



An SSVMS email Forum

Editor's Message



By John Loofbourow, MD

ONCE PHYSICIANS MET MONTHLY, with nearly all members attending; stuck pretty close to Robert's Rules, and debated issues with some fervor, feeling it mattered.

Those days are gone, though the problems now seem more pressing, and involve public policy as well as medical practice.

The closest thing I see in 2003 to those old time gatherings of local physicians are our committees, and the SSVMS Board of Directors meetings. There is intensity, earnest discussion of issues, and the pleasure of sharing a meal with peers. The board meets on the second Monday of each month at the Elvas address at 6 p.m. until about 9 p.m. To attend, make a reservation with Chris Stincelli.

The board is, however, the end stage in local attempts to deal with matters important to physicians; by the time the board acts, issues have usually been under consideration for some time. Members can affect board decisions by contacting the Executive Director or board members. SSVMS Medicine offers board briefs, regular editorials by our President and Executive Director, and timely essays or articles.

SSVMS is a voluntary professional organization, very distinct from a closed shop union, with certain strengths, and certain limitations. We have no captive members; yet that very fact makes our stance more credible. Though there will never be unanimity among us that is as it should be. It is vital that we take decisions, or positions, based on a clear and open democratic process, where both the minority and majority are always aware they have been heard.

To promote that process, the Editorial Committee has developed an EMAIL FORUM, where posits, or assertive statements open to debate, are mailed to members, allowing members to measure the sense of one another's views on a wide variety of issues, simply, directly, and at any time. While imperfect, it is an efficient and democratic process. For this first effort, total numbers are still small, because some members don't have email, or their addresses have changed. If we have your current email address, (and you read your mail!) you should have received this posit.

Otherwise, please contact Melissa Darling (mdarling@SSVMS.org) to update our email files. We welcome your suggestions for future posits.

The first posit was:

All Primary Care Givers Should Have The Option To Take Smallpox Vaccination.

Results as of Feb 15, among 140 responses: Agree 119; Disagree 13; Undecided 8; Included commentary 16

We believe member commentary is particularly important. Space limits preclude

publishing all comments here, but we hope to include them in the email version of SSVMS Medicine. A few selected comments follow:

"I had mine over 60 years ago when everyone was vaccinated. Now there is a threat — perhaps a small one ... well worth the risk in my opinion" — Byron Demorest

"Would like to have confirmation that any complications, time off work, etc, would be covered under Workers' Compensation. I am the Chief of Occ Med at SSC...(and getting)... mixed messages about coverage." — Suzan Scholey

"I'll wait till there is at least one case in the world as my patients are immune compromised and I work with pregnant colleagues." — Sid Crain

Wrap your toga about you, put on your e.sandals and take the e.podium.

Go to <http://www.ssvms.org/articles/positcompox.asp> to read further comments by members regarding the Small Pox posit.

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