



THE Honker

Official Newsletter of the Northern Colorado Medical Society

Winter 2015

Presidential perspective

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COMMUNICATIONS

Kate Alfano

→ *Interested in becoming more involved? Contact Nan at nocomedsoc@gmail.com or (970) 324-3035*



Cory D. Carroll, M.D.

Welcome to 2015! Out with the old in in with the new – as they say. Many of us are wondering what “new”

will come out of Washington or Denver that will influence the complicated medical landscape. Most are not optimistic.

What strikes me is that for those of us delivering care, especially here on the Front Range, there is relative satisfaction with the system. Patients usually get excellent care. Steven Brill’s recent article in Time “What I Learned from My \$190,000 Surgery” juxtaposed with his April 2014 article “Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills Are Killing Us” eloquently shows how medicine is different from other commodities.

Despite the wonderful effects we can create there are absolute problems.

If you think about our system, it was never designed to do what the Institute of Medicine’s Triple Aim wants: Improving the experience of care, improving the health of popu-

lations, and reducing per capita costs of health care. Our health care system has evolved over decades to this current complicated and sometimes dysfunctional system. No one or group ever “started from scratch” to design a functional system. It was always reacting to changes (i.e. medical innovation, the Great Depression, unions, increasing poor and old people, recession, Internet, etc.) and incorporating changes that responded to the major perturbations (i.e. the squeaky wheel).

So what’s a doctor to do?

My advice is to pay attention to the main issues and participate in the process as much as you can. Perhaps St. Francis of Assisi summed it up with his prayer: “Lord, grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

If you are involved – where the decisions are being made – perhaps you can influence the change. Staying on the sidelines and lamenting the problems is one option but I would challenge you to consider active participation.

Cont. on page 2

Cont. from page 1

The Colorado Medical Society and the American Medical Association are actively involved with the policy-makers at the local and federal levels, respectively, to keep the profession of medicine viable and valuable to the American citizens. It's not enough to show up at work and take care of our patients, we need to participate in the policy decisions and fight for our profession.

An easy way to start is to participate with your local medical society – the Northern Colorado Medical Society (NCMS). Becoming a delegate or alternate delegate will allow your voice to be included with others and more effectively influence the state and federal legislators. You can always contact these legislators personally but if you are a NCMS board member you will be able to work with your colleagues to solve the problems and “be part of a positive change.”

Please contact me (cdc@drcorycarroll.com) or Nan Lee (nocomedsoc@gmail.com) if you would like to become part of the solution.



Welcome, new members!

We welcome our new members to NCMS, the third largest component chapter in the Colorado Medical Society. Your membership connects you to your colleagues and to a host of benefits through NCMS and CMS.

Go to www.nocomedsoc.org or www.cms.org to learn more about the societies.

- Brenda M George, DO
- Megan E Grotefend, MD
- Adrian K Krause, MD
- Katje M Lerew Musgrave, DO
- Michael J Rogan, MD
- Peter A Wallskog, MD

Support the 2015 NCMS directory

John Cawley, MD

NCMS staff is preparing for the publication of the 2015 NCMS Physician Pictorial Directory and I'm asking you to update your contact information today to help make sure this valuable resource is as accurate as possible. Physician listings are included in the cost of your membership this year so all actively practicing members will be listed unless they opt out. The deadline to updated your contact information and photo is Monday, Feb. 16.

The NCMS directory is launched at the annual Loveland Community Health Fair hosted by McKee Medical Center in early April, and then distributed to area hospitals, medical clinics, senior centers, pharmacies, and other locations throughout the spring and summer.

Here's why it's important to be listed in the 2015 directory:

1. The directory is the public-facing representation of the Northern Colorado Medical Society in our region. We want to recognize and reward our physicians for membership and present them as the premiere health care providers in our community.
2. The directory is an important source of advertising revenue, which supports our organization's growing programs and initiatives.
3. The directory helps us develop and nurture business relationships throughout the region and establishes us among patients and the media as a health care resource.

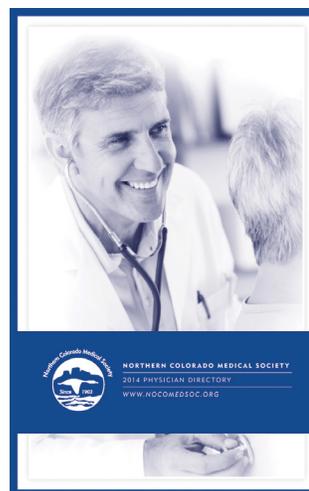
For this publication to be its most effective, each and every NCMS mem-

ber must update his or her contact information. I urge you to do this today.

Here's how. First, view the information we have on file for you by searching for yourself in our Physician Locator at www.nocomedsoc.org/physician-locator. To submit changes online, go to www.cms.org/member/login and log in with your Colorado Medical Society username and password. Forgot your credentials? Choose the “Forgot your

password?” link on that page. First-time logging in? Use the “activate your account” link on that page. Need help logging in? Contact Tim Yanetta, CMS membership coordinator, at tim_yanetta@cms.org or (720) 858-6306.

To see what photo we have on file for you, view a PDF of last year's directory at www.nocomedsoc.org > About



The 2014 NCMS Physician Pictorial Directory

NCMS > Physician Directory Info. Email a new photo (jpeg preferred, 300 dpi) to kate@nocomedsoc.org.

Some large groups or hospital systems are updating listings and photos on behalf of the physicians in their practice/system. Examples are Banner, UCHealth, Orthopaedic and Spine Center of the Rockies, and Advanced Medical Imaging Consultants. If you are not sure whether your office manager or executive is updating your information, please give this memo to the appropriate contact in your practice/system or contact Kate Alfano at NCMS at kate@nocomedsoc.org or (512) 788-0085.

Thank you for your help in making this year's directory robust and accurate.

Report from the 2014 NCMS Annual Meeting

The Northern Colorado Medical Society presented the 2014 NCMS Annual Meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014, at the Midtown Arts Center in Fort Collins. Members enjoyed social time and a buffet dinner, followed by a business meeting and a presentation by Richard Kogan, MD.

The business meeting was called to order by NCMS President John Cawley, MD. Past President Peter Smith, MD, presented the Dr. Michael Wiggins Memorial Scholarship. Each year the Northern Colorado Medical Society invites medical students who graduated from a Larimer County high school to apply for the Wiggins Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship honors the late president of the Larimer County Medical Society and the awardee receives a \$5,000 scholarship to be used for his or her education.

This year's recipient is Dai-An Vo-Ba. Dai-An is a graduate of Fossil Ridge High School and a medical student at the University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus, class of 2017. In her application for the scholarship she wrote that she found her calling for patient care while volunteering at a hospital in Saigon, Vietnam. She now lives by the motto of that hospital: "Walk carefully, work carefully and speak wisely."

Cawley presented the Physician of the Year award to Roger Bermingham, MD. Dr. Bermingham is the former residency program director of the Fort Collins Family Medicine Residency Program and he continues to teach residents at the program in addition to maintaining a geriatric practice through which he cares for homebound elderly and patients at skilled nursing facilities. Read a Q&A with Dr. Bermingham on page 4.

Secretary/Treasurer Lee Goacher, MD, gave the treasurer's report and Past President Christie Reimer, MD, presented Cawley with a gift in gratitude for his service as president. Wrapping up the business portion of the meeting, Jeff Donner, MD, was elected NCMS president-elect, Goacher was re-elected secretary/treasurer, and Cory Carroll, MD, was installed as the 2015 NCMS president.

Kogan took the stage to present "Music and Medicine: George Gershwin," during which he explored the impact of medical and psychiatric illness on the creative output of the great American composer George Gershwin and performed his masterpieces, including Rhapsody in Blue and Porgy and Bess. Kogan is a Julliard-trained concert pianist and Harvard educated psychiatrist, clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical Center and Artistic Director of the Weill Cornell Music and Medical Program.

NCMS thanks the sponsors of the meeting for their financial support: Berkshire Hathaway Home Services,



TOP: The 2015 NCMS officers, *from left to right*, President-elect Jeff Donner, MD; President Cory Carroll, MD; Secretary/Treasurer Lee Goacher, MD; and Immediate Past President John Cawley, MD. **MIDDLE AND BOTTOM:** Richard Kogan, MD, accents his presentation with piano performances.



COPIC, Colorado Drug Card and Columbine Health Systems. And the NCMS Board of Directors thanks all of the attendees of the meeting. Save the date for the NCMS Spring Educational Meeting on May 20, 2015.

A Q&A with Roger Bermingham, MD

2014 Northern Colorado Medical Society Physician of the Year



Roger Bermingham, MD, the 2014 NCMS Physician of the Year, has worked in Northern Colorado for the past 27 years. He previously served as residency program director of the Fort Collins Family Medicine Residency Program, which is a service of Poudre Valley Hospital. He continues to teach residents there in addition to maintaining a geriatric practice through which he cares for homebound elderly and patients at skilled nursing facilities.

Why did you choose to pursue medicine as a career?

I developed asthma around age 6 and spent a ton of time in the office of my general practitioner, Dr. Ed Naess. He was caring, thorough and quickly became a major role model for me. I went to medical school at UCLA. At that time the Santa Monica Community Hospital had a brand new family medicine residency, headed up by Thomas Stearns MD, who was one of the founding fathers of the family medicine movement. I was lucky enough to do some extra observational time at this residency, which convinced me that family medicine was the way to go.

Describe your current practice.

My time is roughly divided into thirds of teaching, seeing patients and administrative work. For teaching, I take the upper-level residents out for nursing home and assisted living and home visits, do a one-week rotation with each first-year resident for an introduction to geriatrics and also do weekly geriatric teaching rounds with the inpatient medicine team.

When I see patients, it is out of the clinic, at nursing homes, assisted living and home visits. I do this both for my own patients but also for the other physicians in the office if they are not available to do that themselves.

I am still involved as faculty with curriculum development for geriatrics, medical ethics, and humanities and medicine. I am the medical director of three nursing homes in town – Golden Peaks, Good Samaritan and Spring Creek – and am fairly active in the state chapter of nursing home medical directors, the Colorado Medical Directors Association, and sit on the National Medical Advisory Board for the Good Samaritan Society.

What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part of my job is my one-on-one time with resident physicians, working with them to see geriatric patients, hoping to instill in them a love and appreciation of seniors. Three of my graduates have gone on to become geriatricians. My favorite part about teaching is getting to know each resident physician as a human being. I feel like each new resident is a potential lifelong contact. I am blessed to be able to work for one of my prior residents, Dr. Janell Wozniak, who is the current director of the residency program.

What hobbies do you enjoy outside of medicine?

I am a hobby junkie and tend to take on hobbies then put them on the back shelf for a while. I read voraciously and am involved in several book clubs, including one at the residency. I have a small “Garden Railroad” in my backyard, which I operate mostly for grandchildren and visiting kids. I took several sommelier classes a while back and enjoy going out to taste wines, especially in combination with good food. And I love music—currently I sing Bass/Baritone in the Larimer Chorale, which is a delight. I like cross-country skiing. I am a fairly spiritual person and have been for a number of years a life vowed member of lay monastic organization emphasizing Celtic Christianity, the Order of St. Aidan and Hilda.

Can you tell us about your family?

I married my high school sweetheart, Shelley, who supported me working as a nurse through medical school and residency. She is literally my best friend and the light of my life. She was a nurse at PVH for several years before retiring about 18 months ago.

I have three kids. My eldest, Doug, is now a PhD psychologist working for Miramont Family Medicine in Wellington. His wife, Kristi, is an MSW with Miramont. My second child, Bryan, is a nurse in Jackman, Maine, in a combination nursing home/urgent care job. My daughter, Heather James, works at CSU as an academic advisor for the departments of Music, Dance and Musical Theater. Her husband, Brian, works for Noble Oil Company and they live in Windsor. I have two grandchildren and one on the way: Liam Bermingham, Gracie James, and baby James.

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New service related to the Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment

Beginning on Aug. 1, 2013, Colorado Medicaid began coverage of end-of-life counseling, or advanced directives, by primary care providers and other specialty providers caring for persons with serious, chronic, or terminal illness relating to the Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment. The Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment (MOST) is a medical order set defining patient choices for certain life-sustaining treatments. The MOST orders are portable across all health care settings and intended as a key device in maintaining continuity of care and communication.

The procedure code for this service is S0257; it is billed in addition to the appropriate Evaluation and Management service. The provider types eligible to render this service are physician, advanced practice nurse, physician assistant, or licensed mental health provider. The reimbursement for this service is available once a year for persons with serious, chronic, or terminal illness. The De-

partment of Health Care Policy and Financing would like to encourage providers to provide and bill for this service for appropriate clients.

The reimbursement for this service is \$40 for a 30-minute session; however, to qualify for reimbursement, providers must complete a brief training module on the Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment process and form, available from Life Quality Institute; **registration fees will be waived for providers seeking to qualify for this payment.** The one-hour training module is offered in an online/on-demand format; a passing score on a brief post-test will generate a certificate of completion for your records. Please visit the Life Quality Institute website for details (www.lifequalityinstitute.org) or call 303-398-6317. Providers should keep the certificate on file and do not need to provide anything to the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing.

Providers should counsel and provide the necessary forms and

guidance to comply with the Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment law as found at Colorado Revised Statutes, sections 15-18.7-101 et seq. and in accordance with the “Getting the MOST Out of the Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment: Guidelines for Healthcare Professionals” implementation instructions available from Life Quality Institute website. Additional provider and patient resources are available from Life Quality Institute, www.lifequalityinstitute.org, and from the Colorado Advance Directives Consortium, www.coloradoadvancedirectives.com.

For more information on the Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment process and form, please contact Jennifer Ballentine, Life Quality Institute, jballentine@lifequalityinstitute.org. For further information on the coverage of the procedure, contact Richard Delaney at richard.delaney@state.co.us or 303-866-3436.

THE CONVERSATION PROJECT

Empowering patients to discuss end-of-life care

Even though many physicians deal with death and dying in the course of their work, many still struggle with talking with their patients about end-of-life care. In a 2012 survey by the California HealthCare Foundation, 80 percent of people said that if seriously ill, they would want to talk to their doctor about end-of-life care but only 7 percent reported having had an end-of-life conversation with their doctor.

The Conversation Project aims to help people have meaningful and effective conversations with their loved ones and caregivers about end-of-life care. Launched in collaboration with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and supported by Cambia Health Foundation, the Conversation Project offers tools, guidance, and resources for people to process their final desires for their life and be-

gin talking with their loved ones, in a comfortable setting, about their wishes and preferences.

“It’s time to communicate about the kind of care we want and don’t want for ourselves,” they state on their website, www.theconversationproject.org. “We believe that the place for this to begin is at the kitchen table—not in the intensive care unit—with the people we love, before it’s too late.”

Go to www.theconversationproject.org to download a “starter kit” for the end-of-life care discussion. It has “Where I Stand” scales to help a person think about what matters most and plan an advance directive. It can also help a patient plan a conversation with family members about directives that are already in place and has a checklist of topics to address in the conversation.

Join CMS at the Sonnenalp in Vail May 1-3

*CMS presents the 2015 Spring Conference:
“Breaking Down Barriers”*

The Colorado Medical Society will host the 2015 CMS Spring Conference May 1-3 at the luxurious Sonnenalp Hotel in Vail to bring physicians together for education and fellowship. Registration is free for members and CMS provides a hotel group rate. This year’s conference theme is “Breaking Down Barriers,” drawing parallels between the fall of the Berlin wall in its 25th anniversary year and efforts to dismantle barriers in health care between patients and physicians.

The purpose of the conference is to create unity among physicians, attract new faces to CMS, develop ideas to address the critical issues facing physicians, and broaden the views of attendees on relevant policy matters by bringing in outside experts. CMS encourages all members, staff and stakeholders to make plans to attend what continues to be a lively celebration of fellowship in the Colorado

medical community. CMS extends a particularly warm invitation to physicians who have never experienced one of CMS’s spring conferences before.

The event kicks off Friday evening with a social reception hosted by the Intermountain Medical Society. Programming runs Saturday morning and Sunday morning and will include a mock claims committee case presented by COPIC, a session on administrative simplification and workplace dissatisfaction, and a session on the physician-as-patient experience. Saturday night’s fireside chat features an open forum on CMS governance. The conference includes free time Saturday afternoon and concludes by noon on Sunday.

This activity has been approved for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*. More information and registration will be available at www.cms.org/events/spring-conference.

Medicaid: Increased payment for office visits and vaccine administration

Beginning Jan. 1, 2015, the Colorado Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) will reimburse covered office visit procedure codes (E&M codes) and the vaccine administration procedure codes for **all providers** at a rate equal to 100% of Medicare’s December 2014 reimbursement rate. The **new rate** will be available to **all enrolled providers** that submit fee schedule claims for office visits or vaccine administrations. The new reimbursement rate will be in place until **June 2016**.

Please note that this rate increase is not a continuation of the previous 1202

Primary Care Supplemental quarterly payments. This increase does not require providers to attest to providing primary care and the higher rate is paid for each claim submitted. Please also note that Medicaid will not be changing its reimbursement for E&M codes on a quarterly basis, as Medicare does. E&M codes will be paid at the December 2014 Medicare rate, regardless of whether Medicare raises or lowers its reimbursement of these codes over the coming months.



COPIC Pearls: Celebrating a 30- year partnership

The Colorado Medical Society and COPIC are celebrating their 30-year partnership with the “Precious Pearls” video series, which highlights the great works of CMS and COPIC, past and present. They launched the series at the CMS Annual Meeting in September 2014 and will release a new video every other week through 2015.

The December 2014 video featured Fort Collins family physician John Bender, MD, speaking about how COPIC’s nationally renowned 3Rs Program was an important part of maintaining the physician-patient relationship and addressing additional medical bills following an uncommon complication from a referred procedure.

Other videos released so far explore COPIC and CMS’s role in passing the peer review bill, providing support for a clinic for vulnerable patient populations, and efforts to increase patient safety.

Go to www.COPICPearls.com to view these videos and more. If you aren’t receiving the Precious Pearls emails, go to <http://tinyurl.com/copic-pearls-sign-up> to sign up.



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Visit us online: nocomedsoc.org

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2015 NCMS and CMS events

March 4 • NCMS board meeting
Biaggi's • Loveland

March 13 • CMS board meeting
CMS office • Denver

May 1-3 • CMS Spring Conference
Sonnenalp Hotel • Vail

May 20 • NCMS Spring Educational Meeting • Location TBD

July 1 • NCMS board meeting
Biaggi's • Loveland

July 10 • CMS board meeting
CMS office • Denver

Sept. 2 • NCMS board meeting/CMS Annual Meeting pre-caucus
Biaggi's • Loveland

Sept. 18-20 • CMS Annual Meeting
Beaver Run Resort • Breckenridge

Oct. 7 • NCMS Legislative Night
Location TBD

Nov. 4 • NCMS board meeting
Biaggi's • Loveland

Nov. 20 • CMS board meeting
CMS office • Denver

Dec. 9 • NCMS Annual Meeting
Location TBD

* NCMS Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. RSVP to Nan Lee at nocomedsoc@gmail.com.