



## **Growth in Group Practice Calls for a Bylaws Change**

**Executive Director's Message**



By Bill Sandberg

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST PRACTICE change we have seen in our medical community in the last 25-30 years? Chances are pretty good that most physicians who have been around for a while would say that it's the growth in medical groups (in both size and number).

That would be my answer, followed by the growth in managed care. And, of course, the changes are strongly related to each other.

This growth has brought about the need to ask our membership to approve a proposed bylaws change scheduled for later this year. But, before we get to the bylaws, we need to understand the makeup of our membership.

The bulk of our membership - 71 percent, or 1,181 of our 1,666 active members<sup>1</sup> - consists of nine medical groups with 15 or more SSVMS members.

The four<sup>2</sup> largest physician groups in our membership are: The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) with 679 members or 41 percent of total membership; UCD Medical Group (UCDMG) with 164 members or 10 percent; Sutter Medical Group with 141 members or 8 percent; and Woodland Clinic Medical Group with 64 members or 4 percent.<sup>3</sup>

Sutter Medical Group and Woodland Clinic Medical Group strive by policy to maintain 100 percent membership in Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society (SSVMS) and the California Medical Association (CMA), and pay the dues for their members. Physicians at TPMG and UCDMG are urged to join and the dues will be paid by their institution.

The remaining 29 percent, or 485 members, fall within two categories: 17 groups with 5 to 10 SSVMS members, totaling 107; and 380 in the solo to small group range of 1-4 physicians. In the group of 380, 56 are in primary care, 21 in obstetrics and gynecology and 303 are specialists. Of the 380, 326 physicians appear to be in solo practice.

Existing SSVMS Bylaws establish six membership districts - three in Sacramento County, one each for El Dorado and Yolo Counties and one for The Permanente Medical Group. The Board of Directors consists of 15 physicians, 12 of whom represent their geographical district, except for TPMG which is not a geographical district.

The remaining three members of the Board are at large officers, not representing a specific district. Each district is automatically entitled to one director position regardless of total members in that district. Remaining positions are apportioned in each district by the total number of physicians in the district.

The proposed bylaws change will prohibit any one membership district or medical group from obtaining a majority of the 12 district positions. Currently, TPMG (District 5), holds five director seats. District 2, bounded in the North by Arden Way and the South by Fruitridge Road, has three director seats. All other districts have one director.

Over two years ago, TPMG's leadership asked SSVMS to find a fair way to prevent TPMG from gaining a majority of the district positions, which has never been a goal of theirs.

An ad hoc committee, several Board meetings and a Board planning retreat resulted in a thorough review of many options and choices to accomplish the task. When all was said and done, the easiest solution was to simply amend the bylaws so that no one district or medical group shall obtain a majority of the district director positions.

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1. As of March 2008, SSVMS has 1,666 Active Members, 400 Medical Students and 400 retired members, for a total membership of 2,466.
2. According to the 2007 Healthcare Directory, published by the Business Journal, TPMG has 1,183 physician shareholders in our area; UCD Medical Group has 804; Sutter Medical Group has 161 shareholders and Woodland Clinic Medical Group 48 shareholders. Mercy Medical Group is listed with 100 shareholders.
3. The nine groups and their SSVMS/CMA membership are: The Permanente Medical Group 679 (41%); UCD Medical Group 164 (10%); Sutter Medical Group 141 (8%); Woodland Clinic Medical Group 64 (4%); Radiological Associates 50 (3%); Mercy Medical Group 20 (1%); Sacramento Anesthesia 24 (1%); Pulmonary Medical Group 23 (1%) and Mercy Radiology 16 (1%).

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