

SCMS Legislative Committee Update

3/28/08

The following is an update on the recent SCMS Tallahassee lobbying trip and other activities of the SCMS Legislative Committee:

I. Our Tallahassee lobbying trip last week:

This year SCMS combined lobbying efforts with the Florida Chapter of the American College of Physicians. Shirley and I represented SCMS and the Alliance. We were joined by FL-ACP Governor Malcolm Foster, MD, FL-ACP Legal Counsel Chris Nuland, a faculty member and 3 Internal Medicine residents from ORMC, 2 Internal Medicine Residents from UF-Jacksonville, and Sarah Rothell from the FMA PAC staff. The entire group was warmly welcomed and we universally received continued commitments of support from our legislators.

Even though there are no overly controversial issues or bills this year, the trip was very successful in keeping our presence and our issues on our legislators' minds. *This is very, very important for us.* When it gets down to the nitty-gritty on bills and issues, the relationships we have with legislators are just as important as our willingness to support them financially. This is why it is crucial that we continue Tallahassee visits each year, that we work to shore up our Key Contact Program this summer, and that we continue to help our friends financially when they need it.

II. Legislative issues discussed:

With each legislator we discussed the three major issues for us at this time:

1. The FMA's Managed Care Bill (HB 405 and SB 1012 working their way through both houses)
2. The need to raise Medicaid reimbursement for all specialties (unlikely this year due to the state budget crisis, but legislators were kept aware of how important this is)
3. Our opposition to bills that would allow non-physicians to practice medicine (we are looking strong at this time)

As of this past week legislative Committee work has been completed, and we are pleased with where most of the bills we are interested in stand (we still have battles to fight, but we are well positioned). We will continue to watch all bills closely over the rest of the Session. Our overall impression is that the FMA (with the help of FL-ACP) has done a great job this year representing our interests.

III. Meetings with individual legislators:

- **Rep. Alan Hays** — was gracious as usual and very supportive on our issues. He was appreciative that we had named him our 2007 SCMS Representative of the Year. We will set a time to present him with a certificate after the Legislative Session.



- **Rep. Dean Cannon** — was very gracious and pledged to use his influence among the House leadership to make sure the FMA's Managed Care Bill continues to go forward.
- **Rep. Chris Dorworth** — was just elected this past fall for the first time. He was very appreciative that we stopped by and spent a lot of time with us. He is not on any health care committees, but we talked about his background working as a rep for a medical products supply company and running an outpatient surgical care center. We were impressed with his command of the issues in general -- he could become a very strong advocate for our interests over time. He will likely give a talk at our May 20th SCMS meeting.
- **Rep. Sandy Adams** — is not on any health care committees, but was appreciative that we stopped by. She has always been supportive on our issues.
- **Rep. David Simmons** — expressed thanks for the support he received from SCMS in his recent fundraiser in Orlando. He has already announced his intent to run for the District 22 State Senate seat when Sen. Constantine terms out in 2010.
- **Rep. Gayle Harrell** — from Port St. Lucie, spent a lot of time with us. She is the Chair of the House Health Quality Committee, and has always been one of the strongest and most well positioned advocates for us and our issues (her husband is a retired Ob/Gyn, and she previously ran his office as well as a mammography center). Rep. Harrell is running for the US House of Representatives in District 16 this fall. She would be a fantastic voice for our issues in Washington and deserves our support. SCMS will put information about her candidacy on our website.
- **Rep. Scott Randolph** — from Orlando, an attorney and a Democrat, seemed supportive on our issues. He brought up ideas on how Medicaid reimbursement could be increased.
- **Sen. Carey Baker** — as always, was very gracious and supportive. He is the Senate sponsor of the FMA's ER Sovereign Immunity Bill (SB 1640). He has also been working on a bill that addresses bullying in schools, which has also been a SCMS Alliance project over the last few years. It may be possible for the Alliance to work with him to expand the anti-bullying effort.
- **Sen. Bill Posey** — spent an extended amount of time with us. He reviewed all the work he has done on the issues of property insurance and property tax reductions. He is very proud that medical liability rates have come down, in part due to his efforts.
- **Sen. Lee Constantine** — expressed support for our issues. He has a special interest in medical education (he was the sponsor of the legislation that created the UCF Medical School).
- **Sen. Mike Haridopolos** — from Indian River, has not forgotten that SCMS walked for him in St. Cloud during his 2003 campaign. His wife is an Internist, and he has always been very supportive on our issues.

IV. Also while in Tallahassee:

In addition to our lobbying efforts, while in Tallahassee I discussed with FMA Associate General Counsel Jeff Scott some of the ideas we have brought forth on how the FMA could improve its overall legislative effectiveness and ways the FMA could help on the issue of hospital medical staff legal representation. I met with Fred Whitson from the FMA staff on several insurance issues raised by SCMS members (more information on this will be forthcoming soon). And we had lunch and talked more about several of our issues with FMA President Karl Altenburger, MD.

Overall this was a highly successful trip. We will try to get more SCMS members to go to Tallahassee next year. It is an extremely valuable and eye-opening experience.

V. Legislative information to SCMS members:

We are in the process of updating the legislative information on our website. Once that is completed we will send out an e-mail on SCMS legislative activities to our members.

VI. The SCMS Legislative Committee:

I want to thank everyone who has agreed to participate on our powerhouse SCMS Legislative Committee. We may still add one or two more, but our current roster stands as:

Glen Davis, MD, Chair
Frank Clontz, MD
Shirley Davis, MSN, Chair Alliance Legislative Committee
Bob Feldman, MD
Hank Greenberg, MD, FMA Region D Representative
Josh Helman, MD
Steve Lester, MD
Sam Omar, MD
Hal Pineless, DO
Sanjay Reddy, MD
John Robertson, MD
Norma Ryan, President, SCMS Alliance
Lloyd Werk, MD
Richard Bragg, MD, SCMS President

This is the kind of participation it takes to make a difference. Each of you are playing an incredibly important role for our Society and I commit to doing what I can to make sure that you receive recognition for your efforts.

We will be holding our next Legislative Committee meeting in May or early June. I will let everyone know soon when the exact date will be.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Davis, MD
Chair, SCMS Legislative Committee