



# FOCUS

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## In This Issue:

- Winter Board
- E-communication now the norm for IMSA
- IMS Projects *Where is the money going?*
- Pennsylvania Alliance donation
- North Central registration deadline
- 2009 National Advocacy Conference
- Cerro Gordo County fundraiser results
- Pin replacement
- Young Member Connection - *Medical Student Program*
- Holiday greetings from IMSA Board

### ALL IMS Alliance members are invited to attend

## Winter Board

Thursday, January 22, 2009  
9:00 AM

Iowa Medical Society offices  
1001 Grand Ave., West Des Moines

### Noreen O'Shea, D.O.

will speak on teen substance abuse.

Dr. O'Shea is a family physician in practice for 21 years. She holds a double major in Biology and Theology from Creighton University.

The mother of four, Dr. O'Shea is interested in challenges facing youth, particularly teen pregnancy and substance abuse.

### Dinah Goldenberg, AMA Alliance

will give an update on possible national bylaws changes, including the addition of domestic partners as a membership category, and report on substance abuse programs offered through the AMA Alliance.

Board members will receive their official Winter Board Meeting notice and information by email. Contact the [IMS Alliance Coordinator](#) to receive the meeting's "virtual" agenda and packet or for additional information via email.

Funding from the IMS  
for the Alliance Coordinator position  
has been cut in half.

### E-communication now the norm.

The Iowa Medical Society is taking on some extensive projects, necessitating the trimming of their budget. The Alliance is shouldering some of the burden; our coordinator's hours have been reduced, and we are moving to electronic communication, including the FOCUS, as much as possible. IMS Alliance Board members will now receive meeting notices only by email. We will convert to "virtual" packets for Winter Board to cut costs and also save time for our coordinator.

We appreciate your help in making the most of our available resources. Please email me at [debers4020@aol.com](mailto:debers4020@aol.com) and I will gladly add you to our list of FOCUS e-recipients. Be assured, your email address will only be used for IMS Alliance business.

Debbie McCalla, IMSA President

### *Where is the money going?*

The IMS Alliance has received a significant reduction in the funds the IMS provides for the Alliance Coordinator. Given the IMS' history of generous support, Alliance members are doubtless curious about where this money will be reallocated. The funds will be used in litigation against the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and in the creation of materials that will increase practices' ability to recruit new physicians. Both projects are consistent with the Alliance's mission to improve the health of Iowans and support the family of medicine; the IMS Alliance Board supports the IMS in these endeavors.

The Iowa Medical Society Task Force, convened under then IMS President Dr. James Hubbard, issued a report in April 2008 detailing the weaknesses in Iowa's health care system. The report notes Iowa's high ranking in health quality measures but also notes "that the state's ability to meet future health care needs will be in jeopardy if steps aren't taken to address several key areas, such as Medicare reimbursement and physician recruitment."

The 64-page Task Force Report on Iowa's Health Care Infrastructure is available on the IMS Web site at [www.iowamedical.org](http://www.iowamedical.org). The IMS Task Force was charged with examining these four key areas pertinent to health care in Iowa:

- Iowa's physician workforce
- Medical education and training in Iowa
- Caring for Iowa's uninsured
- Iowa's public health system

At the April 2008 press conference, then IMS President Elect Dr. Patricia Hoffmann noted that, "The IMS Board voted last February to authorize the Iowa Medical Society to begin exploring litigation against the agency that runs Medicare, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services or CMS. Neither Congress nor CMS has acted to restore equity to the way Medicare reimburses doctors in rural states. Possibly the courts will."

"The reason we're doing this is to protect our state's health care infrastructure. Continuing to allow CMS to not cover the costs of caring for Medicare patients creates a cascading effect that impacts our entire health care system. It adds to and creates recruiting problems. It discourages new physicians from staying or coming to practice medicine in Iowa. It creates higher workloads for those doctors who practice here. And it affects our patients by threatening their ability to access medical care."

## Thank You, Pennsylvania!

The Pennsylvania Medical Society Alliance has sent \$1000 from its foundation to the IMS Alliance to be used for disaster relief to benefit physician practices or children.

The IMS Alliance Executive Committee has determined that half of the funds will go to Linn County, which will in turn donate it to the Madge Phillips Center--Waypoint in Cedar Rapids; Waypoint provides shelter and support to women and children in crisis because of homelessness, domestic violence or sexual assault. It also provides quality child care for over 500 children daily (*from their Web site*). The center was damaged in the June flooding, necessitating relocation.

Half of the funds will go to Johnson County, which will in turn donate to the Shelter House in Iowa City; it offers temporary housing and supportive services that help individuals and families make the transition to stable, productive lives.

## Links

[IMS Alliance](#)

[IMS Alliance Coordinator](#)

[AMA Alliance](#)

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## North Central Regional Alliance Meeting

February 6-8, 2009  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Brochure available on the [IMS Alliance](#) Web site. Check it out today! *Registration and room reservations deadline is Wednesday, January 7.* The dinner speaker on Saturday evening will be Dr. Donald Palmisano, a noted speaker and author on leadership. Address email questions to [Barb Savage](#) or call 515.334.9288.

## Attend 2009 NAC

Learn about upcoming legislative issues affecting medicine, hear topnotch speakers and lobby your congressional representative on behalf of medicine. The 2009 National Advocacy Conference (NAC) will be held in Washington, DC, on March 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The first day will feature AMA Alliance presentations; the rest of the conference will be held in conjunction with the AMA. One highlight from the 2008 NAC was a "white coat" rally on the capitol steps calling attention to legislation needed in the medical arena.

Maureen Lyons, IMS Alliance president-elect, will be leading the delegation from Iowa; she is looking for IMS Alliance members interested in participating. Though there is some reimbursement of expenses by the AMA Alliance and IMS Alliance, attendees should expect out-of-pocket expenditures. Call (641.752.3137) or email [Maureen Lyons](#) to express interest and obtain information. The [AMA Alliance](#) Web site also contains additional information on NAC.

## Cerro Gordo County auction raises over \$10,000 for Community Kitchen

Northern Iowa was hit hard by the June floods; in addition, the downturn in the economy has resulted in a rise in the number of individuals and families seeking meals at the Community Kitchen of North Iowa. Responding to the situation, the Cerro Gordo County Medical Society Alliance decided to shift its fundraising efforts from soliciting for a holiday sharing card to the excitement of a live auction.

The CGC Medical Society agreed to foot the bill for dinner and the services of a professional auctioneer. Fundraising chair Paula Recinos solicited members of both the Society and Alliance for home crafted items and services for the auction. Donated items ran the spectrum from a couple of hours of music by a jazz group to five hours of Polish lessons to home-canned produce. When the dust had settled from the good-natured competition, the Society and Alliance had raised \$10,600 for the Community Kitchen of North Iowa. Kudos go to CGCMSA President Judy Mulkey for her leadership, and additional congratulations to the Cerro Gordo County Medical Society and Alliance for the success of their joint effort.

## Past State Presidents . . .

. . . have you misplaced your cherished state president's pin? Are you interested in getting a replacement? Contact [Debbie McCalla](#) (605.232.3426) for details.

## Young Member Connection -- Medical Student Program



On November 20, the Iowa Medical Society and IMS Alliance produced the first of three programs designed to provide resources to resident physicians, medical students and their spouses. This first program (to be repeated in Des Moines this spring) provides students with information about lifestyles in the various medical specialties, thereby providing information students need to choose a career path.

As with the Iowa City event, the Des Moines program will be presented as a panel discussion with various physician specialties represented to talk about aspects and lifestyles of their specialty outside of clinical medicine. Debbie McCalla (IMS Alliance) and Mike Abrams (IMS) will also sit on the panel to discuss organized medicine and how it can help support the medical family.



## Happy Holidays, IMS Alliance!

The Board of Directors and past Presidents of the IMS Alliance extend best wishes to you and your family for a happy and blessed holiday season and a healthy new year.