



SCMA News Briefs

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SONOMA COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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- **Six resolutions from North Bay physicians advance to CMA House**
- **Local doctors putting iWALK into action**
- **North Bay medical societies begin administrative regionalization effort**
- **CMA offers updates on Accountable Care Organizations**
- **Medicare simplifies "meaningful use" requirements for EHRs**
- **POLST kit now available in Spanish**
- **PEOPLE**
- **HOSPITAL/CLINIC UPDATES**
- **EVENTS**
- **APPLICANTS**
- **CLASSIFIEDS**
- **ABOUT SCMA**

Six resolutions from North Bay physicians advance to CMA House

Six resolutions from North Bay physicians will be submitted to the CMA House of Delegates at its annual meeting this fall. Depending on what action the House takes, the resolutions may become part of CMA's legislative agenda for the coming year. In their current form, the resolutions:

- Request that CMA help local medical societies and physician group practices develop Accountable Care Organizations and/or medical foundations (Dr. Bretan).
- Ask CMA to form a Technical Advisory Committee to investigate strategies for strengthening the alignment between CMA and its component medical societies (Dr. Bretan).
- Recommend that CMA convene a Marijuana Technical Advisory Committee to determine the appropriate DEA Classification Schedule for marijuana (Drs. Bedard and Rogan).
- Urge CMA to endorse Proposition 19, also known as the Regulate, Control and Tax Marijuana Act (Drs. Bedard and Rogan).

- Request that Medi-Cal cover osteopathic manipulative treatment (Drs. McCaffrey and Zaphiris).
- Seek to prevent unlawful disclosure of personal health information to ERISA entities, such as insurance companies and third-party administrators (Dr. Jutila).

Any CMA member is welcome to submit resolutions for consideration by the House of Delegates. Resolutions approved by the House become official CMA policy, and many are subsequently enacted into law by the state legislature.

Local doctors putting iWALK into action

Sonoma County physicians have begun implementing walking programs for their patients as a way to encourage good health and prevent obesity. One example is Sonoma pediatrician Dr. Jerome Smith, who has led monthly walks for local residents for the past year. "Anyone is welcome to go," said Smith, who said the number of participants for the Saturday morning walks has ranged from five to 30. The walks last about 45 minutes and cover two miles, often through scenic vineyards or historic sites.

Like every other physician in the county, Smith received an iWALK prescription pad from SCMA earlier this summer. "I have one in my jacket pocket," he said, noting that he's just started to use them. "More and more families are telling me that they're walking together as a family," he added. "This program has really raised awareness of walking as a physical activity."

Additional copies of the iWALK prescription pads are available for download at scma.org/resources. The pads give different options for taking brisk 30-minute walks five times a week. The goal is to walk 150 minutes per week.

North Bay medical societies begin administrative regionalization effort

In collaboration with CMA, medical societies in Sonoma, Marin, Mendocino, Lake, Napa and Solano counties have begun an administrative regionalization effort to streamline operational systems and realize greater efficiencies. Most notably CMA is pooling its employees with county medical society staff to optimize payroll services and produce significant savings through an Administrative Services Agreement.

In addition, administrative regionalization will allow the county medical societies to share an online database and computer network to better utilize existing staff and increase administrative capacity. Many outsourced services will be brought in-house, eliminating redundancies and improving collaboration between the various North Bay medical societies.

As part of the regionalization effort, SCMA has hired **Erika Goodwin** as a part-time advertising representative. Goodwin, who also works for the Napa and Solano medical societies, will sell display and classified advertising for both [Sonoma Medicine](#) and [Marin Medicine](#) magazines, as well as the News Briefs newsletters and the annual county physician directories. Physicians and others interested in placing display or classified ads in North Bay publications should contact Goodwin at 707-548-6491 or solanomedsoc@sbcglobal.net.

CMA offers updates on Accountable Care Organizations

CMA has begun distributing information on Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), a component of the new health reform legislation that is intended to encourage greater

coordination of care under Medicare. An ACO is a collection of physicians who join together to coordinate care, share clinical information and report on quality measures.

An initial CMA document, "The Basics About ACOs," has been posted at scma.org/resources. Sample questions and answers appear below.

Why create an ACO?

ACOs that meet spending benchmarks will receive bonus payments. These payments will be based on the percent of Medicare Part A hospital savings and Part B physician savings in the community served by the ACO. The idea behind the policy is that greater coordination will improve quality of care, prevent costly hospital visits and ultimately produce a more cost-effective health care system.

What is allowed to be an ACO?

ACOs can be networks of individual physician practices, such as solo and small group physicians; an Independent Provider Association (IPA) or a large medical group; or a fully integrated physician-hospital system, but an ACO does not have to involve a hospital. Most IPAs, medical groups and physician organizations would qualify as ACOs as they currently exist.

How do you set up an ACO?

That is still to be determined. The health care reform bill only provides general terms for the creation of ACOs. Before ACOs are actually implemented, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will issue detailed regulatory guidelines.

Where can I get more information about ACOs?

CMA will be providing regular updates, as regulations take shape, and offer members legal and administrative guidance on how to set up and qualify as an ACO. Sign up at legalinfo@cmanet.org.

Medicare simplifies "meaningful use" requirements for EHRs

In response to comments from CMA and others, Medicare has greatly simplified the "meaningful use" criteria for electronic health record systems. The final EHR rule, released by Medicare in July, also gives physicians more flexibility to choose measures that apply to their specialty. In addition, there are protections for physicians practicing in areas lacking health information technology (HIT) infrastructure, such as health information exchanges and immunization registries.

A summary of the final "meaningful use" rule is available in the HIT resource center at cmanet.org/hit.

POLST kit now available in Spanish

Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) last year became a legally recognized document, similar to the widely used "do not resuscitate" (DNR) orders. The POLST form, used for patients with a serious illness or whose life expectancy is a year or less, outlines a plan of care reflecting the patient's wishes concerning medical treatment and interventions at life's end. The POLST form complements an advance directive by turning a patient's treatment preferences into actionable medical orders.

CMA's POLST kit includes legal forms and wallet identification cards, and answers frequently asked questions about end-of-life issues. The kits are available in both English and Spanish and can be purchased from CMA's online bookstore at cmanet.org/bookstore. Single copies are \$5 for members or \$6 for nonmembers. Significant discounts are available on bulk

purchases. Order 10 kits and members pay \$2.13 each. Order 100 and pay just \$1.53 per kit. (To receive your member discount, be sure to log in before you place the items in your shopping cart.) For more details, contact Samantha Pellon at 916-551-2872 or spellon@cmanet.org.

PEOPLE

In July 26 interview with the [North Bay Business Journal](#), **SCMA President Catherine Gutfreund, MD**, discusses a range of issues affecting physicians in Sonoma County, from low Medicare reimbursement rates to immunization challenges. Publication of the interview in the Business Journal—which has a print circulation of almost 9,000 as well as many online readers—enhances the visibility of the medical association and its leadership team. The Summer issue of [Sonoma Medicine](#) also includes an interview with Dr. Gutfreund.

The Sebastopol Community Health Center has announced that general surgeon **Allan Hill, MD**, will be joining their staff on a part-time basis. The health center is also negotiating with an orthopaedic surgeon to join their staff, and hopes to attract a cardiologist, psychiatrist and neurologist in the coming months. The addition of specialists is part of a growing trend to improve specialty access for health center patients on a permanent basis.

Jill Zechowy, MD, a faculty member at the Santa Rosa Family Medicine Residency, has opened a private practice specializing in women's mental health. Her services include counseling, patient education and psychopharmacologic management. Her office is located at 725 College Ave. in Santa Rosa. For more information, call 515-4473 or visit womensmentalhealthmd.com.

Novato urologist **Peter Bretan, MD**, president of the Marin Medical Society, has opened a satellite office at the Palm Drive Medical Center, 6800 Palm Ave. #D, Sebastopol. Bretan is a kidney transplant surgeon and also maintains a general urology practice. His phone is 415-892-0904.

Five of the 12 graduates of the Santa Rosa Family Medicine Residency have accepted employment offers in Sonoma County. **Drs. Veronica Jordan, Rebecca Katz, Nicole Mohlman, Michele Reynolds** and **Elise Sullivan** will be working at community health centers in Petaluma, Sebastopol and Sonoma. Four other graduates are still in the county, and only three have left. The high retention rate for this year's class offers another encouraging sign that physicians who train in the residency are deciding to stay.

HOSPITAL/CLINIC UPDATES

Sonoma Valley Hospital may soon be treating acute-care patients from Napa State Hospital, pending the outcome of negotiations between the two entities. The influx of patients from the state facility could increase Sonoma Valley's patient volume by 10% and bring additional revenue. Sonoma Valley is also negotiating with the Marin Healthcare District about a possible partnership.

The **West County Health Centers** will be holding a 37th birthday celebration and open house from 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 13, at the Russian River Health Center, 16319 Third St., in Guerneville. All local physicians are invited to attend the event, which will celebrate the growth of the health centers from a single clinic to a network of five health centers across the west county serving 12,000 patients. To RSVP for the open house, call 869-5977, Ext. 3313.

EVENTS

Save the date: North Bay membership dinner on Oct. 28

Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona is the featured speaker at the combined North Bay medical societies' membership dinner on Thursday, Oct. 28. The event, to be held at the San Francisco Yacht Club in Belvedere, begins with a reception at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7. Dr. Carmona, a highly respected trauma surgeon and public health expert, served as surgeon general from 2002 to 2006. He will speak about the role of state and local medical societies in disaster preparedness.

Save the date: Medical volunteers honored on Nov. 18

A celebration of medical volunteers for Operation Access and the Specialty Access Coalition will be held in Novato on Thursday evening, Nov. 18. The event—which includes wine, hors d'oeuvres, music and mingling—will recognize medical volunteers in Sonoma and Marin counties. Invitations are forthcoming.

APPLICANTS

Pankaj Arora, MD, Internal Medicine*, 401 Bicentennial Way, Santa Rosa 95403, 393-2589, Fax 393-2163, pankaj.x.arora@kp.org, Gandhi Med Coll 1997

Roberto Azcarraga, MD, Family Medicine*, 401 Bicentennial Way, Santa Rosa 95403, 393-4300, Fax 393-4558, roberto.r.azcarraga@kp.org, UC San Francisco 1993

Christine Kaiser, MD, Internal Medicine*, Pediatrics*, 401 Bicentennial Way, Santa Rosa 95403, 393-4008, Fax 393-4775, christine.c.kaiser@kp.org, Univ Minnesota 2002

Samer Kanaan, MD, Surgery*, 500 Doyle Park Dr. #303, Santa Rosa 95405, 251-1850, Fax 226-1502, Northwestern Univ 1997

* board certified

CLASSIFIEDS

Office space

Small suite available for reasonable rent. Reception and three rooms, southeast Santa Rosa. Call Connie, 707-525-0211.

Reimbursement specialist

Need help with office inefficiencies? Revenue RN provides outsourced billing, coding and revenue cycle services: www.revenuerecoverynetwork.com.

How to submit a classified ad

To submit a classified ad for MMS News Briefs or Marin Medicine, contact Erika Goodwin at solanomedsoc@sbcqlobal.net or 707-548-6491. 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.

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