

CONNECTICUT FAMILY PHYSICIAN

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Legislation: What’s Coming Up in 2013 Session

The 2013 legislative session is in full swing. Legislators have been officially sworn in, the House elected Representative Brendan Sharkey as the new Speaker of the House and many bills have already been introduced. The bills that have been introduced are mere shells that await committee approval before being given legislative language. Over the next few weeks Committees will meet to determine which bills to raise and on which to take action.

With the recent tragedy in Newtown, all eyes are on the legislature to enact some meaningful reform on gun safety, school security and mental health care. A bipartisan task force has already been established to examine public safety and several working groups have also been established. While medicine will make meaningful contributions to the working groups, especially focusing on mental health care, there are additional

issues that will also be on our agenda.

As groups who oppose medical malpractice reform continue to try and weaken current law, medicine will continue to work toward stronger reform including immunity for physicians providing pro bono work, safe harbors, special health care courts and more. Meaningful medical malpractice reform is key to keeping well qualified physicians in the State. In addition, CAFP will once again be working towards increased fairness in contracting with MCOs, modernizing the preauthorization process, new health care mandates and several public health issues such as the use of tobacco settlement funds, strengthening laws on return to play after a concussion, regulating medical spas and more.

It is expected that the APRNs will approach the legislature about removing “collaboration” from their current scope of practice. They attempted to use the scope of practice review process within the Department of Public Health; however DPH did not review their request, so they are expected to take their fight to the legislature. The Academy will monitor this closely.

CAFP members will continue to be updated as the session progresses and as issues develop. With this being the longer session, there is still quite a ways to go.

Legislation to Eliminate SGR, Boost FP Payments Gets AAFP Support

The AAFP has thrown its support behind a bipartisan House bill that would reform the Medicare payment system by eliminating the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, while putting in place mechanisms to better reward primary care and the adoption of innovative payment models.

AAFP President Jeff Cain, M.D., of Denver, told a Feb. 6 congressional briefing that by eliminating the SGR, the legislation would put an end to the annual question of whether physicians can continue to practice in Medicare. It also would stabilize the Medicare payment system while encouraging the adoption of innovative payment models to improve quality and incentivize value, Cain said. The SGR has called for deep

cuts in the Medicare physician payment rate during the past decade -- reductions only averted by last-minute action by Congress. “For more than 10 years, some of the most vulnerable folks in America -- folks who are elderly, disabled and veterans have had their health care at risk because of what we know is a flawed and broken SGR system,” said Cain. “Family physicians are where millions of Americans get their health care, but continued annual threats to the Medicare system really undermine the family doctor's ability to keep the doors open and to invest in their practices for new and innovative systems.”

The bill would leave in place 2013 Medicare payment levels through the end of 2014, and

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Governor Malloy's Budget Message: Items Which Impact Healthcare

Governor Dannel Malloy recently announced his budget proposal. Some of the general themes of the proposal that relate directly to medical care include:

- Elimination of the Charter

Oak Health Plan and transition of all Charter Oak participants into the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange when fully operational (this was budgeted as a savings to the state)

- Changes in eligibility requirements tied to Husky (up to 133% of the federal poverty level) - fully federally reimbursed
- Implementation of the ACA tied to increased physician payments for primary care services under Medicaid (this is essentially a break even proposal because of federal funding) - \$104 million increased funding to physicians and other providers in 2014 (\$54 million in 2015)
- Savings from pharmacy related programs
- Some increased funding tied to various mental health, behavioral health and addiction services
- Hospital reductions (\$12 million in 2014 and \$146.2 million in 2015 - unclear if this includes additional DSH funding)
- Reduced funding to nursing homes (\$12.2 and \$16.2 million in each of the next two budgetary years)
- Medicaid fraud program \$60 million in each of the next two years (providers and others who receive payment through Medicaid)

There are some good and some not so good items for our members and their patients. However, each of the items in the Governor's message must be voted on by the legislature.

Therefore, there will be more to this developing story as legislators respond to the Governor's budget.

Of Note...

- Drs. Ross Winakor, CAFP President, and Edmund Kim, President-Elect, as well as Mark Schuman and Mary Yokose of the staff will represent the Academy at the 10 State Regional Conference in New York City, February 22-24, 2013.
- CAFP President Ross Winakor was the subject of a question and answer article in the Hartford Business Journal.

A Strong Resource for CAFP Members

As you are aware, Connecticut has expanded its vaccine program to include most pediatric and adolescent vaccines, along with requiring participation from all doctors. However, physicians still need to purchase vaccines for patients over the age of 18, along with several vaccines for non-Medicaid patients under age 18 - HPV, Rotavirus, Hepatitis A for patients over 2, and Flu for patients over 5.

Fortunately, the CAFP has a strong resource – Atlantic

Health Partners - to help members successfully address the financial and administrative challenges of providing recommended vaccines to their patients. Atlantic, the largest vaccine buying group in the State, works with Sanofi and Merck to get Academy members the lowest pricing and best terms for pediatric, adolescent, adult and flu vaccines. We encourage you to contact Atlantic at 800-741-2044 or info@atlanticehealthpartners.com to better determine how they can benefit your practice.

Social Media & CAFP!

CAFP is now on Facebook and Twitter! Do you "follow" us on Twitter? Did you "Like" us on Facebook?? If not – here are a few easy steps to help you join us in the Social Media CRAZE!

If you don't have a Facebook account, sign up for one at www.facebook.com. Enter your information and select a password. You will receive a confirmation email to complete the sign up process. Log in and search for Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians. Click the Like button. Anytime CAFP posts it will show up on your newsfeed.

If you don't have a Twitter account, go to <https://twitter.com/signup> and complete the sign up process. Enter your name, your email address, and a password. Click Sign up for Twitter. Once your Twitter account is established, log in and search for @CTAFPDO and click Follow.

CAFP looks forward to increasing communications with our members through social media.



New CAFP Members

Welcome:

Paul Braonain, M.D.
Glastonbury, CT

Julie Chee, M.D.
Hartford, CT

The 2012 CAFP Scientific Symposium saw record attendance. We also received a number of suggested topics for the 2013 Symposium. Thank you for your ideas. They have been incorporated into the email survey for the 2013 Symposium, which you recently received.

If you have yet to do so, please take a few minutes to complete the survey. The results will help the Program Committee plan the annual symposium which is one of the best symposia in the entire country. Thank you for your help.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013CAFPSymposium>



The Legislation that mandates use of state supplied vaccines through the Connecticut Vaccine Program is in effect. The Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians continues to work with CSMS and the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to address provider concerns. Should an issue occur with the Connecticut Vaccine Program which impacts your practice, please call the CAFP Executive Office at 860-243-3977 and report it to Mary Yokose or Mark Schuman. A copy of the vaccine hassle form can be found on our website: www.ctafp.org under Advocacy.

Time to Support the CAFP Foundation

It is that time of year. Once every two years Academy members are asked to support the CAFP Foundation. The last request for contributions was in April 2011.

The Foundation provides financial resources for expanding continuing medical education programs, supports medical students interested in pursuing a career in family medicine, assists family practice residents in establishing practices in the State of Connecticut and sup-

ports health care charities which will improve the health and lifestyle of Connecticut residents.

Drs. Stacy Taylor, Foundation President, and Ross Winakor, CAFP President are asking each member of the Academy to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians Foundation. Your contribution of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more will help the Academy expand its influence in Connecticut and truly represent family medicine

within our State. Your check should be made payable to the "Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians Foundation" and mailed to the CAFP Executive Office.

If your contribution is for \$75 or more, your name will be entered in a drawing for a free admission to the 2013 CAFP Symposium – a \$175 value. Two winners will be selected.

Please complete the form below.

Thank you for your continued support of the CAFP Foundation!

Support Amount of: \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other Amount \$ _____

Name(s): _____ MD/DO

Phone: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please mail donation directly to CAFP • One Regency Drive • Bloomfield • CT • 06002

(Donations for the CAFP Foundation need to be made directly to the CAFP Foundation at the address indicated above and are tax deductible)

If your contribution is for \$75 or more, your name will be entered in a drawing for a free admission to the 2013 CAFP Symposium – a \$175 value.

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CAFP
Connecticut Academy of
Family Physicians
PO Box 30
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Phone: 860-243-3977
Or 800-600-CAFP
Fax: 860-286-0787

Email:
Mark Schuman
Mschuman@ssmgt.com
Arthur Schuman
Aschuman@ssmgt.com
Mary Yokose
Myokose@ssmgt.com

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CAFP Members, who participated in a recent medical mission to the Dominican Republic, are pictured above from left to right: Drs. Brad Wilkinson, Kathy Viereg, Craig Czarsty, Anne Brewer and Sandra Hughes. The mission, sponsored by Health Horizons International, provides health care to the underserved population of the Dominican Republic.

**Legislation to
Eliminate SGR**

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then would provide annual updates of .5 percent for all physician services for the succeeding four years and a 2.5 percent increase in payments for primary care physicians during the same time period to address the undervaluation of primary care services, according to a bill summary issued.

**Report Stresses Need for More
Primary Care Physicians**

The growing shortage of primary care physicians has forced millions of Americans to seek care from emergency rooms.

It also delays and forgoes needed care in some instances, which has resulted in higher rates of preventable illnesses and even deaths, according to a new report issued by the chair of a Senate subcommittee on primary health and aging.

“When people delay or fail to receive primary care and pre-

ventative services, everyone pays the price,” says the report, which was issued by Sen. Bernard Sanders, I-VT., chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging.

“It is not only our moral responsibility to ensure primary care access now and into the future, but it is fiscally sensible to act quickly to expand this critical workforce.”

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