

LEE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin



THE VOICE OF LEE COUNTY MEDICINE

APRIL 2004

VOLUME 28, NO.2

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA
MARY C. BLUE, M.D.

NO GENERAL MEETING IN APRIL

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY MAY 20, 2004

6:30 p.m. - Social Time

7:00 p.m. - Dinner/Program
at the

Royal Palm Yacht Club
2360 West First Street
Downtown Fort Myers

Speaker: Rudolph Kotula, M.D.

Topic: "Travel Medicine"

Reservations:

LCMS, P.O. Box 60041

Fort Myers, FL 33906-0041

Tel - 936-1645 Fax - 936-0533

If you have a new partner
coming to your practice, please
call The Society office for an
application at: 936-1645.

Inserts

- 1 FOREIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETERS LIST
- 2 FLAMPAC LETTER TO SENATE
CANDIDATE
- 3 WHAT THE LCMS DOES FOR YOU

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Mark your Calendars

9TH ANNUAL LEGAL-MEDICAL
CHALLENGE CUP
"The Battle of the Professions"

Note Date Change: Saturday, May 15, 2004

Renaissance Country Club
12801 Renaissance Way
Fort Myers, FL 33912
(Off Daniels, near I-75)
\$190.00 Per Team



President's Message

'TIS THE SEASON

Douglas Stevens, M.D.



The 2004 season is winding down and the 2004 legislative session is winding up. By the time you read this article we will have staged our "Doctor's Day at the Capital" in Tallahassee. I know how hard it is to take a day out of the office and what a loss that represents, however for those who were able to make the sacrifice I say "thank you" for heeding the call. It places us in the center of the minds of the legislators as they start their work on this year's agenda. With the Governor and the House behind us we are held up for ransom only by the members of Senate. They know that we are watching and that they will be held accountable.

In the meantime hang on out there. This is the time we all work a little harder and give a little more. Our trauma center, although still in peril, has made it for another year. Our hospitals are expanding and renovating during a time when many communities have suffered closings. Our community is vibrant and growing. Our goals are just and clear - we have a unified message and many influential people with us. We have much to be thankful for.

I wish you all health and happiness.

Congratulations

LCMS ALLIANCE & BETTY RUBENSTEIN 2004 AMAA LEAP AWARD WINNER

The American Medical Association Alliance (AMAA), in partnership with the American Medical Association Political Action Committee (AMPAC), will present its second annual legislative Educational and awareness promotion (LEAP) awards at the AMAA annual meeting in Chicago in June. This recognition, for excellence in legislative projects, is awarded to just one county Alliance and one state Alliance each year. Betty Rubenstein's tireless work with legislation and her innovative program of linking groups of Alliance members to form MD-1000 Club memberships along with the participation of Alliance members supporting the MD-1000 Club, have earned Lee County the prestigious Award this year.

A MESSAGE TO ALL PHYSICIANS FROM AMA PRESIDENT DONALD J. PALMISANO, M.D.

I have talked a lot lately about myths, misrepresentation, facts and accountability in the medical liability reform debate. And I've talked about how I believe that we who favor reform are holding the trump card -- the truth.

We've demonstrated that caps on noneconomic damages work -- such as MICRA, which for more than a quarter century has stabilized insurance rates in California.

We've debunked the myth that insurance companies' stock market losses are what drive skyrocketing medical liability premiums.

And we've exploded the claim that aggressive litigation makes medical care safer by punishing physicians when errors occur.

These truths -- and more -- can be found in the document "Medical Liability Reform -- Now!" available in pdf on the AMA's Web site (www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/1/mlr2004.pdf).

In last month's column, I addressed the issue of accountability for those lawyers who hope to strike it rich by filing frivolous suits and intimidating doctors.

Tertullian, a Roman cleric in the second century, wrote "Truth engenders hatred of truth. As soon as it appears, it is the enemy." That's how it appeared when my e-mail box filled up with replies from some trial lawyers after last month's column. Many were angry, a couple were unprintable and some offered a civil debate on this issue.

Here are a few excerpts:

"Your article (and you) are full of crap. You want to restrict the right of ordinary people to seek compensation for medical injuries. You mean merely to incite the passions of an already overpaid profession which is angry because they have to be accountable."

Just to be clear, the AMA does not oppose compensating an injured patient for medical expenses and lost wages. If there's been a wrong, we want it made right.

And we also want accountability for all -- for attorneys and physicians -- and that includes those who give false testimony using junk science to perpetuate a meritless claim that should not have been brought in the first place. Our quest is to maintain access for patients in their hour of need. The current system is destroying access.

Another e-mail: "Stop being a pawn for the abusive insurance industry."

Medical liability insurance companies are a convenient scapegoat, but they are required by law to make conservative investments. They typically place about 80% of their investments in the bond market -- not the stock market. According to A.M. Best Co., the investment yields of medical liability insurers have been stable and positive for the last five years.

If you think we're a "pawn," you are mistaken. Visit the Litigation Center on the AMA's Web site (www.ama-assn.org/go/litigationcenter). There you will find ample evidence that we take on insurers when we document that they have done harm to patients and physicians.

Here's another e-mail: "Peer review may be one part of the solution, but it should be serious, responsible peer review of doctors and hospitals.... Shining the light of investigation on negligence incidents would do more to reduce medical errors, thereby reducing malpractice claims."

continued on page 3.....

As I Recall...

Roger D. Scott, M.D.

CALVERT COURIER

What a surprise to find the following editorial appearing in the CALVERT COURIER October 1957 in Baltimore Maryland!

"Speaking of credit, who should deserve it more than Dr. Roger Scott who terminated his tour of duty at this hospital September 30th. Weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, morning, noon, or night, that's when he was on duty--anytime and all the time. In the few months he was here, his name became a byword. As a surgeon, he performed frequently and well, and for this his many patients will be everlastingly grateful. As a cheerful and friendly person with an unflinching sense of humor, he brought much that we will all remember. Good luck to you, Doctor, wherever you go and whatever you do."

I felt especially honored by this "horn tooting" that was published in the monthly newspaper by the inmates of the Maryland State Penitentiary in Baltimore on Calvert Street. A rat packer I am (while I frequently mistype, I meant packer) & just recently uncovered this "keepsake" from my youth. Few people know that I was in the "Pen" for four months!

The prison hospital with about 14 beds & a nice operating room had just been built within the massive dark & dreary granite walls of the prison. The University Hospital thought it would be good to assign a Chief Surgical Resident to the pen so that all prisoner surgery could be performed there instead of at the University Hospital. I was chosen for the first trial of four months to be THE surgeon for the entire penal system of the state. The salary was about \$250 a month, which was a boon as that doubled my chief resident's salary.

Life in the pen was totally different & here are a few remembrances. All the prisoners decried "not guilty" except for our great X-Ray technician, a former insurance salesman. He admitted guilt at having shot & killed (in his own bed) his wife & her lover. Most of the inmates seemed grateful to have me there. I had no fear of a malpractice suit, but of a shiv (knife) in the back.

One week all the post-op patients needed more & more narcotics and still complained of pain. They all enjoyed a "fix", but all at one time was unusual. I had the medical examiner's toxicologist analyze all the injectable narcotics & found mostly H2O with a trace of narcotic! Well, off to solitary confinement for my now untrusted trustee ward clerk for stealing the narcotics.

The last hanging in the state of Maryland occurred during my tour, and the warden (also the happy hangman) asked me to be present and pronounce the prisoner dead. I declined this invitation as I always felt it was my job to sustain life. The warden did show me the gallows and explained that a proper hanging causes fracture of the cervical vertebrae with transection of the spinal cord rather than strangulation or avulsion of the head from the body. The weight and height of the victim are used to calculate how far he must drop when going through the trap door. A sandbag of the victim's weight hangs from the gallows to stretch the new rope for about a week before the execution.

Continued on page 3.....

LEE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY
BULLETIN

P.O. Box 60041
Fort Myers, Florida 33906-0041
Phone: (239) 936-1645
Fax: (239) 936-0533
E-Mail: awilke@lcmstl.org
Website: www.lee-county-medical-society.org
FMA: www.fmaonline.org
AMA: www.ama-assn.org
The Lee County Medical Society Bulletin is published monthly, with the June and August editions omitted.

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The editors welcome contributions from members. Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect policies of the Society.

PRINTERS

Distinct Impressions 482-6262

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY

NEW SATELLITE OFFICE

Drs. Kini, Roggova & Galang
Kenneth Galang, M.D.
9132 Bonita Beach Road
Bonita Springs, FL 34135
239-768-5454 (T)

RELOCATING PRACTICE

Evelyn Kessel, MD
Brent Myers, MD
Digestive Health Specialists, PA
8380 Riverwalk Park Blvd #200
Fort Myers, FL 33919
239-561-7337 (T)

NEW PRACTICE

H. Scott Harris, MD
Associates in Digestive Health, LLC
665 Del Prado Blvd., Ste 1
Cape Coral, FL 33990
239-772-3636 (T)

Cecil Beehler, MD

Marlin Vision Center
1224 Del Prado Blvd.
Cape Coral, FL 33904
239-772-4057 (T)

Mohammad Rashid, MD

Lehigh Medical Group
1530 Lee Blvd., Room 2100
Lehigh Acres, FL 33936
239-369-0565 (T)

ADM. & BILLING ONLY ADDRESS

CHANGE
Digestive Health Physicians, PA
7152 Coca Sabal Lane
Fort Myers, FL 33908

NEW MEMBERS

Juan Carrere, M.D.
Patrick Daily, M.D.
John Debarros, M.D.
Patrick Landefeld, M.D.
Michael Novotny, M.D.
Robert Strathman, M.D.
Jeffrey Zimm, M.D.

REJOINED

William Kokal, MD
Surgical Associates of SWFL
2675 Winkler Ave, Ste 490
Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-275-6659 (T)

RETIRING

Congratulations on the retirement of
Cecil Miller, M.D.
Howard Sheridan, M.D.

RESIGNED

Thomas P. Lo, M.D.

LCMS ALLIANCE AND FOUNDATION NEWS

Submitted by Lynne Bacon, Co-President

Progress continues at a steady pace in our efforts to collect signatures for the Citizens for a Fair Share amendment. Volunteers worked the polls in largely Democratic precincts in the primary election, but results were not as high as anticipated due to both low voter turnout and the 50-foot buffer zone required by election law, which kept the voters a good distance from our table. Following a disappointing two hours at one polling location, which produced only two signatures, the volunteers moved to an area hospital to distribute petitions until returning to the polls for a hoped-for lunch surge. While the surge never materialized (isn't it amazing how few people determine elections), our collectors persevered and ended the day with over a hundred signatures.

Our stalwart volunteers on this election Tuesday were LYNNE GOROVY, JODI JOHNSON, JENNIFER KIM, CHERI O'MAILIA, LISA ROLAND, ANN WILKE, SHERRY ZUCKER, and LINDA CHAZAL who organized and staffed the day. They also have worked on other occasions at area hospitals, where NANCY BARROW, NANCY BURTON, GYNN GARRAMONE, ANA GREGG, JUDY KASH, SUZANNE KOTULA, LEANNE LUERHMAN, BARBARA RODRIGUEZ, BETTY RUBENSTEIN, FELINDA RUBIN, TAMI TRAIGER, JANE WEST, and yours truly have joined them. Many, many thanks to all, and especially to JODI JOHNSON, who works diligently at staffing our local efforts, and CHERI O'MAILIA, who is the FMAA legislative chairman and supports efforts throughout the state. Although they have full schedules with families and/or jobs, all of these women have dedicated much time and energy to see that this very important amendment gets passed. If we are to meet our deadline, however, we MUST have more participation.

Preliminary studies have shown that this constitutional amendment will pass by a huge margin if it makes it to the ballot, but it will never get there if we do not collect these signatures. PLEASE make every effort to collect in your practices. We are doing as much as we can at the hospitals given the help that we have. On average, we collect 35 signatures per two-hour shift. With an invalidation rate of 20-30%, Lee County needs a total of 40,000-50,000 signatures. We have 10,000 at this point. If 500 physicians in the county collected only 60 signatures each, we would hardly reach our goal. Considering the importance of ensuring access to quality care in our state, no one should feel uncomfortable asking patients to support this amendment; however, if you do not wish to ask your staff to solicit signatures, please invite your spouse to help. JODI JOHNSON, CHERI O'MAILIA, LINDA CHAZAL or I will be happy to give your spouse petitions and fact sheets, as well as answers to any questions you might have.

Dr. Steven West was on hand to answer our questions and update us on the petition drive and some of the behind-the-scenes legislative wrangling in Tallahassee at the Florida Medical Association Alliance's Southwest District Workshop in Port Charlotte last month. Throughout the state, the petition drive is gathering momentum, and public support is mounting, as we await the expected favorable constitutional review by the Florida Supreme Court. The goal is in sight; with your help, we will reach it.

In other Alliance news, the nominating committee is putting together a dynamic slate of incoming officers, and our March "Lunch with Friends" served valuable networking goals as we look forward to next year's projects. Our April meeting will refresh our knowledge of local history as we tour the Edison/Ford estates. Supper Club is an ongoing party you won't want to miss.

The LCMSA Foundation's Buckle Bear program continues teaching youngsters car safety awareness, while our new Stride Right program at Diplomat Elementary School is a model for educating students in healthy lifestyle choices. The Mini-Grant committee has signed, sealed, and delivered over \$20,000 in grants to area health-related charities, courtesy of last May's Gala. Although the February fashion show produced some donations for the Foundation, much more will be needed in order to fund next year's mini-grants. The decision was made to forego a major fund raising event this season in order to concentrate our efforts on the petition drive. With that in mind, we are asking each of you to contribute generously when you receive your up-coming invitation to a no-show event to raise money for the Community Needs Fund of our Reaching Out Program of Giving. We need your financial support so that the Foundation can continue to fulfill its mission.

NEW MEMBER APPLICANTS

Application for Membership

Active members are requested to express to the Committee on Ethical and Judicial Affairs or Board of Governors any information or opinions they may have concerning the eligibility of the applicants.



THOMAS B. JOHNSON, MD - EMERGENCY MEDICINE

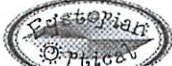
Medical School: New Jersey Medical School, Newark,
New Jersey (1993-97)
Internship & Residency: Orlando Regional Medical Center,
Orlando, FL (1997-2000)
Board Certification: American Board of Emergency Medicine.
Dr. Johnson is with Southwest Florida Emergency Physicians,
at 2727 Winkler Avenue, Fort Myers, FL 33901.



LAERTES A. MANUELIDIS, MD - DERMATOLOGY

Medical School: Yale School of Medicine, New Haven,
CT (1993-97)
Internship: Hospital of St. Raphael, New Haven, CT (1997-98)
Residency: Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, CT (1998-2001)
Fellowship: Medical University of South Carolina,
Charleston, SC (2002-2003)
Board Certification: American Board of Dermatology.
Dr. Manuelidis is in practice with Associates in Dermatology
at 8381 Riverwalk Park Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33919.

The Promenade
Bonita Springs
(239) 498-4420



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"MED MAL INSURANCE: WHO'S STILL WRITING POLICIES?"

Although the number of physicians in Florida who are "going bare" continues to grow, there are still a number of insurance carriers still offering medical malpractice insurance coverage. Please note, the list of providers includes:

ProAssurance/ProNational Insurance Co., Inc.

ProAssurance offers claims-made policies to physicians who fit restricted underwriting criteria. One of the largest medical liability insurers in the country, they insure more than 2,500 Florida physicians. For a rate analysis contact them at Huntington Centre II, 2801 SW 149 Avenue, Suite 200, Miramar, FL 33027. Contact: David Goss dgoss@proassurance.com or telephone 1-800-222-5115.

First Professionals Insurance Company (FPIC)

The largest malpractice insurer in the state with more than 6,000 Florida insured physicians. The company has been writing policies since 1976. For rate information call 800-471-9742 or Marie Allison located at 1000 Riverside Avenue, Suite 800, Jacksonville, FL 32204

The Doctors Company

This company was formed in 1976 to sell medical malpractice policies only. Coverage includes government audits and state-licensing board reviews. This carrier only insures physicians with a national association affiliation such as the American Board of Internal Medicine, American College of Surgeons and others. Office location is 85 Greenwood Road, Napa, CA 94558. Call the Sales Department at 800-352-0320.

Physicians Insurance Company

This company only began writing medical liability policies in March 2003, but is aggressively seeking new business. Currently they insure 6,300 Florida physicians, some with prior acts. Contact Lyn Zoldak at 225 NAE Mizner Boulevard, Suite 680, Boca Raton, FL 33432 or 1-877-800-2259.

Mag Mutual

The Florida Department of Insurance Regulation reports this company is still writing policies in Florida, but the company itself has refused to comment. Call 470-370-3813.

Pediatricians Insurance Risk Retention Group of Florida

This physician-owned company received state approval to offer policies to general pediatricians as of January 1, 2003. Physicians can be refused insurance if the group feels the doctor presents too much exposure. Contact Eugene Rosov at 305-751-9195 or 5891 NE Sixth Avenue, Miami, FL 33137.

Healthcare Underwriters Insurance Group of Florida

Medical Association

This non-profit, doctor owned insurer received approval to start writing policies as soon as capitalization is complete which was November 11, 2003. Regulations required they buy in equivalent to one year's growth of mature, claims-made premium. Coverage can be refused if the physician fails to meet underwriting standards. Call Steve Salaman 1815 Griffin Road Suite 1010, Dania, FL 33004 or at 954-923-1900

Florida Healthcare Providers Insurance Exchange

This MD-financed medical malpractice insurer expects to offer policies in association with Duane Morris LLP, a national law firm with Florida office in Miami and Palm Beach. Call Chris Pestera at 954-336-7284.

Florida Medical Malpractice Joint Underwriting

Authority

When no other company will write an insurance policy, there is JUA. The bad news is that it's an occurrence policy so you must purchase a tail. The physician must go through a Florida insurance agent to obtain an application. Within a five-seven day period the physician is required to pay 40 percent of the annual premium and the balance is due within 90 days. Contact Connie Stahley at 800-836-6003 or write P.O. Box 15021, 5814 Reed Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46885.

GE Medical Protective

Writing policies in Florida since 1992, insures 2,350 Florida physicians. Though this company stopped issuing policies some time ago, they expect to resume if permitted rate increase by the state Office of Insurance Regulations passes.

Reprinted Florida Medical Business
Volume 16, Number 22

Introducing an
Asset Protection Guide
every Physician should read:

PHYSICIAN
PROTECT
THYSELF

The Florida Physician's
Asset Protection Guide
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FREE copy
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Craig R. Hersch, Esquire, CPA
Florida Bar Board Certified
Wills, Trusts & Estate Attorney

SHEPARD, BRETT, STEWART, HERSCH & KINSEY
P.A.
Fort Myers, Florida

ANATOMY OF AN ANNUITY - PART 2

By Sandra Washburn, Financial Consultant

When You Retire

When you are ready to start using the money you have accumulated, you enter the payout period. Variable annuities offer a number of payout options, allowing you to select a plan that best fits your needs. Generally, there are three payout options:

- **Lump-sum Distribution** – This is when you withdraw all of your assets at once. At that time, income taxes are due on any earnings or other taxable amounts, unless you're making a 1035 Exchange. A 1035 Exchange is a tax-free method of exchanging an existing annuity policy for a new policy with a different company.
- **Systematic Withdrawal Plan** – This option lets you determine how much and how often you withdraw. Your income payments are based on either a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your annuity's value. Systematic withdrawals give you the flexibility to discontinue or change your payments at any time. Under this option, the money you withdraw is taken from investment earnings first and taxed as ordinary income
- **Annuitization** – By choosing to annuitize, you can structure your payout to guarantee an income for the rest of your life or for a specific number of years. Each contract contains annuity tables that demonstrate how the insurance company arrives at the initial annuity payment rate, which can vary by the age and sex of the annuitant. There are two options: -**Fixed Annuitization** – The amount of your income payments is fixed and will not fluctuate. You may choose income for life or income for a certain number of years, and the amount you receive will depend upon the option chosen.
- Variable Annuitization** – The amount of your income payments (for life or a certain number of years) will depend on the current value of the underlying investment, which varies over time. A variable annuitization payout option gives your money the best chance of keeping pace with inflation.

With non-qualified money, annuity income payments are tax-advantaged because part of each payment is considered return of principal and therefore is not taxable. Please note that most annuitization options are irrevocable.

Fees and Charges: A variable annuity has two types of expenses – an investment management fee and an insurance contract fee. The investment management fee may range from .25% to 2% per year, depending on the type of investment portfolio you choose. The insurance contract fee also varies, but most companies charge between 1% and 1.5% Contract owners may also be assessed an annual contract fee of between \$30 and \$40 (in most cases, this charge is dropped with assets in excess of \$50,000).

Most annuities are offered without an initial sales charge. However, canceling the contract during the earlier years may trigger an early withdrawal (surrender) charge. This charge ranges from 5% to 9% in the first year and declines to 0%, generally after seven years. However, as long as you remain committed to accumulating money and leave your money in long enough, you will not incur a surrender charge.

Choose Carefully: Before choosing an annuity, it is important to take several things into consideration: the investment selections, the historical performance of the underlying portfolios, the income options, insurance features, fees and charges, and of extreme importance, the soundness of the insurance company offering the annuity. In addition, ask yourself: When do I want to retire? How much income will I need when I retire? What assets will I have to draw on during retirement? Do your research and consult with an investment professional about specifics. By doing your homework you will be able to determine whether annuities should be part of your overall retirement plan.

* Annuities are long-term, tax-deferred investments intended for retirement planning. Withdrawals of certain earnings or other taxable amounts are subject to income tax and, if made prior to age 59 ½, may be subject to an additional 10% federal tax penalty. Early withdrawals have the effect of reducing the death benefit and contract value. Guarantees are backed by the claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company. Investments in the variable portfolios will fluctuate and may be worth more or less upon redemption.

INVESTMENTS IN SECURITIES, ANNUITIES, AND INSURANCE: ARE NOT FDIC INSURED, ARE NOT BANK GUARANTEED, MAY LOSE VALUE BROKERAGE SERVICES ARE OFFERED THROUGH FIRST CITIZENS INVESTOR SERVICES, INC. MEMBER NASD/SIPC First Citizens Investor Services, Inc., is a non-bank subsidiary of First Citizens Bank First Citizens and Atlantic States Bank are subsidiaries of the same financial holding company. This article was provided by Brenda Dolan, Vice President of Atlantic States Bank. Brenda is a Medical Financial Specialist with the bank. For more information contact Brenda at 239-985-2205 or Sandi Washburn at 239-659-2806.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

The Florida Legislative Session began March 2, 2004 and will continue until April 30, 2004. Do you know how to address your legislators? When you are contacting your legislator either in person, by phone or in writing there are several things to keep in mind.

10 TIPS ON HOW TO GET ALONG WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

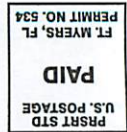
1. BE FAIR – Remember that your legislator represents all of his or her constituents regardless of party or group affiliation. Don't condemn a legislator because he or she has taken a position you personally do not agree with.
2. BE UNDERSTANDABLE – Try to put yourself in your legislator's place. Try to understand his or her problem, outlook and aims. By having empathy for the legislator, he or she will be more inclined to listen objectively to your position and understand your problem.
3. BE REASONABLE – Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinion. Never be vindictive! Continue to develop the relationship even though he or she may not vote your way. A legislator who votes against your position one day may very well be the deciding vote in your favor the next day.
4. BE FRIENDLY – Do not contact your legislator only when you want something done. Invite your legislator to local Board meetings, perhaps as a speaker. Go out of your way to keep in touch throughout the year.
5. BE THOUGHTFUL – Treat your legislator the way you would like to be treated. Let him or her know that you appreciate the good things they do. The golden rule applies in politics, too.
6. BE COOPERATIVE – If a legislator asks for help let him or her know that you can be relied on no matter how busy you are. Your assistance will be appreciated and remembered.
7. BE REALISTIC – Do not expect everything to go your way. Be ready at all times to consider the issues involved and compromise if necessary.
8. BE ACCURATE – Always be sure to have the necessary information and to do a good job at presenting your case. The only way to gain credibility is to know the issues thoroughly.
9. DON'T BE A BOTHER – Legislators do not like to be pestered, scolded, preached to, or "loved to death".
10. BE HONEST – Never stretch the truth to make your argument more saleable. If you learn new facts that would revise your assumptions, do not hesitate to bring the new situation to the attention of the legislator you have been contacting.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR LEGISLATOR

1. Know your legislators' district(s) and the correct spelling of their names. Refer to district maps and directories.
2. Use the following format for addresses:

Senators: Burt Saunders Dave Aronberg Mike Bennett	The Honorable John Doe The Florida State Senate The Capitol, Suite --- Tallahassee, FL 32399	Governor: The Honorable Jeb Bush Governor The Capitol Tallahassee, FL 32399
Representatives: Jerry Paul Lindsay Harrington Bruce Kyle Jeff Kotkamp Carole Green Dudley Goodlette	The Honorable John Doe Florida House of Representatives The Capitol, Suite --- Tallahassee, FL 32399	Lt. Governor: The Honorable Toni Jennings Lt. Governor The Capitol Tallahassee, FL 32301
Cabinet: Charlie Crist, Attorney General Tom Gallagher, Chief Financial Officer Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner	 The Honorable John Doe * Title The Capitol Tallahassee, FL 32399	
3. Write on personal stationary, FMA or CMS letterhead, or on plain paper. A personal letter is best! Your return address should be on the letter, not just on the envelope. This will enable your legislator to reply.
4. Do not use post cards or form letters except when advised to do so by the FMA Legislative Affairs office or the Lee County Medical Society Executive.
5. A good rule to follow is one subject per letter. Try to keep your letter to one page no matter how important the issue. This gives your letter more impact and makes a reply easier. It also takes up less of the staff's and legislator's time.
6. Make clear the position of the issue you are on, and ask the legislator to support your position.
7. Refer to exact bill numbers if available and short or popular titles.
8. Don't threaten or write in a belligerent tone.
9. Don't remind them of broken promises.
10. Don't write so often that your letters lose their impact.
11. Illustrate your position with a local example.
12. Sign your name legibly and type your name under your signature.
13. Time your letters to arrive far enough in advance to be effective.
14. If you have success be sure to write a thank you note.

*** Compiled from FMA articles ***



LEE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 60041
FORT MYERS, FL 33906-0041

General Membership
Meeting
May 20, 2004
Royal Palm Yacht Club