

Philadelphia Medicine



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Dr. Shailendra Vaidya

Incoming president will be advocate for patients; forge links with like-minded organizations

By David Woods, PhD



The Philadelphia County Medical Society's 146th president, Dr. Shailendra ("Shai") Vaidya, is an India-born internist and nephrologist who plans to use his term

forging links to organizations with similar goals and aspirations.

This is especially the case, he says, in serving as an advocate for patients, and in curbing medical error and the litigation that often accompanies it. "I'll talk up these issues," he says, "and this will make for happier doctors and healthier patients." Echoing the AMA's 2007 agenda, Dr. Vaidya says a high priority for organized medicine is working to preserve patients' access to care by reforming the medical liability system.

He is also an advocate for the Institute for Health Improvement's ambitious campaign to protect patients from an estimated five million incidents of medical harm over the next two years by enlisting 4,000 US hospitals in a program of 12 changes in care that save lives and reduce patient injuries. The IHI has issued an invitation and a challenge to healthcare organizations 'to become an active participant in this historic campaign.'

A strong believer in the power of collaboration and communication, Dr. Vaidya notes that 'I' can mean 'Illness' and 'We' can mean 'Wellness.' In other words, loners tend to have a higher incidence of illness than the more gregarious—those who reach out to others.

The new president, who came to

the position following stints as head of the Society's ER Committee and as an IMG member of the AMA governing council, will seek cooperation with such organizations as the Delaware Valley Healthcare Council . . . and with local politicians, especially the new mayor of Philadelphia.

The way to empower patients, he

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says, is through knowledge. Dr. Vaidya himself is an avid seeker of information through the internet. He is also a thinker who likes to walk in the area of his home in Radnor. He is married to Vanitha, a pediatrician; and has a daughter, Reena, who is a PhD student of religion and history at the University of Pennsylvania .

David Woods is publisher of Philadelphia Medicine.

Save the Date President's Ball and Awards Night

Shailendra S. Vaidya, MD, will be installed as the Society's 146th President on Friday evening, June 15, 2007, at the Ace Conference Center (formerly Eagle Lodge) in Lafayette Hill, PA. For more information, 215-563-5343, Ext. 113.

PCMS NEWS

Strittmatter Award Recipient 2006

Alton I. Sutnick, MD

Member since 1963



Dr. Sutnick is Professor of Medicine at Drexel University School of Medicine and the author of over 300 scientific articles and abstracts. His research activities have resulted

in major contributions to medicine, including identifying the first hepatitis virus; practical applications of the marker antigen; pioneering studies in the response of pulmonary surfactant to adult human lung disease and the use of risk factors in cancer screening.

Strittmatter Award Recipient 2007

Robert E. Campbell, MD

Member since 1963



Dr. Campbell's distinguished career as Clinical Professor of Radiology, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; Professor of Radiology at Jefferson Medical College;

past Chair and Director of the Department of Radiology at Penn and consultant to the Wills Eye Hospital, has positioned him as a worldwide leader in diagnostic radiology. He is currently President of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and has served as President of every major professional society in his field.

Practitioner of the Year 2007

Wilbur W. Oaks, MD

Member since 1962



Dr. Oaks is one of Hahnemann University Hospital's most well known and loved faculty members. His distinguished career as Chair of Medicine at Hahnemann has afforded

him the opportunity to be a role model and mentor for students and resident physicians alike. He continues to be a dedicated faculty member. He was the founding father of Drexel's Physicians Assistant Program as well as Founder and Director of the Homeless Clinic.

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Editorial

A list of accomplishments and lessons learned as I leave the PCMS Presidency

By Dell R. Burkey, MD



In June 2006 I became the 145th president of the Philadelphia County Medical Society [PCMS]. I assumed this position at about the same time that I stepped down after serving two years as the chair

of the Pennsylvania Medical Society Political Action Committee [PAMPAC]. In my role as president, I have learned again what I learned as chair of PAMPAC. The organization is only as good and strong as its membership.

Our ability to present the physician view on issues such as legislation, regulation, reimbursement and scope of practice relates directly to the strength of our membership. One of the most important criteria for strength is size. Our credibility is severely damaged when a substantial number of physicians opt not to participate with us.

Another lesson I have learned is that the first year in office is a learning process. The second year is when one can have influence and effect change. I was pleased to serve a two year term as chair of PAMPAC. Doubtless, I was more effective in the second year. PCMS bylaws prohibit a second consecutive presidential term. We need to re-evaluate this, not for me but for future presidents.

A two-year term would allow the president more time to design and implement plans. It stretches out the pool of talent, in that leaders remain for an extended period rather than moving through leadership in a rapid fashion. This gives others more time to mature, understand the issues and develop leadership qualities. The leadership "team," such as the Board, has more time to understand one another and to work together. The Society presents a more stable and recognizable face of leadership to other physicians and the public. At present, by the time everyone realizes who was president, that president is gone.

Legitimate concerns for a two-year term exist. Some may see this as a concentration of power in the hands of

a few. Youth in particular may be dissuaded from participating. Incumbents must make more lengthy commitments of time. This may cause physician leaders

"I want to emphasize the importance of an independent county medical society ... We need to be more vocal in proclaiming the continuing excellence of our local health systems, and we need to become more of a player in supporting local activities."

to choose not to lead. An ineffective leadership team will remain in office for a longer time and might cripple the organization.

Wisely, our PCMS forefathers have required that such a change must be approved by the membership. You may hear about this again.

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of an independent county medical society. Too often, Philadelphia stands alone, especially in relation to the rest of Pennsylvania. This is true in education, transportation, gambling, crime control as well as medicine and health. Too often Philadelphia is seen as a sink hole to the detriment of the rest of the state.

We need to be more vocal in proclaiming the continuing excellence of our local health systems, and we need to become more of a player in supporting local activities. I have tried to stimulate such movement and I think I have been successful to some degree. In my year as President, PCMS has been involved in almost 200 meetings, programs, seminars and socials both within the Society and with others. I trust that we will continue to strengthen our ties locally in the years ahead.

I thank all who supported me this past year, especially those who served on our Board and committees. I truly appreciate your commitment and loyalty.

Dr. Burkey is President of PCMS.

Health Affairs study of Pennsylvania physicians spotlights healthcare problem areas

The following is a statement from Mark A. Piasio, MD, MBA, president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, in response to an April 2007 study published in Health Affairs titled "Changes in Physician Supply and Scope of Practice During a Malpractice Crisis: Evidence from Pennsylvania." Dr. Piasio is a practicing orthopedic surgeon from Dubois, Pa.

Up until recent years, hard data on practicing patient-based Pennsylvania physicians was not available, and many

The report suggests a high annual loss of specialists. According to the report, "Most specialties saw 10-20% of their ranks exit practice in Pennsylvania each year throughout the study period."

relied on anecdotal evidence to determine the state of healthcare affairs in Pennsylvania. In the earlier half of this decade, anecdotal evidence pointed to a large number of Pennsylvania physicians opting to practice elsewhere, retire early, or stop taking high-risk medical cases.

Health Affairs analyzed a 10-year period of Mcare data from 1993 to 2002 that included more than 47,000 doctors out of a total of 64,803 who participated in the state-run fund during that period.

While the study has flaws, the Pennsylvania Medical Society is always thankful when research is shared so that

state problems related to healthcare can be investigated. Any set of data can be valuable in learning about issues.

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This suggests a high turnover rate among Pennsylvania specialists. This high turnover rate simply is not good for patients, especially those with chronic diseases. The disruption of care as a result of the revolving Pennsylvania healthcare door does not leave these patients in the most desirable situation.

This 10-to-20% exit rate corroborates what the Pennsylvania Medical Society was suggesting in the earlier part of this decade through anecdotal evidence.

The *Health Affairs* study included doctors-in-training. At a time when the number of medical residents was increasing, including medical residents is a flaw of the study, particularly because they are not allowed to practice freely. Also, you can't determine practice changes and access to complex medical care by simply reviewing insurance class. Healthcare access can decrease through practice restrictions that don't require insurance class change.

Our country is facing a shortage of healthcare professionals. Trend studies suggest healthcare demand is growing at a faster rate than the supply of available physicians, particularly as the baby boomers age and have greater healthcare needs.

Wal-Mart to open in-store health clinics

Wal-Mart Stores, the world's largest retailer, plans to open as many as 400 in-store health clinics over two to three years and could raise the total to 2,000 in seven years.

Wal-Mart called the clinic program part of an initiative to implement "customer solutions to America's health care crisis," while other steps included a \$4 generic drug prescription program and support for a coalition seeking comprehensive healthcare reform by 2012.

Wal-Mart said it would contract with local hospitals and other organizations to operate the walk-in clinics, which lease space from Wal-Mart and are run as separate businesses.

Expansion planned for program persuading doctors to prescribe cost-effective drugs

In fall 2005, the Pennsylvania Department of Aging launched the Independent Drug Information Service in 28 counties, while the program is expected to be available statewide by the end of the year. The drug-information service uses 11 detailers, all with clinical backgrounds, who visit doctors' offices throughout Pennsylvania, but instead of being armed with marketing materials, the detailers come equipped with educational materials outlining research about different classes of drugs and their efficacy.

The Department of Aging has spent about \$1.5 million on the program so far and expects to spend another \$1.5 million between now and June 2008, while about 600 doctors have been visited so far, and detailers target doctors who see many PACE program enrollees or who work in an area with a high concentration of enrollees.

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pcms people

Seminar: Technology Crossroads

PCMS hosted a seminar with the Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers entitled "Technology Cross Roads: The Intersection of Medicine and Engineering."



Composite photograph: L to R, Joyann Kroser, MD; Gary Friedman, PhD, Prof. of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Drexel University; Ari Brooks, MD, Assistant Prof., Dept. of Surgery, Drexel University School of Medicine; Howard Brooks, MD

Doctor's Day

PCMS hosted a celebration of Doctor's Day at PCMS headquarters. Members and their guests enjoyed music, food and libations.

L to R, Dale Mandel, MD; Mrs. Bianca Mandel; Theodore B. Cohen, MD; Marilyn Wittenstein



L to R, Nicolas Kuritzky, MD; Curtis Miyamoto, MD; Diahann Mosley, MD

PCMS people wanted!

Your colleagues would like to know what you're up to. Send news about academic or other appointments, achievements, awards, promotions, etc., to Philadelphia Medicine, 2100 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia, PA 19130



Linqiu Zhou, MD, (right) and Family

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