

THURSTON-MASON COUNTY

Medical Society

October 2013

Newsletter

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Message from the TMCMS President

By Rachel Reeg, MD

This month I would encourage you to look at the link below to review a summary of resolutions passed at the WSMA annual meeting in Spokane. The annual meeting continues to be a productive meeting with review of important topics, this year's agenda included discussions on end-of-life care, reproductive care and gun rights. Nonetheless, the speakers of the house kept order and led us through civil discussion where everyone could speak and vote their conscience in the best interest of physicians and patients.

The main headlining topic this month, however, is implementation of the Affordable Care Act with the enrollment process starting for many who have had little or no reasonable access to medical care. Despite difficulties in the enrollment phase and surprises for some individuals who will need to change current insurance plans significantly, there is still optimism health care reform implementation will provide important access to medical care to those previously unable to access it due to cost. We hope up to 90% of patients previously qualifying for coverage with Project Access will now qualify for and be able to afford insurance now available due to the Affordable Care Act. I will reiterate our thanks here to all the providers who have volunteered their time to so many in our community, likely changing their lives for months, years or a lifetime. I hope the new government plan can bring about as many good outcomes. The TMCMS board of trustees will continue to monitor the needs of the community to identify other populations who have barriers in accessing healthcare and determine if other programs can be initiated to reduce these barriers.

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Project Access in Transition

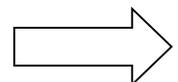
Thurston County Project Access began in 2005 as a way to provide acute and urgent medical services to residents who could not afford health insurance and yet did not qualify for various state and federal assistance programs. Over the past eight years 486 providers and clinics have volunteered their time and services to treat 3,637 people. Through the generosity of physicians and donors Project Access has provided nearly \$23 million worth of donated care to low-income, uninsured individuals in our community.

Due to new opportunities now available through health care reform, Project Access has begun the process of winding down the coordinated medical services provided to patients. As of October 1, Project Access stopped enrolling new patients into the program. All patients who were enrolled by September 30 will have their TCPA coordinated benefits provided through December 31, 2013. Beginning in January, TCPA will no longer provide coordinated medical services. Project Access staff is working to facilitate Project Access patient enrollment into the WA Healthplanfinder for free or reduced cost health care coverage. We anticipate that the majority of Project Access patients will have health care coverage beginning, January 1, 2014.

The TMCMS board will continue to monitor any unmet medical care needs in our community and may help to address gaps in care by developing new opportunities. TMCMS thanks the many physicians who have donated medical services through Project Access over the past several years. Your dedication to the TMCMS mission to "protect and improve the health of the public" is truly appreciated.

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WSMA Resolutions

To see the complete list of resolutions adopted at the 2013 WSMA annual meeting in September please visit the WSMA webpage at <https://www.wsma.org/house-of-delegates>.

WSMA's New President

Dale Reisner, MD of Seattle was installed at the WSMA annual meeting as president of the WSMA. Dr. Reisner practices at Swedish Medical Center in Seattle where she serves as a maternal fetal medicine specialist in the Division of Perinatal Medicine, as well as the Medical Director of Obstetrical Quality and Patient Safety.

TMCMS Thanks WSMA Delegates

The TMCMS would like to thank Dr. Noel Beckford, Dr. Dave Cundiff, Dr. Bob Lang, Dr. Mike Menen, Dr. Rachel Reeg, and Dr. Diana Yu for representing the TMCMS as delegates at the WSMA annual meeting in September. We appreciate your willingness to volunteer your time to represent the Thurston-Mason providers on the state level.

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Understanding WAHealthplanfinder.org

Washington residents now have a new way to find, compare and enroll in health insurance. It's called *Washington Healthplanfinder*, and it allows individuals, families, and small business owners to choose the plan that best fits their needs and their budget. Enrollment starts October 1 and coverage begins January 1, 2014.

WSMA has a dedicated Health Benefit Exchange resources page at www.wsma.org/health-benefit-exchange. There you will find comprehensive resources for physicians, including a section on what to tell your patients, and a section on what you need to know for your practice. Also included are instructional videos, on-demand webinars, plus information on provider contracts. The page provides a simple clear explanation for patients on how to get started getting enrolled, a cost-estimate calculator, and links to additional information.

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CME Opportunity presented by Thurston Primary Care Connections

Primary Care Connections will be hosting a presentation and discussion on "Tuberculosis and Other Public Health Emergencies", Wednesday, Nov. 13 from 5:30 to 7:00 at Providence St. Peter Hospital on the 2nd floor in Conference Room 200. This information will be presented by Rachel Wood, MD, MPH, Health Officer for Lewis County and soon to be Thurston County Health Officer as of December 3rd, 2013 and Diana T Yu MD, MSPH, current Thurston and Mason County Health Officer.

The presentation will focus on the essential need for communications between primary care physicians and public health officers during public health emergencies. CME credits will be available and there is no cost to attend.

Primary Care Connections is a group of primary care clinicians who have come together to produce interesting and pertinent CME and to help enhance how primary care works with other specialists. The group is currently made up of 4 members; Diane Dakin, Kevin Haughton, Diana Yu, and Joan Ashcraft. **They are currently looking for an internist to join the team.** If you are interesting in serving on this committee please contact Jena Layton at jlayton@tmcms.org or 360-352-1417 for more information.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- The 2014 WSMA Legislative Summit is scheduled for Monday, February 10 at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia.
- The 2014 WSMA Leadership Development Conference will be held May 16-17 at Campbell's Resort in Lake Chelan.
- The 2014 Annual Session of the WSMA House of Delegates will be held September 20-21 at the SeaTac Hilton Hotel.

For membership information, please contact the Medical Society office at 360.352.1417.

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