



LOUISIANA MGMA NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9 No. 5

Louisiana Medical Group Management Association

September / October 1998

LMGMA Dues Notices Being Mailed In October

Membership renewals notices for 1999 are being mailed in early October and the board of directors is asking that dues be paid by December 10, 1998.

You will note the information section on the Dues Notice is basically the same as last year's with a few new additions such as e-mail address, practice ownership, and ACMPE status.

You might want to make a few copies for new member referrals. A **CONTEST** kicks off October 1 and each time you refer or enroll a new member, your name goes into a hat for a drawing.

THE PRIZE: A Getaway Vacation at the exciting Sandestin Beach Hilton Golf & Tennis Resort in Florida plus spending money! The winner's name will be drawn at the 1999 Annual Conference and you must be present to win.



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CREDENTIALING: SEE PAGE 8

Register NOW - For The LMGMA Audio Conference
to get your handouts & send in your questions
prior to the conference!!!!

Conference Date:	Oct. 22
Time:	11:30-1:30
Place:	Your own office
For:	You, your staff, your physician(s)
Cost:	\$95 (\$125 for non members)
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For additional information about this newsletter, please contact the Louisiana MGMA State Office at P.O. Box 53213, Lafayette, LA 70505-3213 - Telephone/Fax: 318-984-9777, and visit our website www.netgatemedical.com/lmgma

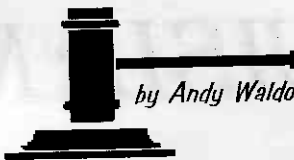
1998-99 Board of Directors:

- President:** Andy W. Waldo IV-Monroe Gastroenterology Clinic - Monroe
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- Secretary:** Shari Davis Advanced Rehab Assoc.. - Lake Charles
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- Director At Large:** Alan Beason Cardiovascular Consultants - Shreveport
- Director At Large:** Stewart J. Clark, Ph.D. LSU Dept of Pediatrics - New Orleans

"The LMGMA is dedicated to supporting the professional growth and development of its members and, in turn, the medical practices with which they are affiliated."

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Message From The President

The news is overflowing with a number of major topics covering the President, the economic crisis in Russia, and a fluctuating stock market. These are serious concerns that directly or indirectly affect all of us. Hopefully, the legislators will focus their attention on these on these issues and give healthcare a break.

I am still trying to read and digest many of the sweeping HCFA and other governmental changes proposed for January 1.

I recently mailed a barrage of letters to my Congressmen and Senators concerning the new APC (Ambulatory Payment Classifications) guidelines for outpatient surgery centers, RBRVS practice overhead expense cuts, and the site of service differentials. LMGMA does not take political stands on healthcare issues so it is important that each of us contact our lawmakers to voice our opinions on such matters.

The only other bad news that I must report is that Kathy Andrus of Baton Rouge has resigned from the LMGMA Board of Directors. Kathy is taking a break from practice management to pursue other endeavors. I have greatly enjoyed working with Kathy and the LMGMA will definitely miss her.

Now for the good news! The LMGMA Board recently met in Lafayette to further this year's agenda. The Corporate Partners Committee has finalized a new program that gives sponsors a rich list of benefits in exchange for their advertising dollars. Please contact Suzie Smith at the state office if you know of a prospective sponsor.

During this meeting the board agreed to pursue two new agenda items. First, a one-day North Louisiana networking meeting is being planned. Second, a salary survey is being explored. Many of you have stated that you would like to see LMGMA conduct a salary survey based on statewide and regional data.

A new Board of Directors Handbook has been created to give current officers guidelines for fulfilling their respective duties. Those of you who are interested in becoming an officer may contact the state office to receive a copy.

Have a great Fall, and I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

National Health Information Management Week
November 1-7, 1998



Putting
Health Information
To Work
With Care

(see article, page 4)

Y2K: Consider Other Millennium Bug Venues

By Melissa B. Hodgson

Senior Communication Specialist - LAMMICO

You may think since your computer is new or you don't use a computer that the year 2000 (Y2K) won't affect you. Aside from the best known issue — that computers will view 01/01/00 as January 1, 1900 rather than 2000 — other issues are at stake for health care practitioners. Congress recently began examining the medical industry's efforts to repair the Y2K glitch. Among other alarming statistics, the Senate quotes information technology world leader the Gartner Group as saying that more than 90% of individual physicians are not even aware of their year 2000 problems.

Medical Equipment: According to USA Today, "The fear is that crashing computers in the first days of 2000 could result in medical records being lost, IV feeders malfunctioning, kidney dialysis machines shutting down for maintenance, pharmacy doors secured by electronic clocks locking up or back-up generators failing."

Medical devices in your office and affiliated hospitals that seem non-date-specific may still react to 01/01/2000 because of embedded microchips. CNET News reports "virtually every diagnostic and therapy machine is powered by one or more microprocessors."

In the Office: Aside from appointment scheduling, accounts payable and receivable, and electronic medical records software, consider items that could disrupt communication with your patients, access to your office, or standard operating procedure. A few examples are listed below:

- Communication: answering machines, voice mail systems, PBX telephone systems, mobile phones, pagers, and fax machines;
- Access: elevators, air conditioners, lighting systems, sprinkler systems, security access control systems, parking lot gates, and traffic lights;
- Office operation: photocopiers, postage machines, electronic clocks and watches, microwave ovens, automated teller machines (ATMs), cars, time clocks, and bar code scanners.

Billing and Collections: Even if your billing software is Y2K compliant or you bill manually, your bottom line may be affected. Senate estimates indicate that electronic payments from insurers and Medicare account for nearly half of health care payments. Y2K could affect any payer you con-

tract with, making them unable to process your payments electronically. Payers resorting to paper processing for all claims are expected to cause a national health care paper-work traffic jam.

Sooner Than You Think: Equipment may react sooner than 2000 because computer programmers often used 09/09/99 as a test date in programming during the 1960s and 1970s assuming their coding would be replaced before 1999. In fact, much of the programming in use today includes original code created decades ago.

One way Y2K issues have already begun to affect the public is in expiration dates. For example, many ATMs and retail outlet systems are refusing credit cards with 2000 or later expiration dates.

What Should You Do? Y2K compliance consultants agree that a three-step approach is necessary: inventory, assess, correct. An exhaustive inventory of equipment needs to be done first. Then test every potentially affected device. Third, fix devices that can be fixed, and replace those that are difficult or impossible to test or cannot be fixed. Since there is no way to be guaranteed of complete Y2K compliance among all the machines you use, develop back-up manual override systems and downtime procedures for all currently machine-assisted procedures.

Reprinted with permission from Louisiana Medical Mutual Insurance Company.

Other Y2K Information Available at MGMA Web Site

If you are seeking information on Y2K in the healthcare industry, visit the MGMA website at www.mgma.com

Click on NEWS and then go to INTERNET LINKS. There are two sites:

- Rx 2000 Solutions Institute
- Year 2000 Center

In The News

Chuck Mock Named Legislative Chair

Chuck Mock, CEO of the CVT Surgical Center in Baton Rouge, has agreed to serve as chair of the LMGMA Legislative Committee.

The appointment was made by President Andy Waldo. A member of the committee for several years, Mock replaces Lee Chastant, LMGMA President-Elect, who will remain on the committee as liaison to the LMGMA board of directors. Other committee members are: Tom Cooper of Lafayette, Clay Countryman of Baton Rouge, Shari Davis of Lake Charles and Lenora Poole of Lake Charles.

Fraud vs. Billing Errors

MONROE -- Northeast Louisiana Physician Hospital Organization (NLPHO) is closely watching the fraud and abuse initiative by the Office of the Inspector General, and will continue to publish excerpts from the Healthcare Financial Management Association Express News.

This update is from the Aug. 21, 1998 issue:

"Health care providers, practitioners, and suppliers will not be subject to the civil monetary penalty law or the [False Claims Act] for billing errors, honest mistakes, or negligence," HHS Inspector General June Gibbs Brown stressed in a recent letter to HFMA President and CEO Richard Clark, HFMA. Brown wrote to Clarke and other healthcare association representatives to dispel concerns that the federal government is treating all billing errors as violations of the False Claims Act. She explained that "law enforcement efforts are focused on improper claims that are made intentionally, or with reckless disregard for the truth, or with deliberate ignorance of the truth." If an improper claim is simply the result of a billing error, honest mistake, or negligence, "the provider may be asked to return the funds, but without penalties," in accordance with HCFA's standards and guidelines. However, Brown also stressed that "all health care providers have a duty to reasonably ensure that the claims submitted to Medicare and other Federal health care programs are true and accurate."

Brown enclosed a copy of the HHS Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) recently released national project protocols (Fax-It document 400042), which she stated were created to allay the healthcare community's concerns about overly zealous enforcement of the False Claims Act. She also stressed her desire to work with the healthcare community "to prevent potential liability for fraud and improper billing before it even occurs."

Reprinted with permission from the NLPHO Notes, September 1998

LPM Returns to LAMMICO

METAIRIE, LA -- LAMMICO Practice Management, L.L.C., which LAMMICO created in 1996 to offer physicians a direct connection to the growing MSO market while maintaining their autonomy, is once again wholly owned by LAMMICO.

In 1997, LAMMICO, a mutual insurance company, partnered with PHP Healthcare Corp. of Reston, Va. to involve PHP's expertise in information systems for managed care and practice management in the start-up of the new company.

"Together, PHP and LAMMICO developed a firm foundation that can support the growth of LAMMICO Practice Management throughout the state," said Robert L. di Benedetto, M.D., President and CEO of LAMMICO. "Now that LPM is up and running, PHP is withdrawing from active management while still serving as a vendor."

For more information, contact Robert L. di Benedetto, M.D., at 800-452-2120 or 504-831-3756

National Health Information Week Is Nov. 1-

CHICAGO -- November 1 through 7 is National Health Information Management (HIM) Week. The week-long event recognizes the "unique contributions" of HIM, or medical records, professionals.

"HIM professionals are playing increasingly pivotal roles in the healthcare industry," said Margaret M. Stewart, RRA, president of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), a national association of 38,000 HIM professionals. "More and more HIM professionals are making these contributions in nontraditional healthcare settings, such as HMOs, ambulatory care centers, and long-term care facilities."

According to Stewart, key HIM roles include data quality management, fraud and abuse prevention, information security, and compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) provisions.

For more information, contact: Jack Segal, Media Relations Manager, at 312/573-8508 -- e-mail: jsegal@ahima.org web site: <http://www.ahima.org>

**BATON ROUGE AREA CODE
IS NOW 225**

1999 LMGMA Annual Conference On Track

Additional Breakout Sessions are being looked at for the 1999 conference, as well as Specialty Sessions. These specialty assemblies, or sessions, offer attendees the opportunity to get together with their peers. President Andy Waldo is busy lining up chairs for these groups.

The 1999 LAMMICO Series Speaker will Jean Gatz of Baton Rouge, internationally known speaker, workshop leader, and author of the popular book, "How To Be The Person Successful Companies Fight To Keep." Jean is high content speaker who blends humor and motivation with a "common sense" approach to life. She shares real-life scenarios and real-life solutions people can apply at work and at home.

National best-selling author Dr. Luis Balart, a New Orleans gastroenterologist, will join us as the Thursday luncheon speaker. Dr. Balart is one of the co-authors of "Sugar Busters" which continues climbing to the top of several national best-sellers list.

Other speakers for the 1999 conference will be addressing a variety of topics important to managers and staff including compliance, new/proposed legislation, Year 2000 (Y2K) issues, managed care, personnel management, using the Internet, time management, and contracts.

More conference details will be published in subsequent newsletters.

Sponsors Being Solicited

A Corporate Partners Committee (sponsors) is being formed as LMGMA enlarges its scope of operations to include additional educational resources and networking opportunities for members.

If you are interested in participating in this venture, please contact any board member or Suzie Smith, executive director, at the LMGMA State Office -- 318-984-9777. Packets outlining sponsor levels and benefits have been printed and are available for distribution to interested parties.

This venture will afford unique benefits for sponsors as they link with LMGMA, Louisiana's premier professional association for medical office administrators and managers.

LMGMA in the Year 2000

Believe it or not, plans have also begun for LMGMA's Year 2000 Conference. If you have any ideas or speaker possibilities to share, please contact the state office or Lee Chastant at Stanocola Clinic in Baton Rouge.

Membership Update

Please add the following information to your 1998 Membership Directory.

NEW ACTIVE MEMBERS:

Debbie Reynon, Office Manager
Urologic Institute of New Orleans
2600 Belle Chasse Highway
Gretna, LA 70056
Tel: 504-394-7000 - Fax: 504-394-6757
Urology - # Physicians: 6

Nate Graff, President
Integrated Health Management
760 Magazine Place #100
New Orleans, LA 70130
Tel: 504-522-1969 - Fax: 504-523-1969
MSO

NEW AFFILIATE MEMBERS:

Fred Daner, Sales Rep
Reynolds & Reynolds Healthcare Systems
263 Chestnut Oak Drive
Mandeville, LA 70448
Tel: 504-727-9985 Fax: 504-727-9986

EMPLOYMENT CHANGE:

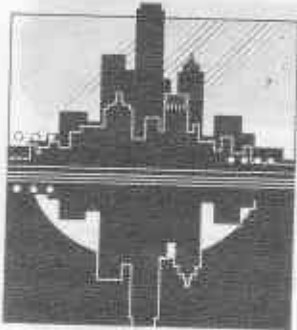
Terry Caluda, Office Manager
Drs. Sagraera, Brunner & Annaloro
800 Virtue St, Ste 204
Chalmette, LA 70043
Urology - # Physicians: 3
Tel: 504-277-8265 Fax: 504-277-0020

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Eugene Landry
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Tel: 504-727-1138

Sandra Boyet
Site Supervisor
Ringgold Family Medicine
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Ringgold, LA 71068



LOCAL / METRO CHAPTER UPDATES

Northwest Louisiana

SHREVEPORT -- Meetings of the Northwest Louisiana (NORWELA) chapter are held at the University Club in Shreveport. The meeting format includes a buffet lunch and networking with colleagues, followed by a presentation on a timely topic relating to medical practice management.

During the August 19 meeting, Mr. Lamar Pugh of the law firm of Pugh, Pugh & Pugh, discussed "Employment Practice Issues." During his 30-minute presentation, Pugh updated the audience on the need for training of management and staff in the area of sexual harassment. Increased awareness and sensitivity is needed at all levels of the organization to avoid problems regarding sexual harassment. A strong policy prohibiting sexual harassment and strict enforcement of the policy is the first step. The next step is training for staff members to ensure their understanding of the policy.

The topic for the Sept. 23 meeting is "Re-engineering for the Medical Practice." Lonnie Hardy, CPA, of James & Hardy, CPAs, will discuss the steps in corporate re-engineering and offer examples of how such activities have improved customer service and reduced costs in many organizations.

Topics for the remainder of 1998 include the following:

Oct. 28: "NCQA and other Quality Issues" by Donna Culpepper, Provider Relations Representative for HealthPlus of Louisiana;

Dec. 2: "Medical Malpractice Considerations" by Art Adams, Senior Field Service Representative for LAMMICO.

-- Alan Beason

Teche Medical Management Association

NEW IBERIA -- The following officers have been elected by the Teche Medical Management Association (TMMA) and have just begun their terms: **President:** Sandra Helveston, office manager for Dr. Luis E. Alvarez (gastroenterologist); **Vice President:** Janelle Gonsoulin, office manager for Dr. James Walker (otolaryngology); **Secretary:** Cheryl Romero, business manager for Iberia Cancer Care Center (the New Iberia office for the Romagosa Radiation Oncology network); **Treasurer:** Joan LaBarge, office manager for Dr. G. Douglas Sagrera (general practice); **Public Relations:** Kimberly Delcambre, LPN for Dr. Jesus R. Garcia (family practice, geriatrics, addiction medicine); **Public Relations:** Glenda Latiolais, office manager for Dr. L.O. Broussard (general surgeon) and Dr. William Harkrider (general and vascular surgeon).

We were recently addressed by Mike Sparks of Freedom Re-

covery Centers who presented a very informative talk. Upcoming scheduled meetings are: Oct. 21 at Iberia Medical Center in Classroom A, and Nov. 17 at Dauterive Hospital in Meeting Room 1. Jerry Webb with Credit Bureau Services will be our October speaker.

A tradition for the Teche MMA is sharing during holiday seasons and this year is no exception as members prepare baskets to be distributed during the months of November and December.

The Teche MMA members share ideas and keep each other informed of changes pertinent to local medical facilities.

-- Cheryl Romero

Baton Rouge MGMA

BATON ROUGE -- The Baton Rouge Medical Group Management Association (BRMGMA) is pleased to have Barbara Helms of Shenandoah Medical Associates as the new treasurer of our association. Barbara has been a member of BRMGMA for some time now, and is a great asset.

Additionally, Pam Burke of Vascular Surgical Associates, has agreed to sit on the BRMGMA Advisory Board in the vacancy left by Kathy Andrus, a dedicated member of both LMGMA and BRMGMA. An aside, although Kathy has decided to leave the medical field, the hard work and values she brought to our organizations will remain.

We had no meeting in July which, by tradition, is our "Summer Break" but we had a very interesting and informative meeting at the office of Drs. Hansbrough, Peters, and Petit at our Aug. 13 meeting. With a great turnout, we were able to view a "paperless office" first hand, thanks to our members Ermyne Collura and Jean Rogers.

For the Sept. 10 meeting, we made the move from an evening meeting to a noon meeting at the restaurant, A Taste of China. The speaker was Michael C. Garrard, a partner at Kean, Miller, Hawthorne, et. al., and an adjunct professor at LSU Law School. He spoke on Employment Law and the importance of appropriate employment records.

We plan to continue meeting at noon for all upcoming meetings since we had such a great turnout in September despite the rain. Carol Fontenot of TempStaffers will speak in October on personnel placement and qualifications. Glen Uffman of the Baton Rouge Credit Bureau will speak in November of Accounts Receivable/Collection Law. We have no meeting in December. Ho. Ho. Ho.

-- Tom Baggett

Northeast Louisiana Medical Managers

MONROE -- Our Chapter has continued to meet during the summer months although several members have been away on vacation. In August, Jack Wright, attorney, presented information on employment liability with an emphasis on sexual harassment.

The September meeting consisted of a round table discussion covering many topics such as the new Medicaid eligibility requirements and electronic claims processing.

Our next meeting will feature our Medicare representative, Danny Walsworth. This meeting is always well attended and is also used as an opportunity to attract new members to NELMMA. All medical managers in the area are invited regardless of their membership status.

Our Chapter continues to support the round-table discussion format on alternating months. This format gives all members the opportunity to share experiences and "best-practices" ideas.

-- Andy Waldo

Tangipahoa Parish Medical Managers Association

HAMMOND -- TMMA has had a busy past few months. Our July meeting brought Curtis Gunter with LAMMICO to discuss the many issues surrounding physician office malpractice. We were very grateful for the wealth of information he provided.

Our July meeting also brought election of officers for the 1998-99 term.

Our August meeting was on the lighter side, featuring Dave Waguespack with North Oaks Hospital. His insightful discussion was on motivation and attitudes. He left us with this thought: "If you think you are beaten, you are. If you think you dare not, you don't. Success begins with your own will...it's all in your state of mind."

Following his talk we honored new officers and **Past President** Kandy Berner. Our new slate of officers are: **President:** Michelle Wier of Internal Medicine Clinic of Tangipahoa; **Vice President:** Sheri Bigner of North Oaks Family Medicine; **Secretary-Treasurer:** Stacie Heno of The Urology Clinic.

We all applaud Kandy for a job well done during her term as president.

Our fall meetings plan to be full of hot topics such as medical records release and confidentiality (September), legalities surrounding treatment of minors (October), and our rights as providers in dealing with insurance companies (November)

-- Michelle Wier

Central Louisiana MGMA

ALEXANDRIA -- The Central Louisiana MGMA has reorganized and the September meeting saw a total of 18 persons in attendance, according to President-Elect Denise Moore.

Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:25 a.m. in the Acadia Room at Cabrini Hospital.

The October meeting will feature Jerry Webb of the local credit bureau who will speak on Collections.

SW Louisiana Medical Management Association

LAKE CHARLES -- Our group from SLMMA has been very active recently. The speakers and their topics at our last three meetings have been: Lisa Schram, Section 125, Flexible Benefits; Christa Reynolds, Medicare update; and Lori Brown, Update on Medical Records - Retention, Release, Confidentiality.

Our membership has increased to 60 including both active and affiliate members. Additionally, we are in the midst of a membership drive with a monetary incentive for the member who signs up the most new members.

The education committee is working on our next seminar. It is tentatively scheduled for February 1999. The speaker will be announced shortly.

At least seven members from SLMMA are preparing to leave for the MGMA National Conference in Denver, Colorado. They will bring back educational information for the rest of the membership.

-- Charline Breaux

Acadiana MGMA

It's hard to believe that summer has come and gone. After a presentation on compliance issues by attorney Clay Countryman in June, the chapter took a summer vacation in July.

In August, Lea Andrus with Paine Webber provided interesting information on developing personal retirement plans.

Our September meeting brought a visit from Dr. Lynn Hickman, Medicare Part B Medical Director. Historically our most well-attended meeting, this year's visit was no exception. Dr. Hickman provided valuable information concerning fraud and abuse issues, and documentation. Merle Francis of Medicare Provider Relations was also present and discussed Y2K concerns as they relate to Medicare.

We hope that the Fall brings cooler temperatures and good fortune to all of the chapters.

-- John Hunsucker

LMGMA WEB PAGE: Q&A, JOB SEARCH

www.netgatedmedical.com/lmgma

New additions in the near future to the LMGMA Web Page will be a Forum where members can key in questions and other members can answer or share their knowledge about the question(s) posed.

LMGMA President Andy Waldo noted this feature, which can be found on a number of other web sites, can produce a source of information that members can tap into and use as an additional educational resource.

Another new feature will be a Job Search. This section will allow practices to post positions that need to be filled.



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Work Begins On Standardized Physician Credentialing Form

A Report From Andy W. Waldo IV, LMGMA President

Statement of the Problem

Physicians' offices are faced with multiple different requests from each health plan requesting the same information over and over again and this results in great expense in terms of staff time and effort. One standardized form would be beneficial for physicians and managed care organizations.

Objective #1: To reach consensus among the session participants regarding the reasonability of a single form that addresses the needs of the MCO and makes life easier for the physician.

Objective #2: Present the Health plan association standardized form and review the features of the form. Establish agreement among the session participants regarding the necessity and fairness of a standardized credentialing form.

The Louisiana State Medical Society (LSMS) held a special one-day meeting in Baton Rouge entitled, "Patient Care Solutions in the Managed Care Environment." At this meeting a breakout session was held to begin work on a standardized physician credentialing form.

LMGMA has long been in favor of this project and has taken a leadership role in organizing a movement to bring the interested parties together to accomplish this task. LSMS is to be congratulated on making this topic such an integral part of this meeting. Discussion facilitators were Dr. Vincent A. Culotta Jr., Dr. Marcus L. Pittman III, and Mr. Clay Countryman, attorney-at-law. Countryman is a member of LMGMA and its legislative committee.

Participants included a cross representation of various healthcare interests including representatives of managed care plans, malpractice carriers, physicians, and medical management. Future meetings will also include representatives from hospitals, business and industry, and the State Insurance Department.

During this meeting the agenda items were established as a framework for this meeting and future meetings (See sidebar at left)

Topics discussed included: Demographics, Education and Training, Hospital Affiliations, MCO Affiliation, Malpractice History, Physician Health Issues, and Licensing Issues.

During this initial meeting, the group made significant progress in identifying the need for and benefits of statewide standardized physician credentialing. A decision was made to work toward the development of one form that will contain data required for credentialing, hospital staff privileges, and other marketing materials that list provider statistics. The group will invite other interested parties who are currently working toward standardized credentialing to participate in future meetings so that efforts are not duplicated. The LMGMA looks forward to working with LSMS at these future meeting to represent the interest of physicians and their practice management team.