



MAD NEWS

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology
VOLUME 4 ISSUE 10 SUMMER, 2006

President's Message

by Dr. Kathryn Bowers

Our Spring Business Meeting was a great success with timely and informative presentations on a variety of topics that affect our practices. Issues such as tiered reimbursements, electronic record systems, Medicare audits and legal matters may not be as interesting to us as clinical presentations, but they are very important in this rapidly changing environment.

We turn our attention now to the Annual Meeting which will be held in Newport, RI, the weekend of September 15th. The meeting notice and registration form was mailed two weeks ago and it is also posted on our website. If you did not receive the mailing please call our office. We are excited to be exploring Newport as a new meeting site and believe it will be as good a venue as our recent trips to Wentworth, NH, and Woodstock, VT.

There are many activities available in the city ranging from the fabled mansions, an in-water boat show and an antique show being held there that weekend. **The city will be crowded that weekend and our reserved group of rooms expires on August 15th. If you are in doubt, reserve a room, you can always cancel it if you find you cannot attend.**

Included in this Newsletter is a legislative report from Marty Cohn, our associate director and lobbyist. There seem to be more bills affecting dermatology under consideration in the Legislature each year and Marty has been busy working to obtain a favorable outcome for us. He also reports on legislation tightening the regulation of tanning salons that we have been instrumental in introducing. We will be following its progress and have recently called on our members to contact their legislators to support this measure.

Finally, we are continuing our effort to increase the membership of practicing dermatologists in our state association. We have completed a census to identify all the practicing dermatologists, many of whom are members of the American Academy but not the Massachusetts Academy.

We will be mailing a membership packet to them and hope they will respond by sending us an application. Our goal is to represent the majority of practicing dermatologists when we speak with insurance companies, the legislature and others.

If you know anyone who is not a MAD member please ask them to contact our office for an application.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Newport in September.

Notes from the Executive Director

by Paul Wetzel

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

For the past six months several dermatologists and I have been working with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts to correct a reimbursement problem with several repair codes. We have made good progress. In recent weeks doctors report they are being properly paid for these codes correcting the previous mistake when they were paid at 50 percent for the repair codes. We have been told by BCBS that reimbursement checks for the underpayments from December, 2005 were mailed beginning in early June. Please let us know if you have not received these corrected payments.

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

An item on the Office Notes page of the June Harvard Pilgrim Newsletter announced they plan to begin conducting random audits of claims where surgical services are billed with Modifier 25. Dermatology is one of the five specialties that will be audited. The article noted, "Harvard Pilgrim does not allow additional payment for E&M services on the same day as surgical procedures unless (a) it is significant and separately identifiable, and (b) it is above and beyond the usual preoperative and post-care associated with the procedure."

The experience with HPHC indicates there have been problems in their interpretation of modifier 59 and 25 and we want to monitor these audits carefully. We have been in contact with them about this.

We will be interested in hearing from any practices that undergo an audit by Harvard Pilgrim and hearing about the process and the experience.

AMA Prescribing Program

The issue of pharmaceutical companies obtaining physician prescription data has been gaining increased national attention in recent months. The American Medical Association which is at the center of the discussion has established a section on its website to deal this issue. If you go to ama-assn.org and look on the right hand column for the title "Prescribing Data Info Center" you will reach this section. There is also a link on the bottom of the first page (Prescribing Data Restriction Program) where you can restrict access to your prescribing data.

MMS Workforce Study

The Massachusetts Medical Society released the results of its 2006 Physician Workforce Study which confirms and expands on four previous studies showing the state faces shortages of physicians in many key specialties. For the first time, the study found a shortage of primary care physicians with 54 percent of community hospitals experiencing shortages of family practitioners and similar problems with internists. Thus far, the Work-force studies have not identified dermatology as a specialty with a "severe or critical" shortage. The full survey which includes questions on physician attitudes towards medical practice in Massachusetts can be found on MMS on the MMS Web site at: massmed.org.

Legislative Matters

by Martin Cohn

As we head to the end of the legislative session, several bills that are of interest to the Mass Academy of Dermatology have started to move. First, we were successful in getting Senate Bill 2191 signed into law by Governor Romney. This bill, sponsored by State Senator Joan Menard, established a task force to study med spas. Several members of MAD have been proposed to sit on this task force.

Second, with the Massachusetts Melanoma Foundation, we worked with State Senators James Timilty and Pam Resor to file Senate Bill 2590, an act to further regulate tanning facilities. Among the highlights of the bill is a funding mechanism to enforce current regulations by local boards of health and a prohibition of anyone under the age of sixteen from using sun tan salons. A public hearing on this bill took place on July 12th. The Massachusetts Medical Society, along with many other organizations, has voted to endorse this legislation.

Third, House Bill 4972, which would allow pharmacists to not only participate in the prescription of patient medications but also override physicians' orders, has moved closer to enactment. (Its companion Senate Bill 408 remains in Senate Ethics and Rules since November, 2005). The Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology board of directors voted to oppose these bills and has sent letters to the chairs of these committee to voice its opposition.

Fourth, working with the Massachusetts Medical Society, we were able to include voluntary language in the bill so that if passed physicians would not be forced to work with pharmacists in choosing medications for their patients.

Fifth, a bill that we have been monitoring, House Bill 4812 has also moved closer to enactment. This bill would provide for direct billing of certain pathology tests. Previous newsletters outlined the pros and cons of this bill. If passed, the bill will prevent physicians who perform no aspect of pathology services from billing for the services. However, a physician who performs the professional interpretation will be able to bill globally.

The Legislature is expected to end its formal sessions on Monday, July 31, a custom it has followed in election years. Over the summer and before elections, we will be reviewing legislative records and will relay this information to you so that you may support those candidates that have promoted the interests of dermatologists in the Commonwealth.

**2006 Annual Meeting
Marriott Hotel, Newport, RI
September 15-17, 2006
Preliminary Schedule**

Friday, September 15

Noon - 1 pm	Registration
1:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Program Series I
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Wine & Cheese Reception

Saturday, September 16

7:30 am - 9:30 AM	Breakfast - Open to all attendees and families
8:00 am - 12:15 PM	Program Series II
12:30 pm	Golf Tournament
6:30 pm - 10:00 PM	Reception / Dinner / Entertainment
6:30 pm - 10:00 PM	Children's Dinner / Entertainment

Sunday, September 17

7:00 am - 9:30 AM	Breakfast - Open to all attendees and families
7:00 am - 8:30 AM	Breakfast/Business Meeting
8:30 am - 12:30 PM	Program Series III

Confirmed Speakers/ Topics

Diane M. Thiboutot MD Hershey, PA

- Isotretinoin: New Insights into Mechanism of Action and Regulatory issues
- Hormonal Evaluation and Treatment of Acne

Robert E. Kalb MD Buffalo, NY

- Conventional systemic psoriasis treatments (Light, MTX, Acitretin)
- The Cost of Psoriasis Treatment

David Wazer MD Boston, MA

- Radiation Therapy for Cutaneous Tumors
- Radiation Oncology in the new Millenium

Richard Bennett MD Los Angeles, CA

- Dermatologic Surgery Vignettes
- Cancer associated with acne radiation treatment

Marty Mihm MD Boston, MA

- Atypical spitz nevi

Alice Gottlieb MD Boston, MA

- Biologic therapy 2006

Jennie J. Muglia MD Providence, RI

- How to set up clinical studies

Marie France Demierre MD Boston, MA

- Case histories



**Joint committee on Public Health hears testimony on
S. 2590 —An Act to Further Regulate Sun Tan Salons**

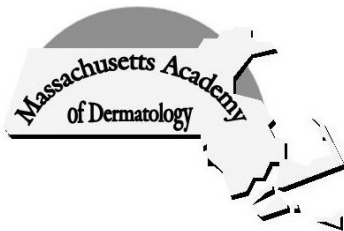


On Wednesday, July 12, testimony was presented to support legislation co-sponsored by the Mass. Academy of Dermatology and the Mass. Melanoma Foundation. Filed by State Senators Joseph Timilty and Pam Resor, the legislation would ban anyone under the age of 16 from using sun tan booths and would provide enforcement fees paid by sun tan facilities to local boards of health. For more info about this legislation, visit our Web site www.massacademyofdermatology.org
Photo: MAD member Dr. Marie France DeMierre, MAD Board member Dr. Karen Rothman, Mass Melanoma Foundation executive director Deb Girard, and Boston University's Dr. Alan Geller conferred with bill sponsor Sen. Joseph Timilty before their testimony .

Attend the Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology Annual Meeting
at the Marriott Hotel in Newport, Rhode Island from September 15-17, 2006.

Registration information can be found at our Web site

www.massacademyofdermatology.org



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