



THE FORUM

September/October 2023 • Volume 22, No. 5 • The Official Magazine of Collier County Medical Society

CCMS Represents Members at FMA Annual Meeting



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register at www.ccmsonline.org or call (239) 435-7727

Saturday, September 30, 8am
Foundation of CCMS "Docs & Duffers"
Charity Golf Tournament
 Kensington Golf & Country Club
Support opportunities at ccmsonline.org

Wednesday, October 4, 6pm
CCMS Women Physicians Social
 Seasons 52

Thursday, October 19, 6pm
CCMS After 5 Social
 Gardens at Terracina

Thursday, October 26, 6pm
CCMS Fall General Membership Meeting
 Moorings Park

Thursday, November 9, 6pm
CCMS After 5 Social
 stay tuned for details

Friday, December 2, 6:30pm
CCMS New Members Welcome Reception
 LaPlaya Beach Resort
Support opportunities at ccmsonline.org

Thursday, December 7, 6pm
CCMS After 5 Social
 Blue Martini

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CCMS Member Dues

The 2024 CCMS dues deadline is Dec. 31, 2023.

Members (or their groups) can pay online today at ccmsonline.org/membership. Invoices will also be mailed directly to members who pay individually, or to practice administrators for group payment. Thank you for renewing!

CCMS Board of Directors 2023-2024

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MEMBER NEWS

New Members:



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Phone: (239) 482-2663 Fax: (239) 482-7585



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Radiation Oncology
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Zachary Elstad, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery
Joint Replacement Institute
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Naples, FL 34109
Phone: (239) 261-2663 Fax: (239) 262-5633



Brandon Ruen, MD
Korunda Medical Institute
4513 Executive Dr
Naples, FL 34119
Phone: (239) 431-6464 Fax: (239) 631-2305
Board Certified: Family Medicine



Omar L Esponda, MD
Vascular Medicine
Vein Specialists
3359 Woods Edge Cir Ste 102
Bonita Springs, FL 34134
Phone: (239) 694-8346 Fax: (239) 936-6272
Board Certified: Internal Medicine



Richard Stephens III, MD
Korunda Pain Management Center
4513 Executive Dr
Naples, FL 34119
Phone: (239) 591-2803 Fax: (239) 594-5637
Board Certified: Anesthesiology



Susanna Gaikazian, MD
Florida Cancer Specialists
8440 Murano Del Lago Dr
Estero, FL 34135
Phone: (239) 221-5402 Fax: (239) 949-5713
Board Certified: Medical Oncology; Hematology

Reinstated Members:

Scott A J Thompson, MD
Orthopedic Center of Florida
8831 Founders Square Dr
Naples, FL 34120
Phone: (239) 482-2663 Fax: (239) 482-7585

New Practice:

Edison Valle Giler, MD
Naples Neuro Care
1575 Pine Ridge Rd, Unit 19
Naples, FL 34109
Phone: (239) 944-5054 Fax: (239) 360-1142

Retired from Practice:

Scott Wiesen, MD

In Memoriam:

D. Gene McCree, MD



Vidur P Ghantiwala, DO
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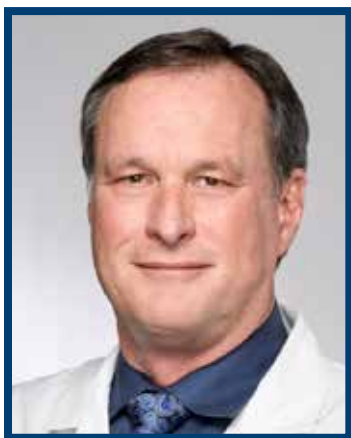
Christie S McGee, MD
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A Message from the CCMS President

Gary Swain, M.D.



Your Collier County Medical Society (CCMS) Board of Directors was honored to represent you at this year's Florida Medical Association (FMA) Annual Meeting on July 28-30 in Orlando. During the meeting, Dr. Jason Goldman was installed as the new FMA president, succeeding Dr. Joshua Lenchus. Dr. Goldman is an Internal Medicine Physician practicing in Coral Springs.

for collective bargaining on behalf of the residents. This resolution was not adopted as the FMA is already looking into the collective bargaining issue for physicians.



Many of the resolutions submitted were in keeping with our mission of serving the needs of our physician members so they can serve the needs of our community. Even in the few resolutions discussed above, one can see the FMA was tasked with seeking legislative changes. The path to legislative change

As FMA delegates, much of our time was spent reviewing and voting on the resolutions brought to the FMA for consideration. Some highly discussed topics included abortion, transgender care, firearm safety, COVID vaccines, board certification, scope of practice, and the impact of the high cost of living on resident physicians. A complete list of resolutions is available at www.bit.ly/3YVYH8B, but items that may interest you include:

involves educating legislators and helping elect political candidates who are medicine-friendly. This typically involves financial support from the FMA Political Action Committee (PAC). We are proud to announce that the CCMS delegation was awarded a trophy for 100% PAC participation this year. Our own CCMS PAC also needs your support if we are to continue to protect the physician-patient relationship. Learn more at ccmsonline.org/advocacy.

1. Resolution 23-101 was submitted by CCMS and was approved as amended to state that the FMA recognized the rightful autonomy of physicians to serve the interests of their patients by communicating, educating, counseling, or treating their patients in a matter consistent with the standards of care. It was felt that we needed to take a stand to protect the physician-patient relationship and protect this from political interference.
2. Resolution 23-304 was approved and called for the FMA to support the repeal of the Pharmacy Collaborative Practice Agreements, Florida Statute 465.1865. This statute gives pharmacists the ability to write prescriptions for certain conditions. The number of conditions appears to be increasing over time.
3. Resolution 23-309 was approved and calls for the FMA to support legislation to amend Florida law to prohibit chiropractors from signing off on vaccine exemptions. The delegates felt it more appropriate that physicians make these decisions.
4. Resolution 23-301 was approved and called for the FMA to support legislation providing additional liability protection for physicians caring for incarcerated individuals.
5. Two separate resolutions examined the cost of living for resident physicians. One was approved that stated the FMA should encourage Graduate Medical Education (GME) training programs to support trainee pay to reflect the local cost of living and provide additional stipends for food and other utilities to offset the rising cost of living. The other resolution dealt with FMA support

One of our FMA colleagues, Dr. Michael Patete, was recognized with an award for his efforts to raise money for the FMA PAC. He reportedly raised over one million dollars over the last eight years. Dr. Patete is a past FMA president who practices in Sarasota County as an Otolaryngologist.

Elections were held for several offices, and Collier County continues to be well represented. Two CCMS members, past FMA and CCMS President Dr. Corey Howard and past CCMS President Dr. Rebekah Bernard, were voted into office as American Medical Association (AMA) delegates. Dr. Rafael Haciski also continues to serve as an AMA alternate delegate from Collier County in the second year of his two-year commitment. Dr. Howard serves as chair of the delegation.

Another outstanding Collier County physician at the FMA meeting this year was Dr. Nicole Mamprejew, a resident physician at NCH who successfully submitted a poster presentation. Dr. Mamprejew's poster was entitled Multidisciplinary Cardiac Excellence in Treating Cardiogenic Shock at a Community-based Hospital. Other authors on the poster included Drs. Sankalp Patel, Viviana Navas, Mazen Albaghdadi, Robert Cubeddu, Samantha Sublette, Gaston Cudemus, Ricardo Martinez-Ruiz, Brian Solomon, Adam Frank, Vishal Patel, Gabriel Hardemeyer, Dhiran Verghese, Juan Sierra David, and Juliana Madison.

Your CCMS board would like to encourage you to consider becoming more active in the CCMS and the FMA. If you are not currently a member of the FMA, please consider joining, as the more FMA members from Collier County, the more delegates we will have at the FMA Annual Meeting to support your views.



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CCMS Delegation Represents Collier Physicians at FMA Annual Meeting

Collier County Medical Society



CCMS members participating as delegates to the Florida Medical Association represented their colleagues at the 2023 FMA Annual Meeting and House of Delegates, July 28-30 in Orlando. The CCMS delegation consisted of CCMS president and delegation chair Dr. Gary Swain, and delegates Dr. Jose Baez, Dr. George Brinnig, Dr. Alexandra Grace, Dr. Glenn Groat, Dr. Rafael Haciski, Dr. Erik Hiester, and Dr. Rebecca Smith. CCMS members who participated on other delegations included Dr. Rebekah Bernard, Dr. Corey Howard, Dr. Cyndi Yag-Howard and Dr. Catherine Kowal.

To help increase the CCMS delegation allotment to the FMA and represent Collier County physicians and patients, CCMS members are encouraged to join the FMA. If every CCMS member joined the FMA, the Society's delegation could double, strengthening our voice at the FMA House of Delegates. Members are also encouraged to contribute to the FMA and CCMS political action committees to help support physician and patient friendly candidates for state and local offices. Visit ccmsonline.org/membership for a link to the FMA membership information and CCMS PAC dues.

CCMS is also well represented in FMA leadership roles. Dr. Bernard and Dr. Howard serve on the FMA Board of Governors, while Dr. Haciski serves as an AMA alternate delegate. Dr. Bernard was elected to join the AMA delegation, and Dr. Howard was re-elected. He has served as the AMA delegation chair for many years. Additionally, Dr. Brinnig was chosen to serve on the FMA Annual Meeting Reference Committee 1, and Dr. Kowal was selected as chair for Reference Committee 2.

Prior to the meeting, FMA delegates from across the state submitted testimony online on various resolutions and FMA Board of Governors reports proposed to the House of Delegates, and then offered additional testimony at onsite reference committees. Then on Sunday of the Annual Meeting, reference committees presented recommendations that were up for debate by the full House of Delegates. Read on for details of some of the House's noteworthy actions. CCMS members who would like to read the FMA's final report should visit www.bit.ly/3YVYH8B

Resolution 23-101 Protection of Physicians from Criminalization of Standards of Medical Care, submitted by CCMS adopted as amended. That the FMA recognizes the rightful autonomy of physicians to serve the interests of their patients by communicating, educating, counseling, or treating their patients in a matter consistent with the standards of care.

Resolution 23-104 Fraudulent Nursing Diplomas, adopted as amended. That the FMA supports the revocation of the licenses of those nurses with fraudulent diplomas who are currently practicing in Florida and will continue to monitor the revocation of fraudulent nursing licenses.

Resolution 23-105 Protecting Access to Reproductive Health, referred to the FMA Board for decision. That the FMA opposes limitations on access to evidence-based reproductive health services; will work with interested medical specialty societies to vigorously advocate for broad, equitable access to reproductive health services; and opposes the imposition of criminal and civil penalties or other retaliatory efforts against patients, patient advocates, physicians, other healthcare workers, and health systems for receiving, assisting in, referring patients to, or providing reproductive health services.

Resolution 23-106 Ensuring Affordable Housing for Trainees in Graduate Medical Education Programs, adopted as amended. The FMA should encourage Graduate Medical Education (GME) training programs to support trainees' pay to reflect the local cost of living. Additionally, all GME programs should provide additional stipends for food and other utilities to offset the rise in the cost of living.

Resolution 23-108/ Resolution 23-117 Addressing Physician Suicides and Shortages/ Recognizing Physician Suicide as a Public Health Concern, substitute language adopted. That our FMA recognizes physician suicide as a public health concern; encourages hospitals in Florida to continue to develop and educate their physicians on available mental health resources; supports legislation to promote the development and implementation of suicide prevention interventions for Florida physicians; and study the issue of physician suicide and recommend such programs and requisite funding to mitigate this issue faced by physicians, residents, and students.

Resolution 23-115 Sunshine in the Department of Health, adopted. The FMA formally requests a detailed description of the process and criteria used by the DOH for recognizing board certification, office surgery, and health care organization credentialing organizations from the State Surgeon General; and will make the description of this process and criteria publicly available for comment by physicians on its website.

Resolution 23-116 Fertility and Reproductive Health Education for Female Physicians, adopted. That the FMA acknowledges the potential physical, financial, and emotional impacts of physician infertility; and develops educational materials, including but not limited to emails, mail, and FMA website, to increase awareness and available resources on physician infertility.

Resolution 23-203 Addressing the Needs of Patients Impacted by Medication Shortages, substitute language adopted. That the FMA support legislation that would insure safe access to

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opioid analgesic medications and medications to treat opioid use disorder; and work with pharmaceutical companies, drug distributors, pharmacies and appropriate governmental entities to insure a transparent and adequate supply of opioid analgesic medications and access to medications to treat opioid use disorder.

Resolution 23-301 Liability Protection for Physicians Caring for Incarcerated People, adopted. That the FMA supports legislation that would provide additional liability protection for physicians caring for incarcerated individuals.

Resolution 23-302 Preventing Messaging Only Services, adopted as amended. That the FMA support legislation that would prevent entities who use messaging-only care from practicing medicine in the state of Florida.

Resolution 23-303 Health Insurance Identification Transparency, adopted. That the FMA support any legislation in Florida which calls for health insurance identification card transparency for consumers and which would also aid medical providers in identifying whether a health plan is state or federal plan.

Resolution 23-306 Staffing Ratios in the Emergency Department, adopted as amended. That the FMA support legislation to ensure the adequate supervision of non-physician practitioners (NPPs) in the ED by requiring that the supervising physician may only supervise 2 NPPs at a time, to provide true supervision and appropriate care to the emergency patient. At any given time, there cannot be a ratio exceeding 1:2 of real-time and

on-site physicians to NPPs working in the ED; bring a resolution to the AMA to seek similar federal legislation or regulation, prohibiting staffing ratios that do not allow for proper supervision of NPPs in the ED; and bring a resolution to the AMA at the next meeting to seek similar federal legislation or regulation, that would require all EDs to be staffed 24-7 by a qualified physician.

Resolution 23-309 Vaccine Exemption Authorizations, adopted. That the FMA support legislation to amend Florida law to prohibit chiropractors from signing off on vaccine exemptions.

Resolution 23-311 Delta 8-THC, adopted. That the FMA support legislative and/or regulatory efforts prohibiting the sale or distribution of delta-8-THC in Florida, while still allowing opportunity for proper scientific research.

Resolution 23-313 Verification that Autonomous Practice Nurses are Having the Intended Impact, adopted as amended. That the FMA create a report using publicly available data from the Board of Nursing identifying the practice location of all advanced practice registered nurses that are working in autonomous practices as established by Florida Statute 464.0123; and seek legislation that would amend Florida Statute 464.0123, Autonomous practice by an advanced practice registered nurse, to restrict the practice of autonomous advanced practice registered nurses to those areas that qualify as medically underserved communities and provide only medically necessary care.



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Foundation of CCMS Announces 2023 Scholarship Awards

Foundation of Collier County Medical Society

Dr. William and Nancy Lascheid Memorial Scholarship for Medical Students

The board of directors of the Foundation of CCMS is pleased to announce that **Stephanie Galindo**, graduate of Golden Gate High School in Naples and Florida Gulf Coast University, in the class of 2027 at Florida State University College of Medicine, is the winner of the Foundation's 2023 Dr. William and Nancy Lascheid Memorial Scholarship for Medical Students.

The \$12,500 award recognizes future physicians who are Florida residents and have demonstrated excellence in community service, in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Lascheid, co-founders of the charitable Neighborhood Health Clinic in Naples and past presidents of CCMS and the CCMS Alliance, respectively. It is the ninth year the Foundation has provided this scholarship.

"This memorial scholarship provides much-needed financial aid to future medical professionals and rewards students who give their time and talents to charitable causes," said Dr. Rolando Rivera, board chair of the Foundation. "Ms. Galindo is an outstanding student and volunteer who is dedicated to caring for vulnerable members of our community just as the Lascheids did, and we are honored to give her this award."

"The Dr. William and Nancy Lascheid Memorial Scholarship clearly reflects my parents' mission of providing quality medical care for low-income workers who are in need," said Leslie Lascheid, CEO of Neighborhood Health Clinic. "Congratulations to Ms. Galindo, this year's recipient, whose passion of caring for others and her commitment to volunteerism mirrors the overall mission and vision of the Clinic."



Ms. Galindo, a first-generation Mexican American, received her bachelor's in biochemistry & biotechnology at Florida Gulf Coast University. Her community service activities have included volunteering with Neighborhood Health Clinic, Grace Place for Children and Families, Naples Community Hospital, Lions Club, and Global Medical Brigades. She is also

a graduate of the Youth Leadership Collier program, class of 2017.

"There are no words to convey how honored and privileged I feel to have been selected. As a previous volunteer at the Neighborhood Health Clinic, I had the opportunity to

meet Nancy Lascheid and see how the Clinic benefitted and changed the lives of many individuals in the Collier County community," said Ms. Galindo. "This scholarship will help ease the financial burden of medical school and motivates me to continue my journey in becoming a physician committed to educating and elevating patients from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds. Hopefully someday, I'll get to go back to the Neighborhood Health Clinic and serve these patients as a physician."

Foundation of CCMS Healthcare Scholarships

The board of directors of the Foundation of CCMS is also pleased to announce the winners of its 2023 Foundation Healthcare Scholarship awards: **Michael Grossi, Dulce Morales, Thais Martinez, Rebecca Paul, Andrea Ducasse, and Elianis Rill.**

The Foundation of CCMS healthcare scholarships are for students who are Florida residents enrolled or accepted into a healthcare degree program, with awards based on need, academic performance, and community involvement. This year, each student will receive a scholarship ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,250. The final tally of 2023 scholarship awards given by the Foundation is \$34,000. The Foundation has awarded nearly \$250,000 in scholarships since 2013.

"The Foundation received numerous applications from talented healthcare students, making our job of selecting the recipients difficult yet rewarding," said Dr. Rolando Rivera, Foundation Chair. "Thank you to the generous Foundation donors and sponsors whose contributions have given us the opportunity to provide financial aid to these future medical professionals, who will make us proud."



Michael Grossi is a Marco Island Academy graduate and a medical student at Florida State University College of Medicine. "Words cannot express how deeply humbled and grateful I am to the Foundation for selecting me as a scholarship recipient. My healthcare experiences in Collier County serve as a lasting reminder of the impact taking care of our community can have."



Dulce Morales graduated from Immokalee High School and is a medical student at the University of Florida College of Medicine. "As I look upon past recipients, I see individuals from different backgrounds. I am honored to be part of such a group. Collectively, we can better serve the diverse population that is found in our community."

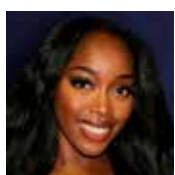
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Thais Martinez is a graduate of Golden Gate High School and a medical student at FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. "In each of my experiences with medicine, the physician embodies all the roles I wish to fulfill: mentor, caretaker, and scientist. I am incredibly grateful for the Foundation's generosity."



Rebecca Paul is a Lorenzo Walker Technical High School graduate, and a DDS/DMD student at Lincoln Memorial University College of Medicine. "I am determined to be a representation to young girls and boys of all the possibilities they can achieve. Thank you for bringing me one step closer to changing the world with one smile at a time!"



Andrea Ducasse graduated from Golden Gate High School and is a Doctorate of Occupational Therapy student at Howard University. "As a first-generation immigrant and student who has experienced socioeconomic barriers, I feel extremely fortunate to have been awarded this scholarship. Your generosity allows me to be one step closer to my dreams."



Elianis Rill is a graduate of Lely High School and in the PA program at South University West Palm Beach. "I can't wait to move back to Naples, where I grew up, and collaborate with medical professionals to advocate for change, raise awareness of the healthcare needs of the underserved, and assist them in leading more sustainable lives."

The Foundation's signature fundraiser, the 10th Anniversary Docs & Duffers Golf Tournament on September 30, 2023 will help raise funds for its scholarship program and local healthcare programs in need. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization launched by the Collier County Medical Society in 2012, with the mission to provide support and leadership to programs that address access to healthcare and promote health education. More information on supporting the Foundation and its scholarships is available at ccmsfoundation.org.



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Honoring Women in Medicine Month

Collier County Medical Society

September is Women in Medicine Month, a time to celebrate and recognize the contributions of women physicians. Throughout history, women have made significant strides in medicine, and their achievements have paved the way for future generations of aspiring female doctors. This month, we pay tribute to the accomplishments of women physicians and shed light on challenges they face.

The journey of women in medicine has been a testament to perseverance. In the 19th century, pioneers like Drs. Elizabeth Blackwell and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson defied societal norms and became the first women to receive medical degrees. In the 20th century Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig revolutionized pediatric cardiology; Dr. Virginia Apgar created the Apgar Score to assess newborn health; and Dr. Patricia Bath became the first African American to complete a residency in ophthalmology and first African American female doctor to receive a medical patent. Locally, Dr. Ethyl Trygstad was a founding member of our Medical Society, serving as the first CCMS Secretary in 1957 and the first CCMS woman president in 1968.

We also take pride in the progress made by women physicians in recent times, excelling in various medical specialties and advancing the fields of research and academia.

However, women physicians still encounter unique challenges, such as stereotypes and prejudice, that can impact their opportunities for career growth. The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and pay disparities between genders further underscore the need for efforts to promote gender equality in medicine.

The rigorous training and demanding schedules of a medical career can make it difficult to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. This imbalance often disproportionately affects women, leading to burnout and attrition from the medical field. It is critical for organizations and institutions to foster environments that accommodate the needs of women physicians as they juggle their professional and personal lives.

The decision to start a family can be complex for women physicians due to concerns about maternity leave, childcare, and the impact on career progression. Some women face discrimination or judgment for choosing motherhood and a career in medicine, and physician infertility is a growing concern. It is crucial to create a culture that embraces parenthood and provides equal opportunities for professional growth, regardless of family status.

Women physicians, especially those in male-dominated specialties, may struggle to find appropriate mentors who understand the unique challenges they face. Encouraging mentorship programs that pair women physicians with experienced female mentors can provide invaluable guidance.

The FMA Annual Meeting featured a reception for Women In Medicine this year, sponsored by the Florida chapter of the American College of OB/GYNs. Attendees voiced support for more opportunities for women physicians to participate in the FMA, including childcare at meetings, help integrating mid-late-career women physicians into the organization, mentorship for newer physicians, and women-focused training courses to improve business, communication, and leadership skills.



Drs. Graciela Garton, Tameca Bakker, Susanna Gaikazian, and Rebecca Kosloff at the CCMS Women Physicians Winter Social 2023.

FMA President Dr. Jason Goldman appointed a task force to evaluate the unique needs of women in medicine and recommend FMA resources to support these needs, including but not limited to the possibility of a Women in Medicine Section. He named CCMS members Dr. Catherine Kowal and Dr. Rebekah Bernard (Chair) to the task force. Feel free to send task force suggestions to rebekahbernard@gmail.com.

Florida Physician Workforce Demographics from 2021 show that 31.1% of practicing physicians are women (up from 25% in 2011). Florida ranks 39th in the country for number of women physicians, with a nationwide percentage of 35%. That number is expected to increase, as women have comprised at least 40% of U.S. medical students for the last 25 years, increasing to slightly more than 50% since 2017.

FMA task force goals:

- Evaluate the current composition of the membership and assess if there is appropriate representation of women in medicine.
- Review methods and procedures utilized by other organizations to support women in medicine.
- Assess the need and feasibility for an FMA Women in Medicine section including purpose, role within the organization, current FMA policy and whether bylaw changes would be required, and necessary staff time and resources.
- Identify / develop other programs within the FMA to address the needs of Women in Medicine and integrate into the mission of the organization including:
- Providing a forum for networking, mentoring, advocacy and leadership development for women physicians and medical students
- Monitoring trends while identifying and addressing emerging professional issues affecting women in medicine
- Contributing to FMA advocacy on women's health and women in medicine policy issues
- Contributing to FMA efforts to increase the membership, participation, and leadership of women in the FMA.

We honor the achievements of women physicians in shaping the landscape of healthcare and remain aware of challenges they continue to face. By fostering an equitable, supportive, inclusive environment, we can empower the next generation of women physicians to continue making history and transforming medicine.

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Speaking out about ‘Imposter Doctors’

Rebekah Bernard, M.D.



The fallout from my book, *Patients at Risk: The Rise of the Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistant in Healthcare* (Universal Publishers, 2020), was intense. The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) published a press release criticizing me and my co-author. Nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) deluged me with hate mail, and a meme was even



was sometimes obscured. The second limitation involves the exclusion of high-risk or even ‘typical’ patients. In fact, nearly every study involves low-risk, previously diagnosed patients, often with self-limited diagnoses like strains, sprains, and colds.

circulated including my name on a list of infamous physicians, including sex offenders and Nazi war criminals. This furor stemmed from the book’s argument that NPs and PAs should not practice independently without careful physician oversight, a point of view that conflicts with the AANP and AAPA’s political agenda. We supported our thesis with 528 citations documenting educational decline and logical flaws in independent practice research. This year, I published a sequel—*Imposter Doctors: Patients at Risk* (Universal Publishers, 2023)—adding another 471 citations.

Awareness of the issue

I knew very little about NP and PA training until I was added to a social media group dedicated to the topic. Doctors were reporting patient harm and near-misses that they associated with a dramatic increase in the number of non-physicians and the proliferation of poor-quality, online teaching institutions. Researching the topic, I learned that while physicians must complete a minimum of 15,000 hours of supervised clinical training, NPs can graduate and practice after just 500 hours of training, and PAs after 2,000 hours. While traditionally only the most experienced nurses became NPs, new direct entry programs now allowed NPs to graduate without ever practicing a day as a registered nurse.

Despite published concerns about NP educational quality by academic nurse researchers (in one study, up to 5.5% of all family nurse practitioner students had never prescribed medication once during training), the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) insisted that NPs are fully qualified to provide independent practice and that “five decades” of research showed NP practice to be equivalent to that of physicians.

NP and PA research

Reading through the AANP’s claims, I dug into the literature. I discovered that while the research did indeed conclude similar outcomes, a deeper reading of the studies found serious limitations that were rarely mentioned in the abstracts—or the news headlines that followed. First, every single study on NP (and PA) care involved some degree of physician supervision or oversight. How often physicians were involved in patient care in these studies

The bottom line when it comes to NP and PA research is this: NPs and PAs can provide exceptional care for low-risk, previously diagnosed, and minor health problems when working under the direction of a physician. Whether these results can be extrapolated to complex patients without physician involvement has not been definitively proven. Considering that studies are now showing concerns about excess testing and medication prescribing (including unnecessary antibiotics, antipsychotics in children, and opioids) by non-physicians, there is cause for concern.

The physician shortage

While NPs and PAs are touted as a way to compensate for the physician shortage, this scenario was created by government policies initiated in the 1980s and 1990s, when experts were warning of an impending ‘physician surplus.’ In fact, the situation was perceived as being so dire that in 1997, the Clinton administration began to pay New York hospitals to stop training physicians. That same year, the Balanced Budget Act froze funding for physician residency training.

With fewer physicians per capita than most western European nations, the U.S. physician shortage is now accepted as fact. However, the physician funding cap remains in place, despite bills introduced every year since 2007 to repeal the legislation. Although medical school enrollment increased 30% over the last two decades, residency slots increased by just 1%. Instead, legislation like the Affordable Care Act has focused on funding NP and PA training programs.

Will there be a doctor to take care of you?

Corporations are increasingly hiring NPs and PAs and, in some hospitals, emergency departments and intensive care units are being run without any physicians on site. Increasingly, I ask myself: will there be a physician there to take care of me, or my family, when I need one?

It can be scary to speak out about this topic, but as physicians, we are obligated to the ethical principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, and that includes a duty to warn patients of impending harm. While I received my fair share of hate mail, I have also been overwhelmed by support from physicians, patients, and many NPs and PAs who want to work on physician-led teams. I urge you to join me in advocating for physician-led care. You can learn more about the issue from my books, or by joining the advocacy group Physicians for Patient Protection (physiciansforpatientprotection.org). After all, we will all be patients one day.

Local Physicians Revive the “Physicians’ Community Talent Show”

Erik Hiester, D.O., Nena Korunda, M.D., and Rebecca Smith, M.D.

The revival of the “Physicians’ Community Talent Show” is Saturday, November 11, 2023, at the Sugden Auditorium, Telford Building at NCH Downtown Baker Hospital in Naples. Proceeds benefit three Collier County organizations that were established by local physicians: Neighborhood Health Clinic and Physicians Led Access Network (PLAN), which both address access to care for the underserved, and the Foundation of CCMS, which awards scholarships to future medical professionals and supports the CCMS physician wellness program. For information on tickets or sponsoring, email naplesdocs2gether@gmail.com. Here is a look at some of our talent.



Dr. Mark Russo – Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Russo is a nephrologist who has practiced in Naples since 2001. He is the NCH subsection chief of nephrology, an active board member of Naples Classical Academy, and a previous physician of the year at NCH and at CCMS. Dr. Russo enjoys bicycle riding and rode 100 miles with his son over two days from Key West to Key Largo during the pandemic. He cherishes spending time with his wife Kristy, daughter Mya and son Marco.



Dr. Millard Brooks - Magic

Dr. Brooks is a board-certified anesthesiologist who came to Naples in 1990 after completing his medical school and training in Houston. He currently works at the PRMC-North Orthopedic Center. Dr. Brooks is also an award-winning magician and a ten-time alumnus of the Physicians Talent show. His “Redneck Comedy Magic” is ready to return for more thrills and entertainment.



Dr. Sarah deLeon Mansson - Dance

Dr. deLeon Mansson is board-certified in cardiology, internal medicine, and echocardiography and practices at both campuses of PRMC. She was a Cal-Poly Broncette of the Poly-centric dance team at California Polytechnic State Univ. (undergrad). She completed an Internal Medicine residency at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and fellowship at Deborah Heart and Lung Center. She and her husband, Dr. Jonas Mansson, have 4 children and enjoy family time and traveling.



Dr. Kae Ferber – Vocals

Dr. Kae Ferber has practiced internal medicine and geriatrics in Naples since 2001, currently with Millennium Physician Group. She grew up on a farm in northern Wisconsin learning to sing and play piano at church. As an original member of the first talent shows, she is welcomed back this year.



Dr. Andrea Hayes – Vocals

After a diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes at 15, Dr. Hayes dedicated her life to treating patients with her own disease. She attended U. of Alabama School of Medicine and U. of Tennessee for internship/residency, with fellowship at Vanderbilt in Endocrinology/Diabetes/Metabolism. After 24 years in private practice in Nashville, she moved to Naples and opened Naples Diabetes Concierge. Singing on stage is on her “bucket list” and it’s now or never!



Dr. Erik Hiester – Piano/Co-Chair

Dr. Hiester is a board-certified family practice physician at NCH where he works with his wife, Dr. Karen Hiester. He grew up in Homestead, FL and completed a BS and MS in Biomedical Engineering before medical school in Kansas City, then residency at Wilson Hospital System and pain fellowship at Emory. He has a piano performance minor from U. of Miami and has accompanied instrumental and praise bands the last 20 years. He participated in the Talent Show in 2013 and 2014 and is excited to help revive it!



Dr. Tami Kuhlman – Vocals

Dr. Kuhlman is Medical Director of FACEmedspa in Bonita Springs where she offers non-invasive skin care. She previously was Medical Director of Surface Medspa in Naples, a Gynecologist at Cleveland Clinic Naples, and an OB-GYN at Deaconess Waltham Hospital, and had private OB-GYN practices in New York. She has sung in choruses since 4th grade and performed in choruses and madrigal groups in Europe and the U.S., including @Children’s Free Opera, the National Cathedral, and the Yale Bach Society.



Dr. Freddie Negron – Guitar/Vocals

Dr. Negron is a Pulmonologist, Internist, and Palliative Medicine physician. He recently retired from VITAS Healthcare in Naples and is a service-connected US Army Veteran. Self-taught in guitar, bass, and drums, he has performed in coffee-houses, concerts for charity, and praise music. He will be mainly handling the bass guitar and vocals for the Physicians Talent Show and is pleased to join this endeavor.



Dr. Rhena Ruiz-Novero – Vocals

Dr. Ruiz-Novero is a family medicine physician with Millennium. She’s been in Naples for 12 years, grew up in small-town Iowa, went to undergrad at Northwestern, medical school in Manila, and residency in Milwaukee. She has sung in church and choirs, and singing in a band has always been a dream. She hopes to inspire her kids, ages 16, 14 and 10 to embrace performing arts and see how it feeds the souls of both participants and audience.



Dr. Ivan Seligman - Photographer

Dr. Seligman is a retired dermatopathologist with Naples Pathology Associates, joining the NCH staff in 1994 and remaining in emeritus status since 2013. He is also a well-known community professional photographer and former culinary writer for *Gulfshore Life* and *Naples Florida Weekly* magazines. He has photographed for numerous charitable events in Naples, including past Physician Talent Shows.

Mark Danni serves as the Show Director and Amanda Attia, MSPT as choreographer. Mark is The Community School of Naples theater program director and has Broadway and Off-Broadway experience. Amanda Attia danced and taught dance for 38 years, and is the Administrator of Preferred Care Home Health.

CCMS After 5 Socials FMA Annual Meeting



Dr. Gregory Cannarsa, Dr. Amanda Sacino,
Dr. Sonal Sura, Dr. Glenn Groat,
Dr. Anne Marie Tremaine, Nader Girgis



CCMS Members and Guests at FMA Annual Meeting



Dr. Robert Swift, Debra Barnett, Dr. Jay Barnett



Dr. Colin Kanar, Dr. Phillip Mote,
Dr. Mark Josephson



Dr. Rebecca Smith, Dr. Nicole Mamprefew,
Dr. Gary Swain



Karen Wilkinson, Dr. David Wilkinson,
Dr. Rannie AlSamkari, Samantha Farling



Dr. Eric Hochman, Kim Hochman,
Dr. Tami Kuhlman, Michael Petrick, Linda Minck



Dr. Rebekah Bernard, Dr. Corey Howard



Marisol Baez & Dr. Jose Baez



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