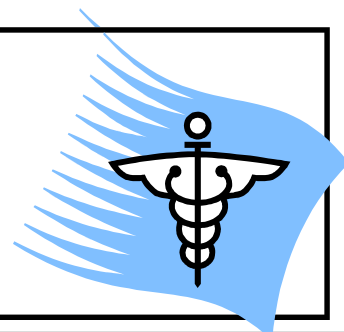


# GREGG-UPSHUR COUNTY DOC NEWS



Winter 2007 Issue 21

Shahrokh Safarimaryaki, M.D., President

## *2006 Executive Board*

Shahrokh Safarimaryaki, MD,

President

John McKenzie, M.D.,

Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer

David Witt, MD,

Past President

Board of Censors:

Jimmy Chamness, MD

Timothy Howes, MD

Shahrokh Safarimaryaki, MD

TMA Delegates:

Robert Wheeler, MD

Brad Butler, MD

James Repasky, MD

Alternates:

Frank Tibiletti, MD

Michael McShan, MD

TMA Board of Councilors:

Craig King, MD

TMA Committees:

Robert M Wheeler, MD

Maternal/Perinatal Committee

Michael C Leath, MD

Physician Health/Rehab Com-  
mittee

Wendy J Burke, MD

Council on Scientific Affairs

Ronald G Morton, MD

TEXMED CME Program Chairs

## TMA's Stance On HPV Immunizations and Public School Admission

- HPV is incredibly common, even in women who have had only one sexual partner.
- Most Texas physicians are recommending this vaccine and some are currently giving this vaccine to their female patients.
- There is strong science backing this vaccination.
- While the aim of this vaccine is to prevent infection with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the ultimate goal of prevention of cervical cancer which is linked to infection with HPV.
- Are concerned about the high cost associated with the purchase, storage and administration of the HPV vaccine.
- Want to ensure that insurers are adequately covering both the cost of the vaccine and administration of the vaccine.

We continue to be strongly opposed to easing the exemption process.

**Last Published:** 2/19/2007, [www.texmed.org](http://www.texmed.org)

## Transparency and Accountability

Transparency is the latest buzzword in health care. But for physicians, transparency has been the standard for centuries; it's the keystone of the patient-physician relationship. Physicians once had detailed and candid discussions about the patient's health care, treatment plan, and financing. Today, neither patient nor physician can easily access accurate information from insurance companies to make informed decisions. It's become impossible for physicians to counsel patients on affordable and efficient treatment plans.

In contrast, government and health insurance companies interpret "transparency" to mean only that physicians, hospitals, and ambulatory surgical centers must post their fees for "consumers" shopping for health care. The posting of fees is misleading because very few patients pay the fee physicians and health care providers charge. Most pay discounted fees dictated by insurance companies or government agencies.

Health insurance companies also are establishing preferred physician networks, which they market as providing higher quality and better value to patients. The insurance companies use only bills and claims data to create tiered or "preferred" networks. Quality care and patient outcomes are not part of the analysis. The preferred networks are solely based on cost, and low cost care is not necessarily effective care.

## TMA: Use Surplus From Fee Income to Speed Licensing of Physicians

*"Texas Can't Afford to Turn Away Good Doctors"*

The nation's largest state medical society called for a \$3.8 million increase in appropriations to the Texas Medical Board (TMB) to eliminate the growing backlog of physicians waiting for a license to practice in Texas.

Routine license applications are taking more than six months to process, creating a logjam of more than 2,500 pending applications. This backlog is nearly as many physicians as TMB licensed in all of fiscal year 2006, which was a near-record year.

"Our 2003 health care liability reforms are attracting quality physicians from around the country," said Texas Medical Association (TMA) President Ladon W. Homer, MD. "Texas can't afford to turn away good doctors."

In a letter to Texas Senate Finance Committee Chair Steve Ogden (R-Bryan), Dr. Homer said the state already has the dollars to fund the additional \$3.8 million for the TMB budget. "Over the past biennium, physician license fees collected by the state totaled nearly \$55 million," he said. "However, only about \$15 million was appropriated to TMB."

In 2003, TMA supported an additional surcharge on physician licenses to strengthen TMB's ability to fulfill its mission of patient protection. "We did so to ensure that the board had the resources necessary to address patient care concerns and provide oversight to the growing number of physicians in Texas," Dr. Homer wrote.

Texas needs more physicians. It ranks 42nd among all states with 194 physicians per 100,000 population, far less than the national average of 239. With Texas' booming population of older, sicker, and less well-educated people, the need for more physicians to care for them is dire.

"In essence, we have 2,500 small businesses waiting six to nine months to begin operations," Dr. Homer said in his letter to Senator Ogden. "The average physician in Texas employs five and contributes in excess of \$600,000 per year to the local economy. At the very least, these 2,500 potential small businesses employ 12,500 with a minimum impact of \$1.5 billion annually — a big return for a small investment of \$3.8 million."

In fiscal year 2006, new physicians made 4,026 license applications, up 34.6 percent from 2005, itself a record year. Yet TMB could grant only 2,516 licenses, actually down by 177, or 6.6 percent, from the previous year.

The problem is getting worse. In January 2007, TMB logged 467 new applications for physician licenses. That is a single-month record for the agency.

*TMA is the largest state medical society in the nation, representing nearly 42,000 physician and medical student members. It is located in Austin and has 120 component county medical societies around the state. TMA's key objective since 1853 is to improve the health of all Texans.*



### BRAD BUTLER, M.D. STEPS TO THE PLATE AS A TMA DELEGATE

A big THANK YOU to Brad Butler, M.D. for volunteering to serve as a TMA delegate for the Gregg Upshur County Medical Society. As a delegate, Brad will attend the spring conference and represent our medical society. The term is 3 years. Dr. Jim Chamness was the recruiter - many thanks to Dr. Chamness for his recruiting efforts!

**Gregg Upshur County Medical Society extends**

**Sympathy to**

**The family of George Robert Hugman, Jr.,**

**Family Practitioner, Gladewater,**

**on the loss of husband, father, grandfather and friend.**



# Look.... Ethics CME, March 27

## *You've Been Sued: Successfully Navigating the Litigation Process*



**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 27, 2007  
Check-in & Dinner: 5:30pm  
Program: 6-9pm  
Medical Plaza, 5th Floor, Room 1  
701 East Marshall Avenue  
Longview, Texas

### **Who Should Attend**

This 3 hour interactive program is intended for physicians of all specialties who are interested in practical ways to reduce the potential for malpractice liability.

### **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this program, participants should be able to:

Describe basic legal principles as they apply to physicians involved in medical liability claims and lawsuits.

Recognize strategies that will assist physicians in preparation for depositions and trials.

Describe physician reactions to being sued and list useful coping mechanisms.

Identify risk management practices that improve defensibility.

### **About the Speaker**

Dan Ballard, JD is a partner with Ballard & Simmons, LLP. He received a BA from the University of Texas and a JD from the University of Texas School of Law. He was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 1983. Mr. Ballard has spoken extensively on risk management and medical malpractice defense issues to physicians throughout the state.

### **CME Credit**

TMLT is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. TMLT designates this educational activity for a maximum of 3 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits.. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

### **Please RSVP by Friday, March 23**

Judy Thomas,

Phone/Fax: 903-553-4867

E-mail: [gucms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gucms@sbcglobal.net)

GUCMS and TMLT wish to thank Good Shepherd

Medical Center for hosting this event.

## **Cancer Survivorship Conference for Healthcare Professionals**

The Physician Oncology Education Program will host the Cancer Survivorship Conference for Healthcare Professionals in Texarkana, Texas on April 13, 2007. The conference will offer **7.5 AMA PRA Category I™** credits, including 3 hours of Ethics, and 12 Prescribed credits from the American Association of Family Physicians. Conference topics will include: Milestone Screening, Late Effects, Oral Health and the Cancer Patient, Nutrition and Physical Activity, and Pain Management. For more information or to register, please visit [www.acteva.com/go/tmapoep](http://www.acteva.com/go/tmapoep) or call Laura Wells at 512-370-1673.

## **Local Society Awards \$1000 Scholarships to UTMB Medical Students**

GUCMS recently awarded two \$1000 scholarships to UTMB medical students Ashley Group and John Ray. Ashley, a Pine Tree High School graduate, is a third year medical student. John, a Troup High School graduate, is a second year medical student.

Scholarship recipients must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Previously reside in Gregg or Upshur County or within a 20 mile radius of Gregg or Upshur County or city of Kilgore
- Be a resident of Texas
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Provide verification of enrollment at a Texas medical school
- Be progressing satisfactorily in medical school
- Be in any year of medical study

The scholarship will be awarded annually and is distributed by TMA.



## New Members

+++++

**Rekha Reddy, M.D.**  
Internal Medicine

**Jonathon Redmon, M.D.**  
Surgery

**Isaac Kwarteng, D.O.**  
Family Practice

**Jonathon Fontenot, M.D.**  
Orthopedic Surgery

**\*\*\*Welcome\*\*\***

## Lifetime Members/ Retired

**William Stephenson, M.D.**  
**Warren Tharp, M.D.**

## Congratulations

# Wanted:

2 to 3 physicians willing to give serve as officers and/or Board of Censors members. All it takes is committing a Tuesday evening every 2 or 3 months for Board meetings and reviewing new member applications. Contact Judy at [gucms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gucms@sbcglobal.net) if you're interested. If you want more info, talk to Bob Wheeler, David Witt, John McKenzie, Tim Howes, Jim Chamness or Shawn Safarimaryaki.

## License Renewal Made a Little Easier

The Texas Medical Board (TMB) is accepting license renewals online. To renew, visit [TMB Physician Registration](http://TMB Physician Registration).

Need information or have Questions

Please contact:

*Judy Thomas, Executive Director*

P.O. Box 1424

Longview, Texas 75606

Phone.Fax: 903-553-4867

[gucms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gucms@sbcglobal.net)

