



Bulletin

of the Mahoning County Medical Society
Second & Third Quarter 2011



Bulletin

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CALENDAR

<i>October 29, 2011</i>	<i>Phineas & Ferb, Covelli Centre</i>
<i>November 4, 2011</i>	<i>Straight No Chaser, Covelli Centre</i>
<i>November 5, 2011</i>	<i>Medical Society Conference on Current Concepts in Healthcare, NEOMED</i>
<i>November 18, 2011</i>	<i>Trace Adkins, Covelli Centre</i>
<i>December 15 - 18, 2011</i>	<i>Disney on Ice, Covelli Centre</i>
<i>January 11, 2012</i>	<i>6th District Winter Caucus Congress Lake Club</i>

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I Am a Heartless Doctor

As the race for the Republican presidential nomination heats up, so has the rhetoric regarding healthcare reform in our country. It appears that all of the mainstream candidates for this position agree that “Obamacare” is a critically flawed program. The debate however seems to be heating up on what type of healthcare reform our federal government should be undertaking. Some feel that a milder version of “Obamacare” would be appropriate. Others, most notably those on Libertarian leaning sides, feel the federal government should stay out of the healthcare industry all together.

In a recent debate, a moderator posed for candidate Dr. Ron Paul a hypothetical situation: “Imagine a 30 some-year-old healthy male who has chosen to not have healthcare insurance because he felt that he was healthy and didn’t want to pay the cost of the insurance for something he wasn’t going to use. Now imagine that same 30-year-old is in a serious accident and is now critically ill. He is likely going to require 6 or more weeks in the ICU.” The moderator then went on to ask whether Congressman Paul felt they should “pull the plug” on this young man because he couldn’t pay his expensive bill. I watched this debate live and listened to Congressman Paul’s response. I felt he made a fairly articulate argument that although he did not advocate for pulling the plug on this gentleman, that it was not the responsibility of the federal government to pay the bills for people who have chosen to put themselves in situations such as this. He then went on to offer a fairly clear explanation that there were other ways of paying his bills that included community, family, or even church-related organizations.

Imagine my surprise over the next week or so when I read multiple accounts in the media that stated that Dr. Ron Paul was a heartless doctor. Many of his words, as usual, had been twisted by the media. There were some missed quotes, but the overwhelming majority of the message was that as a physician, if he did not feel that it was the government’s responsibility to pay for one of its injured and downtrodden citizens, that he was a heartless doctor.

Well I guess I’m a heartless doctor too. I stand firmly on the belief that we as Americans have every right to enjoy the freedoms that our founding fathers fought for. We have the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and yes, we have the freedom to make stupid decisions about our own healthcare. I think one of the things that our country has lost over time is the idea that although we have an incredible amount of freedom in our country, it does not mean that we are free from the consequences of exercising those freedoms. We certainly have the freedom to speak out against our government or other people, but that doesn’t mean that we won’t hold you accountable for ignorance or ridiculous things that you say. The press has freedoms in our country, but we certainly expect the press to be accountable for the things they print. In our country we have the freedom to make poor choices regarding our personal health. We can choose to smoke, drink excessively, eat poorly, not exercise, or practice any number of other negative health behaviors. However, we should be expected to be responsible for those consequences. Along the same lines, if someone chooses to not carry health insurance or be underinsured from a healthcare standpoint, it is not the responsibility of the rest of our society through the federal government to rescue those people from their poor decisions.

Now, I’m not advocating that a hospital should have the right to “pull the plug” on this hypothetical patient discussed above just because he cannot pay his bill at the time of service. However, I do feel that the hospital has every right to continue to pursue repayment from the individual for everyday of the remainder of life that the hospital provided him with.

Freedom isn’t free people! The sooner America understands this, the sooner we will get back on track.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MTE', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



From the President by Thomas E. Albani, MD

ACCESS HEALTH MAHONING VALLEY

ACCESS HEALTH MAHONING VALLEY is a multicounty initiative that is about to go live in our area. It is supported by local businesses, individuals, and politicians. Many community leaders have spent many hours putting this program together in a cohesive, efficient and user (patient and physician) friendly format. It is designed to target those in our community who fall between the ages of 18 and 65 years old, cannot afford insurance of their own, and do not qualify for public assistance. Essentially, this program is designed to target the growing ranks of the working poor.

This program has been several years in the making. It is a non-profit organization. Medical malpractice coverage is provided for non-procedural outpatient services. The basic concept is to provide readily accessible care to those in need. By providing primary care to the growing number in need of a medical home, focus can be placed on preventative care rather than emergency/catastrophic care. This will serve to reduce medical costs to our community (taxpayers) by avoiding expensive and unnecessary emergency room visits. It is essentially taking that group of patients who overuse and overspend our available medical resources, and funnels them into a more controlled, organized, and efficient system. This will save all taxpayers a great deal of money.

Primary care providers will be on the outpatient "front line". Primary care providers can see patients in one of two settings (entirely their choice): 1) their own office, or 2) one of several designated **Access Health Mahoning Valley**-sanctioned facilities. Currently there is one facility in Trumbull County (set to open in December), and the Midlothian Free Clinic (operating since March of 2008) in Mahoning County. Another facility in Mahoning County is being developed. As mentioned, no additional malpractice insurance is required to see these patients for non-procedural visits. There are no inpatient responsibilities tied to seeing these patients.

The program is not designed to duplicate services that are already available ... therefore the inpatient care of these patients will remain as it has been, with use of the inpatient physicians on call for various medical specialties/services. The one difference will be that these patients will hopefully be under better medical control, with pre-existing medical issues identified and treated. This should result in better outcomes, fewer complications, and less risk assumed by all physicians involved.

So where do YOU fit in to all of this? It is readily apparent that each of us has somehow been involved in the care of these patients with no medical coverage. The above program has been developed to help care for these patients in a more controlled fashion to allow a more controlled, cost effective approach to their care. More patients (especially those inappropriately utilizing emergency room services) will be able to access preventive care services and receive treatment for current or newly identified problems. It allows a dignified approach to the care of these patients and will help to foster individual responsibility for one's own care. It is also designed to allow all medical providers to join in the effort, to avoid leaving a disproportionate share of the work on a select few. WE in the medical community have an opportunity here to take an appropriate leadership role. WE can do this better than anyone else ... these are OUR friends and OUR neighbors in need. This is OUR area of expertise. I strongly urge each of you to support this program and help in any way you can. During these terrible economic times, NEVER has our community needed our collective leadership, skills, and medical knowledge more. If not now, when? If not us, who?

Please contact any of the following people for more information and/or to volunteer:

Amanda Mesmer
Executive Director, Access Health Mahoning Valley
Her phone number

Thomas E. Albani, Jr., MD
Board of Directors Access Health; Medical Director, Midlothian Free Clinic
330-533-7300

Karyn Frederick
Executive Director, MCMS
330-533-4880

Bits 'n' Pieces

THE FOLLOWING PHYSICIANS HAVE RETIRED FROM PRACTICE:

Jay R. Osborne, MD
Pang-Hsiung Huang, MD

MEMBERSHIP DUES INVOICES MAILED

Invoices for 2012 membership dues have been mailed. This is the first year that physicians have the choice of joining either the Mahoning County Medical Society, the Ohio State Medical Association or both organizations. If you have any questions about this membership choice, please call the Society office at 330-533-4880.

DOCBOOKMD NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE ANDROID PHONE

DocBookMD, the application that gives you access to the MCMS membership directory on your smart phone, as well as secure, HIPPA compliant messaging, is now available to those with Android phones. To sign up, log on to the MCMS website at www.mahoningmed.org and click on the DocBookMD button. You will have to phone the Society to get your membership number in order to register.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dr. Anthony Lattanzio has moved his practice to:
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Austintown, OH 44515
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In Memoriam

Richard M. Kalapos, DO
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Dr. Albani Named Ohio Family Physician of the Year



Mahoning County Medical Society President Dr. Tom Albani was named the Ohio Family Physician of the Year at the Annual Meeting of the Ohio Association of Family Practice in Columbus. Dr. Albani was nominated by patients Tom and Georgia Backus who wrote: "He lives an 'on call' life. His care for families day and night is a part of his professional and personal makeup. During the holiday season he comforts families who have lost a loved one that year in his care by sending a poinsettia honoring their life and bringing comfort to the family."

In addition to serving as president of the medical society, Dr. Albani is the chairman of the Primary Care Department at St. Elizabeth Boardman Health Center where he received the Humility of Mary Health Partners' Mahoning Valley Leadership in Health Award. He is a volunteer faculty member for the family medicine residency program at St. Elizabeth Health Center and an assistant clinical professor at Northeast Ohio Medical University in Rootstown.

In 2008 Dr. Albani became the Medical Director of the Midlothian Free Health Care Clinic which he helped to establish. The clinic provides free primary care to adults age 18 to 65 with no health insurance or who are not eligible for healthcare assistance. He also serves on the board of Access Health Mahoning Valley. (You can read more about Access Health in the President's Message in this issue.)

Dr. Albani and his wife Karen are natives of Hubbard and live in Boardman. They have five children. Dr. Albani has had a private practice in the area since 1990. His office is in Canfield.

CME EVENT FREE TO COUNTY SOCIETY MEMBERS

The Mahoning County Medical Society, in collaboration with the Stark County Medical Society, the Summit County Medical Society and the Trumbull County Medical Society and the Northeast Ohio Medical University, is presenting a CME event, The Medical Society Conference on Current Concepts in Healthcare. The conference will be held on Saturday, November 5, 2011, at NEOMED in Rootstown beginning at 8:00 A.M. and concluding at 4:30 P.M.

Primary Care physicians and specialists in private practice, or those employed by a health system, are invited to join us for this informative conference exploring a variety of topics applicable to your practice. Speakers and topics include:

What Access Health Can Mean to You and Your Community - Barb Blevins, Director, Access Health Stark County and Amanda Mesmer, Executive Director, Access Health Mahoning Valley

Introduction to Palliative Care - Beth Magnifico, DO, Director of Palliative Medicine, Humility of Mary Health Partners

Improving Physician to Physician Communications - Timothy Gueramy, MD, Founder and CEO, DocBookMD

Acupuncture: Can it Benefit Your Patients? - Darlene Mager, DO, New Directions Pain & Medical Practice

Update on Breast Reconstruction - Peter L. Sarkos, MD

Suicide: Understanding the Pain, Easing the Grief - Humphrey D. Germaniuk, MD, Forensic Pathologist, Trumbull County Coroner

NEOMED has designated this live activity for a maximum of 6.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits.™

You may register in the following ways: Download the registration form from the MCMS website at www.mahoningmed.org and mail or fax it directly to NEOMED, Office of CPE, P.O. Box 95, Rootstown, OH 44272-0095, FAX 330-325-5929, or visit www.neomed.edu/ce to download a registration form and pay by credit card as indicated on the form.

If you are a member of any county medical society in the state of Ohio, you may attend at no charge. If you are not a member of a county society, the cost is \$149 which includes breakfast, lunch, parking and course materials.

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Call to Action: Tell Congress to Fix the Medicare SGR

Without Congressional action, Medicare physician reimbursement rates are scheduled to be cut 30 percent on Jan. 1, 2012. The Joint Selection Committee on Deficit Reduction is currently reviewing many different proposals for reducing the federal debt, including permanently fixing the flawed Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula responsible for the pending cut. We need your help to let Congress know now is the time to permanently fix the flawed SGR. Send a letter to tell your Congressional representative urging that the Joint Committee repeals the flawed SGR. More information on the OSMA's efforts in conjunction with the AMA is available at www.osma.org. You may also download and print this flyer to give to your patients.



Medicare and TRICARE patients: Protect your access to health care. Demand that Congress fix Medicare!

Call your senators and representative today at (888) 434-6200.

On Jan. 1, Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors are scheduled to be cut by nearly 30 percent. This follows a decade of flat rates and annual threats of steep payment cuts. And seniors and military families will pay the price.

What does this mean to you?

More physicians will find that they cannot afford to accept Medicare and TRICARE insurance and many seniors and military families will lose access to the care they deserve.

If Congress does nothing or once again freezes Medicare payments to doctors, the cost of eliminating these annual threats will continue to grow to over half a trillion dollars in just a couple years.

The American Medical Association and the Ohio State Medical Association believes patients have the right to see their physicians. We need a real solution that will preserve access to care for seniors and military families -- and fix Medicare now for the benefit of future generations.

It is time for Congress to become fiscally responsible and stop the budget tricks that keep making the problem worse. Congress needs to fix this crisis once and for all. As a Medicare or TRICARE patient, you can urge them to take action.

Call (888) 434-6200 today.

Tell your senators and representative it's time to **fix this problem and protect your access to care**. Congress isn't going to act unless you do!



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