

Philadelphia Medicine



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Incoming PCMS president plans increased communication with members—and with the broader healthcare community

By David Woods



The Philadelphia County Medical Society's 143rd president, Enrique Hernandez, MD, wants to reach out and involve PCMS members, enhance the Society's relationships with other healthcare organizations—and increase the organization's visibility as a credible public information source and as a strong advocate for physicians.

The 52-year-old Puerto Rico-born gynecologic oncologist heads Temple University Medical School's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and comes to the PCMS presidency after extensive service to the Society. He has served as a member of the Cancer Control Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Health, as delegate to the Pennsylvania Medical Society, as treasurer, and as president-elect.

A self-described pragmatist, Dr. Hernandez understands that these goals won't be reached overnight ... and as a long distance runner who has participated in marathons in New York, Maryland and Hawaii, he knows that the presidency is a chain, a continuum. With that in mind, he says, he will build on the accomplishments of his predecessor, Dr. Sheila Moriber Katz, and pass along his own achievements for his successor to carry forward.

Specifically, Dr. Hernandez plans to re-establish PCMS committees on science and education, hospital and third-party payers, and cancer control. He would like to increase communication with members by posting Society activities and initiatives on the web site and through e-mails. And he is eager to

expand connections to such organizations as the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Delaware Valley Healthcare Council, the pharmaceutical industry, and the American Cancer Society.

Among other projects the new president has in mind are: continuing and expanding the Block Captains program; making the PCMS building available to other medical organizations; setting up a support group for physicians who have been victims of frivolous lawsuits, and developing and

Promotion is the key so far as Dr. Hernandez is concerned. A frequent radio, TV, and print interviewee in both English and Spanish, he is keen not only to do things for PCMS, but to be seen—and heard—doing them.

promoting a science award, an award that has already attracted a generous GlaxoSmithKline contribution.

Promotion is the key so far as Dr. Hernandez is concerned. A frequent radio, TV, and print interviewee in both English and Spanish, he is keen not only to do things for PCMS, but to be seen—and heard—doing them: developing a profile and a presence for the Society, not least by wooing and endorsing political candidates.

Dr. Hernandez is married to Carla, a nurse; the couple have three children. He is an enthusiastic handyman and gardener, who will bring those talents of fixing and growing to his new role.

David Woods, PhD, is president of Healthcare Media International, Inc. (dwoods@healthpublishing.com).

PCMS News

The Philadelphia County Medical Society 2004 Award Recipients

Strittmatter Award Recipient:

William S. Frankl, MD, MS, MED



The annual PCMS Strittmatter Award is the highest honor presented to a physician who has made the most valuable contribution to the healing arts, surgical or medical. Established in 1923 by I.P.

Strittmatter, MD, the award commends the recipient's contribution to one of the fundamental sciences of medicine, having a beneficial influence on either surgery or medicine. PCMS is proud to honor William S. Frankl, MD, MS, MED, a leader in the field of cardiology and an outstanding teacher and administrator as well as prolific writer. He is a past president of PCMS and an active member of organized medicine for 24 years. Dr. Frankl has held leadership roles at the state and national levels.

Practitioner of the Year Award Recipient

James Plumb, MD, MPH



PCMS presents the Practitioner of the Year Award to a physician who demonstrates dedication to the profession in the areas of quality patient care and community service. The Award is supported by the Wiener Fund established by Jacob S. Wiener, MD, member of PCMS, and honors the memory of Rose Janet Feldman Wiener. This year's recipient, James Plumb, MD, MPH, is a member of PCMS and Director of the Office to Advance Population Health at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Cristol Award Recipient

James L. Cristol, MD



The Cristol Award is presented to a physician member of PCMS who has made a significant contribution to the Society, past or present, furthering and enhancing the educational, scientific and charitable goals, purposes and functions of organized medicine. Following in the footsteps of his father, David Cristol, MD, for whom the award is named, this year's award recipient, James L. Cristol, MD, has been a leader and dedicated member of PCMS/PMS since 1981. Dr. Cristol maintains an active practice in ophthalmology.

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Editorial

Outgoing PCMS president reviews her term and expresses optimism for organized medicine's future

By Sheila Moriber Katz, MD, MBA



When I was installed as the 142nd president of PCMS last June, I announced my theme for my term of office in two words: *in unison*. It's about *we*, not *me* and it's about the patient.

Philadelphia is a diverse medical community, so it makes sense to form bonds among patient groups, professionals, government, academia and business. With the support of the PCMS Board of Directors, our Society has made significant progress toward mutually beneficial partnerships, including collaborative efforts with the US Department of Health and Human Services, the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Deans of our medical schools, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the Schools of Nursing and Public Health, and the pharmaceutical industry.

On PCMS' behalf, I have met with the medical school Deans on several occasions, and we agreed on a mutual interest in medical science. We have agreed to institute a series of lectures by leaders of the National Institutes of Health, and this fall we will also inaugurate a PCMS Science Night to acknowledge the research efforts of pre-med and medical students, residents and young physicians. These efforts are being recognized with the support and participation of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and Science Night is funded by a generous grant from GlaxoSmithKline.

We have reached out to pharmaceutical companies to sponsor educational programs for our physicians, and six educational meetings took place during my term of office with their support.

Our successful Block Captains program will now receive Federal and City support, and we thank the US Department of Health and Human

Services for a generous grant.

I have met with Mark Schweiker, former Pennsylvania Governor and now President of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and we hope to contribute our physicians' talents on behalf of the Chamber's life science initiatives. The University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and the Drexel University School of Public Health have also expressed a desire to work jointly with PCMS on medical and scientific issues.

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In the general and primary elections we endorsed those candidates who supported our values, one of whom was Dr. James Tayoun in his challenge to State Senator Vincent Fumo. Dr. Tayoun is a PCMS Board member and the founder of the Politically Active Physicians Association.

I am committed to remaining active in many of these efforts, especially those related to science and to the Federal government where I have had the honor of serving in the Executive Branch, and I have also appointed a Think Tank to study the future of PCMS to ensure its viability and effectiveness.

I thank each of you for your support. I am optimistic for the future, and I encourage you to be optimistic, too!

Dr. Katz is the president of PCMS.

Myth vs. Fact:**Rebuttal to myths about the total number of physicians who have left Pennsylvania due to the medical liability crisis**

Myth: The total number of physicians who have left Pennsylvania can be accurately calculated using comparisons of recently released Mcare data, which the Pennsylvania Medical Society [PMS] supports as accurate.

Facts: PMS has never stated that comparison of the Mcare's total number of physicians according to Mcare abatement applications is an "accurate barometer" of the number of physicians who have left Pennsylvania. The data used as the basis for these conclusions were released publicly recently by the Office of Mcare. These data reflect the number of physicians who have applied for Mcare abatements to date.

PMS has maintained that no state government or private entity keeps accurate figures that can be used to ascertain the number of physicians who have left the state in any particular year due to the medical liability crisis. State licensing data are questionable because of double counting of resident physicians. Among the many reasons recent Mcare data cannot be used for accurate comparisons and conclusions are:

- They include residents who may be double-counted due to moonlighting and being engaged in training and, as such, not in active, fulltime practice in Pennsylvania.
- There is no baseline for comparison, it has never been collected before, therefore, there is no previous "total physician" number that reflects identical data sets. For example, Pennsylvania's licensing board for physicians indicated a drop of approximately 1,400 licenses for the same year the press has used.
- They include part-timers and out-of-state physicians.
- They include physicians not involved in direct patient care, such as administrators, researchers, and academic physicians.
- A reported gain of 800 physicians between 2002 and 2004 ignores the fact that other data show a decline of this level or greater in previous years, particularly 2001. AMA data

show a drop in the total number of physicians practicing in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, PMS's Dr. Steve Foreman, director of the Society's Health Services Research Institute, was misquoted in an article in which he explained the numerous factors that made such a comparison of data illogical and erroneous.

Myth: If the total number of doctors in Pennsylvania hasn't dropped, there is no crisis. Press reports seem to show that no doctors have left, and that there is no need to provide relief to Pennsylvania physicians for skyrocketing medical liability premiums.

Facts:

- Access to care—not total numbers of doctors leaving—is the core of the crisis. When Pennsylvania patients or their doctors tell their stories about lack of access to care, these stories are real. Comparisons of statewide, nonspecialty specific data distort the real problems. Specialists have restricted their practice, stopped treating high-risk patients, and suspended the purchase of new technologies due to medical liability costs. Rural physicians have left, or are hanging on by a thread. Data comparisons cannot reveal the real crisis, and erroneous analyses do great disservice to patients.
- Mcare relief was instituted by the Governor and the Legislature to keep Pennsylvania physicians practicing. If it is working—by keeping more physicians practicing in the state in 2003 than 2002—are we now to punish those same physicians for keeping their pledge to stay in the state and remain loyal to their patients?
- Skyrocketing medical liability premiums are a reality; they're irrefutable facts. Pennsylvania's medical liability premiums have increased by more than 100% over the past several years. Other practice costs have also risen sharply, and reimbursements remain below those of the rest of the country.

- Medical students and residents across the state have pointed to the medical liability crisis as the reason they're not staying here to practice. Pennsylvania's average physician age has increased and will continue to increase. Our best young doctors are leaving.
- Pennsylvania should not be proud that the number of physicians in our state remains stagnant. Most states are gaining 2-3% more physicians per year. Shouldn't we be alarmed that Pennsylvania, with an increasing aging patient population, is not gaining physicians as are other states?

Myth: The "Disappearing Doctors" list maintained by Donna Baver Ravito, former legislative chair of the PMS Alliance, claims that 1,700 physicians have left Pennsylvania.

Fact: Ms. Ravito has gathered a collection of approximately 1,700 anecdotes from physicians who have been affected by the medical liability crisis. Recent articles have questioned the list as "inaccurate." However, Ms. Ravito clearly states in a disclaimer to the document that this list contains references to physicians who have relocated to other states, retired earlier than planned, closed their practices, or been forced to significantly alter their practice of medicine or curtail services.

Recent attacks to the credibility of Ms. Ravito's "list" again miss the point that it is clearly not a statistical record, but rather a narrative of the worsening crisis.

*PCMS Board of Directors
invites you to the President's Ball
& Awards Night Annual Meeting
Enrique Hernandez, MD,
will be installed as the Society's
143rd President
Thursday, June 17
Marriott West, Conshohocken, Pa.
Reception: 6:30 PM
Program, Dinner & Dancing: 7:30 PM
Guests Invited • Black Tie Preferred
Cost: \$90 per person
Residents and students: \$50*

50 Years of Medical Service Awards

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To attend PMS Annual Meeting ...

PCMS may need additional physician members to represent Philadelphia physicians and patients at the Annual Meeting of PMS at the Hershey Lodge & Convention Center on Saturday, October 16, and Sunday, October 17, 2004. Expenses will be reimbursed.

This is an opportunity to have a voice in setting medical society policy. All physician members are welcome. Contact: 215-563-5343, Ext. 102.

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