

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN PHYSICIAN

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"Not for ourselves do we labor"

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VMS MEMBERS ADOPT NEW RESOLUTIONS, SET HEALTH CARE PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2015

In This Issue:

Page 1

- VMS members adopt new resolutions, set health care public policy priorities for 2015

Pg. 2

- From the President's Desk

Pg. 3

- New officers tapped during VMS annual meeting

Pg. 4

- Four recognized for outstanding service to health care and community

Pg. 5

- VMS Foundation Awards Scholarship to UVM College of Medicine Students

Pg. 6

- VMS Foundation launches Pursuing High Value Care for Vermonters initiative
- Vermont physician receives national honor

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The Vermont Medical Society adopted policy resolutions that address a number of issues important to the state's physicians, including analyzing the Administration's compliance with Act 48 triggers, encouraging access to evidence-based alternatives to Opioid prescribing, ensuring timely access to Level One inpatient psychiatric care, and integrating the science of the Adverse Childhood Experience study in medical practice and education. VMS members approved the resolutions during the organization's 201st annual meeting Oct. 25, in Manchester Village, Vt.

The resolutions will form the basis of the organization's 2015 public policy efforts on behalf of its 2,000 physician members. The adopted resolutions were:

Compliance with Act 48 Triggers for Publicly Financing Health Care – Calls on VMS to analyze the Administration's proposal and assumptions for publicly financing Green Mountain Care, and develop findings regarding the relevant Act 48 conditions or triggers.

Encouraging Access to Evidence-Based Alternatives to Opioid Prescribing – VMS will support the work of the Uniform Pain Management Advisory Council to increase access to, and coverage for, evidence-based non-pharmacological treatment and non-opioid pharmacological treatment for chronic pain.

Timely Access to Level One Inpatient Psychiatric Care in Vermont – VMS will work with the Department of Mental Health, the General Assembly and the Vermont Association of Hospital and Health Systems to assess the current status of access to level one inpatient psychiatric care in Vermont and, if deemed to still be inadequate, urge the State to adopt further measures to enhance level one psychiatric inpatient treatment resources.

Integrating the Science of the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study in Vermont Medical Practice and Medical Education – Urges the Vermont Department of Health to continue to monitor the population-based impact of ACE using data collection strategies such as (but not limited to) the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additionally, VMS will work with public and private partners to identify, and rigorously evaluate and promote, strategies for the integration of strength based, data-driven and age-appropriate prevention, screening and follow-up/referral activities throughout Vermont's health care delivery system and medical training.

Working with the Green Mountain Care Board to Develop the Vermont Health Resource Allocation Plan – VMS urges the Green Mountain Care Board to partner with physicians and other health professionals to develop a statewide health resource allocation plan that uses the medical needs of all Vermonters as the underlying construct rather than a community market based approach. Further, the plan should weigh heavily issues of equity and patient centeredness. VMS also urges the Board to prioritize the current and future needs of the workforce by ensuring an adequate primary care and mental health/substance abuse workforce that is readily available to all Vermonters, as well as regionalized specialty medical and surgical workforce that is reasonably available and a tertiary and quaternary workforce that is emergently available to all the state's residents.

Continued on Page 7

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By David M. Coddair, M.D.



It is my extreme good fortune to be a Medical Doctor and this year my good fortune doubles with the privilege of becoming President of the Vermont Medical Society. Our collective privilege is looking after the good of our patients. It certainly is "all about the patient".

Two general trends over the last several years have become prominent themes in the current transformation of the health care system: evidenced-based care and stewardship of health care resources.

Evidence-based care separates us from the charlatans and we must follow the evidence in those decisions where it is available and use our best judgment in the rest of the clinical situations. In any event we must demand good evidence and expect transparency from our researchers and guideline authors, regardless of funding sources.

Stewardship of health care refers not only to appropriate use of financial resources but also to population and public health. VMS has properly endorsed the "Choosing Wisely" campaign started by our Internist colleagues and embraced by many specialty societies.

With these thoughts in mind I wish to enumerate some priorities for VMS over the next year:

- A laser-like focus on evolving health care reform efforts. This would involve:
 - Continuing participation in the coalition Vermont Partners for Health Care Reform, ensuring that reform efforts actually adhere to the principles enumerated in Act 48.
 - Enhancing the flow of young talented physicians to all areas of Vermont.
 - Fostering the coordination between the various Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and the Blueprint for Health, while simplifying and standardizing the numerous quality measures among the various overseeing bodies.
 - Ensuring that reimbursement levels sustain our physician practices.
- Continuing to foster physician leadership as facilitated by the good work of Dr. Cy Jordan. This involves physician involvement in health reform as well as physician leadership of office- and hospital-based systems.
- Supporting physicians in every clinical location whether they are solo, group practices, private, or employed. In the 2014 VMS Physician Survey, 87 percent of responding physicians still find the practice of medicine "deeply satisfying" excluding the administrative burdens. Many are frustrated by these burdens and VMS does labor to decrease these burdens.
- Advocating for patients at the local level when appropriate and preserving not only primary care, but also specialty care in rural areas. This is key, not only for continuity and quality of care, but also for local economies.
- Expanding our physician membership. We need more and younger members as well as the dues to support our superb staff in our Montpelier office.
- Continuing our tradition of shining a light on our public health threats:
 - Fostering a proper home life for our pediatric patients.
 - Fighting the childhood obesity epidemic both in our offices as well as by partnering with public health agencies and schools.
 - Leading the effort to decrease distracted driving. Operating handheld electronic devices while driving is now illegal in Vermont. Let us remind our patients to comply with the law to save lives.
 - Recognizing our responsibility in dealing with the opioid abuse epidemic. Forty-five percent of responses in the VMS survey disagreed with the statement that "the benefits of long-term opioids in non-malignant pain outweighed the risks" and 21 percent were neutral. This may well be one of the biggest therapeutic misadventures of our time. We have an obligation to use these medications safely.

So life is interesting, change is good and I feel most fortunate to work with both the talented staff at the Vermont Medical Society and with dedicated and inspiring physicians throughout Vermont.

Thank you for the opportunity.



NEW OFFICERS TAPPED DURING VMS ANNUAL MEETING

During the 201st annual meeting VMS members tapped three committed and accomplished physicians to head the Society's leadership team.

David Coddair, M.D., a family physician at the Morrisville Family Health Center, was named president. He also serves as the executive medical director of Community Health Services of Lamoille Valley, a Federally Qualified Health Center that runs several practices in the Lamoille Valley area and in 2009 was a recipient of the VMS Physician of the Year award.

Dr. Coddair earned his M.D. at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, where he currently serves as a clinical associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine, and completed his residency at Fletcher Allen.

As president of VMS, Dr. Coddair will take a lead role in the Society's public policy efforts in Montpelier and Washington, D.C. Priorities during the upcoming year will include efforts to ensure continued access to quality health care during Vermont's transition to a single-payer system as well as integrating public health and primary care. During his inaugural address, Dr. Coddair said that the pursuit of evidence-based care and the proper stewardship of health care resources will be two prominent themes of his presidency (see his letter on page 2 for more insight).

Also during the meeting, VMS members elected **James Hebert, M.D.**, and **Wendy Davis, M.D.**, president-elect and vice president, respectively.

Dr. Hebert is a general surgeon at Fletcher Allen Health Care and a Mackay-Page Professor of Surgery at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, where he earned his M.D. He was named to U.S. News and World Report's Top Doctors list for 2012-2013, placing in the top 1 percent for excellence in General Surgery with special expertise in Biliary Surgery and Colon & Rectal Surgery.

His research interests have focused on host defenses against infection and medical education. He has been a funded researcher and has authored many peer reviewed articles, book chapters, editorials and reviews. He has been the recipient of the UVM Department of Surgery teaching and service awards. In 2002 Dr. Hebert received a Distinguished Academic Achievement Award from the Medical Alumni Association at UVM, and in 2006 was the recipient of a Distinguished Service Award from the NBME.

Wendy Davis, M.D. is a clinical professor of Pediatrics at the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, and the Associate Director of the National Improvement Partnership Network. She also serves as a pediatrician at Fletcher Allen Health Center and as a professor in the University of Vermont College of Medicine's pediatric department.

The Vermont Health Commissioner from 2008 to 2011, Dr. Davis is an American Academy of Pediatrics Fellow and the 2009 recipient of the Vermont Medical Society's Distinguished Service Award. She received her M.D. from the University of Virginia School of Medicine in 1981 and completed pediatric and chief residencies at Case Western Reserve University.



Vermont Medical Society

LEADERSHIP

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James Hebert, M.D.
President - Elect

Wendy Davis, M.D.
Vice President

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Secretary/Treasurer

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Immediate Past President

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President

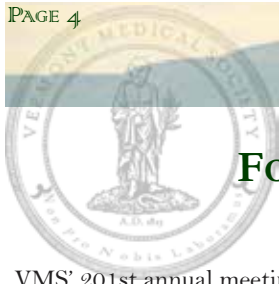
Stephanie Winters
Operations Director

Colleen Magne
Business Manager

Justin Campfield
Communications Director

Suzanne Parker, M.D.
VPHM Medical Director

Cyrus Jordan, M.D.
VMSERF Administrator



FOUR RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO HEALTH CARE AND COMMUNITY

VMS' 201st annual meeting concluded in celebration as four Vermonters were honored for their outstanding contributions to the health and well being of the state's residents.

The Distinguished Service Award was presented to **David Butsch, M.D.**, of Barre, Vt., for his work as a physician and surgeon at the Central Vermont Medical Center for more than 40 years, treating patients and assisting in their recuperation. His patients describe him as both a great surgeon and as an amazing man who is compassionate about the people he is treating. Dr. Butsch has served as the President of VMS, and as its delegate to the AMA for six years. In addition to his career as a surgeon, he was a cofounder of the Central Vermont Civic Center, a nonprofit organization that in 1998 opened a multipurpose building which during the winter months is operated as an ice rink that is home to interscholastic, youth, and adult leagues' hockey games.



From left to right: David Coddair, M.D., David Butsch, M.D. and Jack Murray, M.D.

The Distinguished Service Award, the highest award VMS can bestow upon one of its members, is given on the basis of meritorious service in the science and art of medicine and for outstanding contributions to the medical profession, its organizations, and the welfare of the public.



From left to right: David Coddair, M.D., David Little, M.D. and Tom Peterson, M.D.

The Physician of the Year award was presented to **David Little, M.D.**, of Milton, Vt., for his exemplary and respectful care that he has given to his many patients and their families, and the role model he has provided within the physician community. Dr. Little is well respected by his colleagues and beloved by his patients for the caring and compassionate style of delivering comprehensive high quality care. He is a Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Vermont College of Medicine and a past recipient of the Vermont Family Physician of the Year Award.

The Physician of the Year Award is granted annually to a physician licensed in the state of Vermont who has demonstrated: outstanding performance in the quality of care given to his/her patients; skillful and compassionate patient care; and, dedication to the welfare of his patients in accordance with accepted principles of good medical practice.

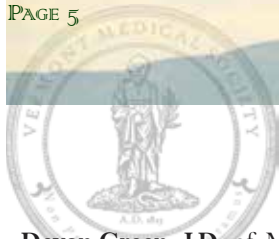
Jill Lord, RN, M.S., of Windsor, Vt., received the Citizen of the Year Award for her efforts as Director of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center. In 1998, Lord was instrumental in creating the Vermont Nursing Internship Program in order to help mentor and support new nursing graduates going into clinical roles and continues to serve as President of its board. She was also recognized for her strong presence in community health through service on the Windsor Area Community Partnership, the Blueprint for Health, the Windsor Area Drug Task Force, and the PATCH Network, in addition to a myriad of other community health initiatives. Her dedication to growth and care have helped create structured teen activities after school, alcohol and drug counseling and recovery programs, food and clothing for the needy, mental health services, dental services, and navigation through the changing environment of health care.



From left to right: David Coddair, M.D., and Jill Lord, R.N., M.S.

The Citizen of the Year Award is given to a non-physician resident of the state of Vermont who in the past and presently has made a significant contribution to the health of the people of Vermont.

Continued on page 5



VMS AWARDS

Devon Green, J.D., of Montpelier, Vt., was presented with the Founders' Award, which is presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, vision, and achievement in improving the health of Vermonters and all Americans.

Green was recognized for her successful work as a staff attorney at Vermont Legal Aid on the landmark nationwide class action lawsuit "Jimmo v. Sebelius." The case challenged the Medicare "Improvement Standard" which denied care to Medicare beneficiaries who needed services to maintain their health status but who could not demonstrate that their condition would improve. Many thousands of Medicare patients should benefit from the Jimmo decision by helping them stay in their communities and avoid or delay hospitalizations and nursing home placements.



From left to right: Lila Richardson, David Coddair, M.D., and Devon Green, J.D.

VMS FOUNDATION AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP TO UVM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE STUDENTS

Two University of Vermont College of Medicine students who've signaled their intention to practice in Vermont when they graduate have been rewarded for their commitment to the state as the Vermont Medical Society's Education and Research Foundation awarded them \$5,000 scholarships.

The scholarship winners, **Tara Higgins** and **Whitney Thomas**, were honored during the VMS' 201st annual meeting.

A member of the class of 2016, Higgins is a 2009 graduate of Bates College and completed the UVM College of Medicine's Post baccalaureate Premedical Program in 2011.

Her work in health care has included completing a reproductive health externship at Planned Parenthood of New England, and research assistantships at the UVM the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, and the Department of Psychiatry's substance abuse treatment center.

She has also worked to improve the lives of children through her work as a writing tutor, literacy volunteer and mentor.

Thomas, also a member of the class of 2016, has served as a teacher at the UVM College of Medicine and Community Health Center of Burlington's WeCare project, a reproductive education initiative that helps educate Somali and Somali-Bantu women in the Burlington area about prenatal health and pregnancy. Additionally, she has served as a coordinator of the SmileDocs program – a student-run initiative that teaches elementary students about medicine, organ systems, nutrition and health – and was a research assistant at Fletcher Allen Health Care's breast ultrasound research project, Imaging the World.

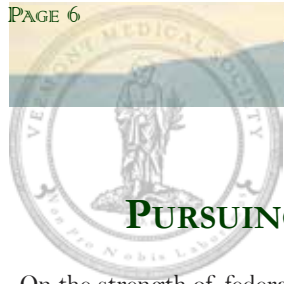
She is a 2008 graduate of Bates College and received an M.A. in medical science from Boston University in 2012.

Each year the Vermont Medical Society Education and Research Foundation gives one or more scholarships to medical students who are committed to practicing medicine in Vermont and caring for Vermonters. The scholarship program was created to encourage young doctors to return to Vermont after completing their residency training.

The scholarship is funded through generous contributions from Fletcher Allen Health Care, members of the Vermont Medical Society, and the Chittenden County Medical Society.



From left to right: Dean Rick Morin, M.D., Whitney Thomas and Tara Higgins



VMS FOUNDATION LAUNCHES PURSUING HIGH VALUE CARE FOR VERMONTERS INITIATIVE

On the strength of federal health reform funds awarded through a grant from the State of Vermont's Vermont Health Care Innovation Project (VCHIP), the VMS Foundation has recently launched the Pursuing High Value Care for Vermonters initiative. By engaging in a number of projects, the initiative hopes to increase the value of the health care system by focusing on things that matter to patients, reducing harm, conserving resources and increasing system efficiencies.

The initiative's first project, the Optimizing Laboratory Testing Collaborative, aims to reduce harm to patients and conserve system resources by optimizing the use of laboratory tests for patients cared for in our region's hospitals. By using a collaborative approach to considering the best medical evidence and quality improvement science, the project will initially evaluate

current test ordering profiles and patterns, then organize a plan to optimize testing and develop sustainable practices around them.

The collaborative is comprised of clinical leaders from Central Vermont Hospital, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Rutland Regional Medical Center, and the University of Vermont Medical Center.

And the collaboration has been busy so far as one on-site learning session and three webinars have taken place in the past three months.

For more information about the Pursuing High Value Care for Vermonters initiative or the Optimizing Laboratory Testing Collaborative, visit VMSFoundation.org.

VERMONT PHYSICIAN RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

Toby Sadkin, M.D., a family medicine physician practicing in St. Albans, is the recipient of the 2014 Physician Executive of the Year Award from the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA), a national association for medical practice executives and leaders.

In addition to seeing patients full-time at St. Albans Primary Care, Dr. Sadkin is the Executive Committee chair at Primary Care Health Partners (PCHP), a group of eight primary care offices located in Vermont and upstate New York. She is the managing partner of PCHP's Vermont offices, located in Brattleboro, Burlington, Bennington, South Burlington, and St. Albans. PCHP is the largest physician-owned primary care organization in Vermont.

The MGMA Physician Executive of the Year Award recognizes a physician in a medical group practice who has exhibited outstanding leadership to achieve exceptional medical group performance in the delivery of health care, through both personal example and collaborative team management.

Dr. Sadkin has been instrumental in the success of PCHP, which was formed in 2000 in response to the Kaiser Permanente health plan leaving the region. Under her leadership, PCHP acquired and reorganized a medical billing company to provide billing services to its eight practices. A sister company, Northeast Medical Practice Management, was formed in 2009 to offer those services to other medical practices not in PCHP.

She has also been a leader in using technology to improve the delivery of health care services. Dr. Sadkin's office was the first PCHP site to implement an electronic health record system in 2007, long before the federal government offered incentives for physicians to use the technology. She then led the rollout of the EHR system to other PCHP offices. More recently, Dr. Sadkin has been leading PCHP in the implementation of an online portal in medical offices so that patients can easily access their own medical records.

"Everyone within PCHP and many others outside PCHP are amazed at how much Dr. Sadkin has given of her time through committee participations, as well as frequently reaching out to the managers at the PCHP administrative office in Williston," said Jon Asselin, PCHP's chief operating officer and chief financial officer. "She remains on top of operational and financial, as well as clinical issues," he said.

Dr. Sadkin has also been active in other Vermont organizations. She is a board member at OneCare Vermont, a statewide accountable care organization that coordinates the health care of 54,000 Vermont Medicare beneficiaries, and has recently expanded to cover beneficiaries of Medicaid and commercial insurance programs.

MGMA presented the award to Dr. Sadkin in October during its annual conference in Las Vegas.



PRIORITIES

Cont'd from pg. 1

Supporting Funding and Positions for Graduate Medical Education in Vermont – Calls for VMS to work with academia, government, hospitals, insurers, and providers to increase GME opportunities and funding in Vermont, as well as aligning GMEs with the state's evolving medical needs.

Patient Portals – VMS will join eligible hospitals and eligible providers in working with VITL in order to explore building a statewide patient portal



in Collaboration with
**American Academy of Pediatrics
 Vermont Chapter, and Vermont Academy
 of Family Physicians**

Topnotch Resort & Spa, Stowe, Vt.

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