



**On Friday, June 18, 2010**  
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**Once again, the United States Senate has failed to deal with the pending 21.3% cut** in reimbursement to all physicians serving Medicare patients. On Wednesday the CMA notified all members of the failed effort to stop the cuts which were part of a bigger bill that included many other non-medical stimulus extensions. Democrats in the Senate are working on a scaled back bill which would delay the cuts, for the third time this year, to November. If this scaled back effort does not get passed prior to the coming weekend, the rate cuts will go into effect. Then, depending on when a fix happened, the claims will be reprocessed. That will create monumental confusion.

Physicians in El Dorado, Sacramento and Yolo counties would benefit from the inclusion in this legislation from what has become known as the "GPCI (aka Gypsy) Fix." For ten years, CMA and County Medical Societies have been working to develop a revenue neutral fix to the geographical payment issue. A geographical payment adjustment to physicians' fees, based on practice expense in that local, was last updated 12 years ago with 1966 demographic data. A total of 14 counties would see increases in a range of 0.3% to 13.2%. Our three counties would each receive a 2.7% fee increase from this adjustment. These two issues, and especially the 21.3% cut, have taken a tremendous amount of staff resources and time by the AMA, State and County societies over the years. Both sides of the aisle agree that the SGR payment formula is flawed, and they know a cut of this magnitude (or any cut for that matter) would create real access issues for Medicare patients.

**How about a free lunch! Yes, lunch for you and a guest.** But you have to earn it. If you could change any silly, out-of-date rule, regulation or requirement that impacts your practice and costs everyone unnecessary expense, what would it be?

Submit your 200 words or less suggestion, and email it no later than July 4 to me at [bsandberg@ssvms.org](mailto:bsandberg@ssvms.org). Be sure to note who made the rule.

**Physician Supply.** In 1996, after careful study, the Pew Health Professions Commission urged national reductions of 10-25% in the number of new physicians, pharmacists and registered nurses due to the anticipated impact of hospital closures and managed care. The AMA has now predicted that by 2020 the country will find itself short of as many as 45,000 primary care physicians. (Thanks to Dr. Renollet, for these two contrasting tidbits.) **Here's my prediction.** In the next 5 to 10 years, primary care physicians will get the adjustments that they have deserved all along. It is already happening, and it's called supply and demand. It will be a huge shift as a result of insuring 35-40 million more patients. To the 400 or so medical students who receive this *On Friday*, consider your specialty choice carefully.

**CHW, Sutter Medical Group, UCDMG, TPMG, Solo, Specialty and Primary Care physicians! You need this and it's free!** CMA is now publishing a new electronic newsletter called CMA Practice Resources or CPR for short. It is broad enough to interest all physicians regardless of specialty or mode of practice. It's free to members and staff and to non-members too; although many of the links in the newsletter to CMA proprietary information is available only to members. Register [here](#).

**A history lecture entitled, "The Naval Hospitals of Mare Island," will be presented on Wednesday July 14, 7:00 pm at SSVMS by Tom Snyder, MD,** a retired urologist and Kaiser Permanente administrator. Commander David G. Farragut arrived on Mare Island in 1856 (our medical society

was already 6 years old) to establish the Navy's first West Coast base and plan for a Naval Hospital that served for more than 100 years. By the way, the next time you are coming home traveling east on Highway 37, visit Mare Island. It's a pretty neat place, and there's a lot to see. To register for the lecture, call SSVMS at 916-452-2671. Don't delay; our lectures fill up quickly.

**What to do with those bound journals and medical texts?** Best to toss them into your recycle cans. Sad, but true. There is no market for them, and mass recyclers don't like them either, especially if they are old and with lead laden ink. If books are 100 years old, however, someone may want them. You could also contact our Medical Museum at 916-456-3152.

**When budgets are tight, like they are in California,** legislators like to pass stuff that costs others money or hassle and shows their constituents that something is being done. So now, effective June 27, 2010, physicians have to notify their patients that they are licensed and regulated by the Medical Board of California. Three ways to do this were outlined to you in a letter from the Medical Board, and you can read about them [here](#). CMA has prepared the signs or documents that you can customize. Ask and we will email them to you. This may be a reasonable thing to ask, but it will be a potential violation of the Business and Professions Code if you don't. My doctor's office already looks like a bulletin board.

**The Medical Leadership Council on Cultural Proficiency** is made up of medical societies throughout California and has been meeting since 2002. It has developed a very complete website with guides to local and regional interpreter services, cultural proficiency tools, CME, patient brochures and other information. It is a good resource for anyone dealing with patients or others with language and cultural barriers. For more information go to: [www.medicalleadership.org](http://www.medicalleadership.org).

**SSVMS is hosting a financial planning seminar and dinner for members and their partners** with Kanseki Associates at SSVMS on Tuesday, July 20, 2010, 6:30 pm. You can read about this seminar that was first announced by Dr. David Herbert in the May/June issue of *SSV Medicine* by clicking [here](#). RSVP to Le Pham at 916-452-2671.

**Thank you to Dr. John Chuck and the Serotonin Surge Charities** that sponsored the April 16, 2010 Spring Break Event at Arden Hills. \$325,000 was raised at that event; a \$30,000 increase over the prior year. Our SPIRIT Program was honored to receive a donation of \$17,500. **Congratulations to the SSVMS Alliance** which held a very successful, first ever, **The Art of Medicine Auction and Wine Tasting** that netted \$27,000, allowing them to continue to support their favorite local charities. **A special salute and thank you to Dr. William Vetter**, Past President of SSVMS, who recently completed his 14 year term on the **Board of Directors of NORCAL Mutual Insurance Company**. NORCAP is the organization of county medical societies that founded NORCAL in 1975 during the professional liability crisis, and **Dr. Stephen Hiuga, was recently elected President of NORCAP**, kudos to him. From the June Primary Elections, we congratulate two of our members for earning their place in the November elections: **Past President Dr. Richard Pan** (Assembly District 5) and **Dr. Ami Bera** (U.S. Congress District 3).

**Many physicians have questioned the applicability of the Use Tax** by the California Board of Equalization. We have a paper prepared by the CMA Legal Department on that issue if you would like a copy.

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**Good but puzzling news.** Medical liability carriers, and many self insured medical liability plans, are reporting significant drops in claims volume. As an example, NORCAL Mutual, the company that we helped establish and endorse, reports that claims are down by 30% and it is a trend that has been developing for a few years. Lots of industry experts are trying to find out why and, of course, as you can imagine there are lots of theories.

Bill Sandberg  
[bsandberg@ssvms.org](mailto:bsandberg@ssvms.org)