

Philadelphia Medicine



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Incoming PCMS president to focus on medical liability, relations with insurers

By David Woods



Incoming PCMS president Stephen L. Schwartz, MD, has been guided throughout his life by two rabbinical sages, whose aphorisms, he says, will give particular focus and meaning to his term of office. The first is: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"

That kind of objectivity and urgency translates into his plans for the presidency. These goals, broadly speaking, have to do with issues that adversely affect physicians' ability to practice medicine ... and which in turn may have a negative effect on the health of the community.

Specifically, Dr. Schwartz intends to continue the struggle to alleviate Pennsylvania's—and particularly Philadelphia's—medical liability insurance crisis so that physicians practicing here will continue to do so, that newly-graduating doctors will want to stay here, and that the State and the City can attract medical professionals from elsewhere. He also wants to revise existing antitrust legislation so doctors can plan jointly how to confront the monopolistic behavior of the area's major insurance providers, something he calls reducing "the stranglehold of the abusive albatross with which we all have to deal."

Dr. Schwartz, a graduate of Temple University, is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Jefferson. He chose psychiatry, he says, because "it's intellectually fascinating...the way the mind works, the complexity of emotions, and how we comport our behavior

in the pursuit of our goals." When he takes up the mantle of the 141st presidency of the PCMS, he will have done so as a long time servant of organized medicine. At the Society he has served as treasurer, as chairman of the section on psychiatry and of the Philadelphia delegation to the Pennsylvania Medical Society House of Delegates.

Dr. Schwartz also wants to encourage vigilance in protecting physicians from professional encroachment by nonmedical personnel, and to push for increased membership in PCMS.

He has also been president of both the Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Psychiatric Associations.

In addition to his own goals in the areas of medical liability and insurer monopoly, the incoming president wants to encourage vigilance in protecting physicians from professional encroachment by nonmedical personnel, to push for increased membership in PCMS "so we can have a strong voice; and to stay focused — and be an essential resource — on the issue of bioterrorism."

Dr. Schwartz and his wife, Miriam, have three sons, the youngest of whom is a physician, and their interests include travel, theater, literature and opera.

Oh, and that other aphorism might characterize his presidency, too: "It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it."

David Woods, PhD, is president of Healthcare Media International, Inc. Philadelphia (HMI3000@aol.com).

Monthly Luncheons

The PCMS Past Presidents Council continues its series of monthly luncheons open to all members and guests. Luncheons are held on the first Thursday of each month at 12 noon at PCMS headquarters.

The speaker at the Thursday, June 6, luncheon will be **Harris R. Clearfield, MD**, President, Philadelphia County Medical Society. His topic will be "Everything You've Always Wanted To Know About Belching, Flatulence and Bloating But Were Afraid To Ask."

Please note: No luncheons will be held in July and August. The next luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, September 4, 2002. Speaker and topic to be announced.

Lunch and parking are free; parking entrance is from 21st Street. RSVP on 215-563-5343, Ext. 111 so we may provide enough lunches.

Classified Ads

Although *Philadelphia Medicine* no longer accepts classified ads we are pleased to announce that we accept ads for our Web site. Through the Internet you will reach a larger audience at a cheaper price.

You may place the ad directly through the Web site. We encourage you to visit us at **www.philamedsoc.org** or by calling 215-563-5343, Ext. 102.

Special Announcement:

Please join us for the Installation of **Stephen L. Schwartz, MD**, as the 141st President of PCMS on Wednesday, June 26, at the Conshohocken Marriott.

All members are invited to attend. Call 215-563-5343, Ext. 113 for further information and reservations.

Philadelphia Medicine



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editorial

Physicians, the society and public welfare

For the past several issues, *Philadelphia Medicine* has dealt extensively with professional liability insurance, managed care and other practice management subjects. These matters are of great concern to physicians today. Understandably, members look to their medical societies to represent their views in the legislative, regulatory and business environments and report back to them on successes and failures. We attempt to keep you informed not only through this newsletter, but also by our website, www.philamedsoc.org, e-mail, faxes and US mail.

Some critics would term our endeavors as self-serving. They are wrong and naive. In the final analysis each endeavor will not only help physicians but patients as well. When physicians leave, reduce their scope of practice, cannot recruit new and young partners and replacements, cannot diagnose and treat as they believe they should, it is the patients and the public who suffer.

Physicians contribute generously to public welfare. We need not remind you of the services you render at far below what you believe to be market value in addition to services you render free, both in the office and in the community.

However, we are not sure you know the public health efforts we undertake on your behalf and with your dues dollar. You should know some of these and be proud of them. One example: our involvement with the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

For several years we have been actively engaged in the City's block captain program, which the City began with the idea of cleaning and beautifying streets. Each block selected a captain who represented the residents on the block and coordinated efforts. Eventually, beginning in 1998, through the efforts of PCMS, the emphasis shifted to include health matters. Robert D. Reinecke, MD, then PCMS President, selected "Access of Philadelphians to Physicians" as his theme and requested that others participate actively. Adrian D. Copeland, MD, joined

efforts with Dr. Reinecke to bring about this change.

PCMS hosts regular meetings with the block captains. Six hundred of them meet with us on a rotating basis and pass information to the residents on their blocks. We educate them on quality medical care and how to access that care. Guest speakers have addressed eye care, infant mortality, asthma, lead poisoning, blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, breast cancer awareness, men's health concerns, and many other subjects.

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Guests at those meetings have included representatives from Medicare, Medicaid, AARP, the Visiting Nurses Association, Philadelphia Corporation on Aging, Mayor's Commission on Services to the Aged, Philadelphia Senior Center, Hospice of the Delaware Valley, the commissioner and his deputy from the City Health Department, and others.

We have distributed thousands of health related publications, including some that we have authored or co-authored.

This is one of our public health programs. There are others. Rarely does any mention of these find their way into the media. Like your contributions, they are ignored. It is easier to bash us as self-serving.

Our mission is to represent physicians and patients in the legislative, regulatory and business arenas and to make contributions to public health and welfare. That was our mission in 1849, when we were founded, and we recommit ourselves to it now in 2002.

—The Editorial Board

50-year awardees named

The Philadelphia County Medical Society congratulates the following physicians who have served their patients for 50 years. PCMS will honor them on Wednesday, June 26, 2002, at the Philadelphia Marriott West during the installation of Stephen L. Schwartz, MD, as PCMS President.

Budd B. Axelrod, MD
Temple University 1952

Anthony J. Bamont, MD
Hahnemann University 1952

Jerome I. Brody, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Melvin J. Chisum, MD
University of Pennsylvania 1952

Jerome M. Cotler, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Isaac Djerassi, MD
Hebrew University of Jerusalem Medical School 1952

Welles P. Go, MD
University of Santo Tomas 1952

Warren P. Goldburgh, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

George F. Gowen, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Lois M. Johnson-Hammerman, MD
University of Rochester, NY 1952

Kenneth M. Kron, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Rudolf F. Laveran-Stiebar, MD
University of Vienna 1952

Thomas F. O'Toole, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Ernest J. Pick, MD
Hebrew University of Jerusalem Medical School 1952

John M. Roberts, MD
Yale University 1952

Erwin R. Schmidt, MD
University of Wisconsin 1952

Joseph W. Slap, MD
Hahnemann University 1952

William T. Stack, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Charles A. Syms, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Charles A. Tollett, MD
Temple University 1952

Charles B. Tribit, MD
Jefferson Medical College 1952

Court rule will create shield from frivolous lawsuits

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court on April 22 issued a rule change regarding frivolous lawsuits that PMS has been pursuing for several years. The rule change, which would protect defendants from frivolous lawsuits by penalizing the attorneys and firms that file them, is similar to a federal rule on the matter, but does not go as far as PMS originally proposed legislatively. The rule, which applies to plaintiffs and defendants alike, allows a judge to charge attorneys and their law firms for fees and expenses if they file actions, without a reasonable basis for doing so, that harass, cause unnecessary harm, or purposefully drive up the cost of litigation.

Under the ruling, the litigant would have 28 days to drop the frivolous portion of the suit or face penalties. Legislators have not taken action on a State Senate measure that would curb frivolous lawsuits because they feared that the proposed legislation was too extreme and might overstep the

authority of the Legislature to limit the judiciary.

The legislation, sponsored by State Senator James Gerlach (R-Berks, Chester, Lehigh, Montgomery), would allow plaintiffs or defendants to recover damages for injury to reputation, cost of litigation, lost income and other sanctions.

Frustrated by coding? It's the law!

Tracey Glenn, Senior Analyst with PMSCO Healthcare Consulting, has written an informative article on coding and documentation. The number-one rule to follow with coding is simple: not documented, not done.

To read this important article, you may visit our website at www.philamedsoc.org or write to PCMS at 2100 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130 to request a copy.

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pcms people

2002 Strittmatter Award

Doris Gorka Bartuska, MD



Dr. Bartuska is a Past President of PCMS and an active member for 32 years. She is recognized for her academic and scientific achievements in the fields of Endocrinology and Metabolism. Dr. Bartuska is Emeritus Professor of Medicine, Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

2002 Practitioner of the Year Award

Carol Anne Love, MD



Dr. Love has been in family practice since 1981 and has been an active member of PCMS for 20 years. She is recognized for her service to the community, especially the underprivileged in the Germantown section of the City and for her volunteer efforts with the Philadelphia Futures program, which mentors high school students.

Change of address?

Call 215-563-5343, Ext. 111 with any change of address, phone or fax number or e-mail address.

2002 Cristol Award

Ronald J. Carlucci, MD



Dr. Carlucci is a general surgeon and has been a member of PCMS since 1965. He is recognized for his years of volunteer work in organized medicine. He has served as PCMS Secretary, Board Member, West Branch Director, PMS Delegate and chaired or served on numerous committees.

Paul S. Friedman, MD Deceased April 29, 2002



PCMS President, 1962. Dr. Friedman practiced radiology in Philadelphia for more than 60 years. He also taught at Hahnemann University Hospital and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

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 Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Want to attend the PMS annual meeting? Here's how

The Philadelphia County Medical Society may need additional physician members to represent Philadelphia physicians and patients at the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Medical Society in Hershey, PA at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center on Saturday, October 19, and Sunday, October 20, 2002.

Expenses will be reimbursed. This is an opportunity to have a voice in setting medical society policy. All members, including young physicians, residents, international medical graduates, women and retired physicians are welcome. Call 215-563-5343, Ext. 101.

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