policy until January 1, 2011.

Medicare physicians who have not updated their PECOS enrollment information in the past five years may need to fill out another application or risk facing payment problems for ordered or referred services. The new rules taking effect next January authorize Medicare to

reject claims if an ordering or referring physician is not identified in Medicare's PECOS enrollment system.

CMA and others in organized medicine pushed for a delay in implementing the new policy, which could negatively impact many physicians and other health care providers. If the rule were enforced today, thousands of otherwise acceptable Medicare claims could go unpaid merely because they were submitted by providers who enrolled in Medicare before the PECOS database was developed.

Because PECOS enrollment can be quite confusing, CMA has developed a step-by-step guide to walk physicians through the process, from determining if they are already in PECOS to accessing the Internet-based PECOS enrollment system. This guide is available in the members-only section of [cmanet.org](http://cmanet.org).

### **Medicare participation status deadline is March 17**

Physicians have until March 17 to change their Medicare participation status for 2010. Physicians who have not already changed their status can still do so, and those who have already made changes can still retract them. It is possible, however, that Medicare will extend the participation deadline if Congress acts to postpone the 21% physician pay cut scheduled to take effect on March 1.

The effective date of any decision will ultimately be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2010. Participation decisions are binding for one year, unless you choose to opt out of Medicare entirely. Once you opt out, you cannot opt back in for two years.

Be aware that because changes in participation status are retroactive to Jan. 1, physicians who switch from "nonparticipating" to "participating" will have to refund to patients any balance billing collected between Jan. 1 and their new decision date.

For more information on physicians' Medicare participation options, see CMA On-Call document #0151, "Medicare Participation (and Nonparticipation) Options." On-Call documents are free to members in the members-only of [cmanet.org](http://cmanet.org). Nonmembers can purchase On-Call documents for \$2 per page at [cmanet.org/bookstore](http://cmanet.org/bookstore).

### **PFMC grant deadline is April 1**

Nonprofit health organizations in Sonoma County are encouraged to apply for Community Grants from the Pacific Foundation for Medical Care. The grants, generally in the \$10,000 range, are awarded twice a year by the nonprofit foundation to support local projects that enhance health services.

The application deadline for the next round of grants is April 1. For application materials, contact Kathy Pass at 525-4281 or [kpass@rhs.org](mailto:kpass@rhs.org). For more information, visit [www.pfmc.org](http://www.pfmc.org).

### **Healdsburg Hospital opens Women's Diagnostic Center**

Healdsburg Hospital, in partnership with the Redwood Regional Medical Group, has opened a Women's Diagnostic Center on the hospital campus. Services offered at the center include digital mammography and DXA scanning.

### **CMA announces 2010 webinar series**

Access valuable educational resources without taking time off from work or paying travel expenses!

CMA's webinars are live, interactive, online educational events designed to provide members and their staff with access to industry experts for guidance on timely topics such as best practices for your practice, health information technology, and reimbursement, legal, and regulatory issues. And, as an added benefit to CMA members, each webinar is archived online for viewing at your leisure with links to the PowerPoint presentations and additional topic-related documents.

March webinars include:

- 3/2: Meaningful Use for Your EHR
- 3/3: Documentation – Medi-Cal Fraud and Abuse Series
- 3/10: Medicare – New Year, Fresh Start
- 3/18: HIPAA – How to Be Compliant with Recent Changes

To view the full webinar calendar, visit [cmanet.org/calendar](http://cmanet.org/calendar).

## **APPLICANTS**

**Lucia Roncalli, MD, Family Medicine**, 3320 Chanate Rd., Santa Rosa 95404, 547-2220, Fax 303-3318, American Univ Caribbean 2006

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

### **Family Practice Physician Wanted**

Sonoma County Indian Health Project (SCIHP) in Santa Rosa is seeking a full-time BC/BE Family Practice Physician to join our team. SCIHP is a comprehensive community care clinic located in the Northern Californian wine country. Candidates must currently hold a California Physician/Surgeon license. Inpatient care at the hospital required. For the right candidate we offer a competitive salary, excellent benefits, and an opportunity for loan repayment. For more information, please contact Bob Orr at 707-521-4654; or [Bob.Orr@crihb.net](mailto:Bob.Orr@crihb.net). [www.scihp.org](http://www.scihp.org).

### **Medical Billing/Reimbursement Specialist**

Saving you time and money. Alleviating paperwork pain, aging A/R headaches. [www.revenuercoverynetwork.com](http://www.revenuercoverynetwork.com)

### **Medical Office Space**

Small suite available for reasonable rent. Three exam rooms, southeast Santa Rosa. Call Connie, 707-525-0211.

### **How to submit a classified ad**

To submit a classified ad for SCMA News Briefs or Sonoma Medicine, contact Nan Perrott at [nperrott@rhscommunications.com](mailto:nperrott@rhscommunications.com) or 707-525-4226. The cost is one dollar per word.

## **ABOUT SCMA**

The Sonoma County Medical Association, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit association, supports local physicians and their efforts to enhance the health of the community. Founded in 1858, SCMA is affiliated with the California Medical Association and the American Medical Association.

© SCMA 2010  
3033 Cleveland Ave. #104  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**TO UNSUBSCRIBE**

You are receiving SCMA News Briefs because you are a physician or an affiliated medical professional in Sonoma County. If you wish to unsubscribe, contact Steve Osborn at [sosborn@scma.org](mailto:sosborn@scma.org) or 707-525-4325.