



## **Time Flies When You're Working with Top People**

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



By Margaret E. Parsons, MD

AS THE CALENDAR YEAR WINDS DOWN, the staff members at SSVMS are busy with dues statements, planning the annual dinner, and unwinding after the CMA House of Delegates meeting. These are just some of the items from the current calendar. I continue to be impressed by the year-round activities of our SSVMS staff, physician leaders, and volunteers.

Organized medicine at all levels - local, state, and national, whether general medical or specialty-specific - work in different ways to help us continue practicing in the way we believe we should to care for patients. It has been an amazing year for medicine in advocacy at both state and federal levels: Medi-Cal, health care reform, and Medicare funding issues lead the list. This work was accomplished by all levels of organized medicine and physicians participating to achieve a common goal.

Through the year, SSVMS met with state and federal elected representatives on these issues. SSVMS also advocated on behalf of local patients and physicians at the county level and worked to care for those in our region through physician volunteers in county and community clinics.

In conjunction with CMA, SSVMS assisted members through the transition of our Medicare payor to Palmetto this fall. Without this advocacy, the headaches, difficulties, and slow payments would have been far worse. As one of those personally affected by delayed payments for three months, I know the value of organized medicine helping to get things on track.

Having attended many committee meetings over the year, I was impressed by the hard work of our physician volunteers and staff on this magazine, peer review, public health, children's health, history of medicine, development of CME programs, membership, SPIRIT clinic volunteers, and more.

October also brought the CMA House of Delegates, and SSVMS is the largest society in the 11th District. Our delegation spoke thoughtfully and well, and our members were leaders on reference committees; Marcia Gollober chaired one committee. We had solid representation on the board from Dean Hadley and Joanne Berkowitz. SSVMS members in CMA Board of Trustees slots included Lee Snook (solo/small group representation) and Paul Phinney (large group representation). Richard Pan chaired the Council on Legislation.

Paul Phinney was elected as Vice-Chair of the CMA Board of Trustees (see page 9). Three cheers to Paul and his hard work that has earned the respect of the CMA board and led to this key leadership role; he will have a difficult and thoughtful job as organized medicine faces challenges in future years.

I personally am very grateful for, and proud of, an excellent Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Through the year, the board has had thoughtful deliberation and

worked to insure that we meet the needs of members and keep an environment for physicians to best care for patients. It is a great feeling when you can finish a meeting and know that different experiences and viewpoints can be heard and discussed, and a plan brought together.

And the same goes for the Executive Committee members: Drs. Rick Jones, Charles McDonnell, Steve Melcher, and Glennah Trochet - a thoughtful and hard-working crowd that makes our monthly Executive Committee meetings a pleasure. Dr. John Loofburrow continues at the helm as editor of this magazine and does an outstanding job leading his editorial board with his caring and diligent style. Dr. Bob LaPerriere's commitment to the medical museum continues to make it a well-polished gem.

Over the year you may have noticed some changes if you have been by the offices. In addition to taking care of the society, we must care for our building (which we own) and the board has worked to make fiscally sound decisions. Old and leaky windows have been replaced, bathrooms updated, and stairways improved.

The backbone of the organization continues to be our superior staff led by Bill Sandberg. Through the year, I have met several of the other Executive Directors from throughout the state and I am ever more appreciative of Bill and his work on our behalf. My office is just two buildings down from the SSVMS building on Elvas Avenue, so I frequently walk over to chat with Bill, sign a letter, or check on something; and I see the rapport and commitment of the staff. They are truly a wonderful team.

Why do I write about all this? If you think patient care, scope of practice, fair payor policies, physician reimbursement, vaccine programs, balanced billing, public health initiatives, health care reform, physician workforce, medical education, and so many more issues are important, then join me and the rest of the board in renewing your membership.

More important, please help keep our society strong by reaching out and recruiting another member. We face challenging times, and need the strength of strong medical organizations with high membership of the physician population working on our behalf. I, the board members, and the staff are available anytime to talk to prospective members.

As I type my last "President's Letter," my appreciation goes to the organization and its members for the opportunity to have served as President. The energy, ideas, and commitment of the members have made it a pleasure.

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