

State of the Union

During the first 100 days of office, ECMS met in monthly executive sessions to set an agenda to vote on decisions of the Finance Committee and the Policy Strategy Committee, and to meet at least once with all of the committee chairs. ECMS would utilize the MSNJ the management team more and more as things began flowing. Now halfway through office, it is time for the State of the Union address.

National debates on healthcare reform have energized much of the Boards activity: Dr. Caggiano, Chair of the National Political Action Committee, Dr. Fletcher and the College of Surgeons, and Dr. Lind, Chair of our Legislative Committee have kept the Board apprised of the necessary actions to take. Dr. Wallen has kept the membership informed through faxed notices. and I as your President met personally with Congressman Pallone, Chair of the Health Subcommittee. Most recently, Dr. Clemente organized a town hall meeting with the seniors, and ECMS also organized physician groups to speak to the public. At this point, our main concerns are maintaining Medicare reimbursement, preventing rationing of care to the poor and the elderly, and preventing a national healthcare plan from interfering with the doctor-patient relationship. The Medical Society, recognizing the need for a better balance of power with the insurance companies, has offered amendments to the national health reform.

In addition to political action, two new established programs have enriched the lives of our members: First, The Founders' Day Ceremony that took place during the November Board meeting gave us a moment before Thanksgiving to pause and to revel in our heritage as we honored Dr. Caggiano and heard from two distinguished lecturers, Dr. Hill and Dr. Jacobs and clips from the movie being made about the pioneers that built the ECMS were shown to ceremony attendees. Second, Dr. Fletcher is establishing a new tradition by hosting a lecture program along with the Annual Meeting. This should certainly help attract new members.

ECMS is reaching out to physicians in the County through dinners and hospital meetings and new cost savings plans through the state dues are being sought. We are grateful to Dr. Raluca Coyle for her tireless efforts on the Membership Committee.

ECMS has identified new enticements for our members. I have personally developed an ECMS 36 lecture course on the "Business of Medicine", which is on CD as a way to educate physicians starting out in practice, and I hope to expand on this lecture series. A multipurpose educational room is being developed at headquarters which will expedite program planning by committees and serve to educate members on ECMS's history, disaster preparedness, business and political action. The office files are being reorganized onto CDs, and the office itself has a rebuilt walk-in closet as well as displays on the front walls of our history.

Other committee activities include: the Medical Disaster Preparedness Committee's participation under Dr. Wallen's leadership in Pandemic Flu Readiness this fall and the School Health Committee's participation under my leadership in an open forum for the Essex County School System Flu Readiness Team. I have also been meeting with the American Lung Association School Asthma Task Force to educate schools on the disease and have been meeting with the Homeland Security Critical Infrastructure Health Care Sector on the flu response and other security measures. The Nominating Committee, under Chair, Dr. Michael Wujciak has been in session and is doing a yeoman's job to secure a fair accession to the future governance of ECMS. The History Committee under my and Dr. Hills' leadership put together the Founders' Day Ceremony and have been working on the movie,

book and website about ECMS history. Congratulations to Dr. Hill and I for a recent feature write up on the movie in the Star Ledger. The Judicial Committee, chaired by Dr. Lima is due to meet and as always our thanks to Dr. DiTrolio who has been working overtime on credentialing new members.

I want to once again thank all the committee chairs and hope to see their programs implemented soon. I look forward to seeing everyone's resolutions this January in preparation for the state convention. I also want to thank my Executive Committee and staff for always going beyond the call of duty and as always am indebted to Dr. Olesnicky for getting out the electronic newsletter.

I wish everyone a healthy and happy holiday season.

Barry Prystowsky, M.D., President