

CONNECTICUT FAMILY PHYSICIAN

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Connecticut Academy Hosts 2018 Ten State Conference; 98 State Chapter Leaders Attend by Gary Lewis LeRoy, M.D., FAAFP



“Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest.”

-Samuel L. Clemens
(AKA: Mark Twain)

I had the distinct privilege to attend the 2018 Ten State Conference from February 16-18th at the Downtown Hartford Marriott. Not unlike several college football conferences (e.g. The BIG Ten with its 14 teams), the conference title “Ten State” is not indicative of the actual number of state chapters who attended. Fifteen state chapters with 98 attendees were represented, along with AAFP leaders. Chapters attending were: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Beginning the meeting with a dynamic presentation entitled, “The Undeniable Truth About the Drug Epidemic of the 21st Century,” Judge Jodi Debbrecht Switalski, co-founder of the

Regional Anti-Drug Education and Outreach in Michigan, kept the audience spellbound during her two-hour presentation chronicling the evolution of the drug epidemic engulfing our American society. It is not just an opioid problem confined to poor metropolitan areas. It has no socioeconomic or geographic boundaries. While the number of written opioid prescriptions have diminished the use of benzodiazepines, other scheduled drugs, and illegally obtained drugs have drastically increased.

Judge Jodi dispelled the public notion that this was a crisis created exclusively by primary care physicians who over-prescribed opioids for pain relief. Her take home message for physicians was to always inform patients that physical dependency to these drugs can begin within three (3) days; closely monitor the patient’s use of scheduled prescription drugs; and clearly document the actions taken to minimize physical dependency by patients with an abuse potential.

At the conclusion of the first

day’s agenda an unexpected “Special Guest” arrived at the Conference to invite the attendees over to his home for a reception and dinner. Mr. Samuel L. Clemens, also known as Mark Twain, and his wife Olivia were longtime residents of Hartford, Connecticut. For a man of 183 years (born 1835) he appeared to be in remarkably good health. He provided the audience with a humorous monologue prior to allowing us to board the buses to take a VIP tour of the beautiful homestead where he wrote many of his classic American novels and short stories.

The programming for the Ten State Conference provided the attendees with an eclectic array of thought-provoking topics of interest. Presentations included: Office of the Future – Finding the tools, expertise, and motivation to innovate your practice; Joyful Medicine; Effective Tools to Reduce Burnout; Chapter Management, Then and Now; and Cybersecurity and Risk Prevention. There was also a raucous team exercise entitled, “The Million \$\$ Discussion.” Each team was given a budget of one million dollars

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CAFP Mission Statement

The mission of CAFP is to promote excellence in health care and to improve the health of people of Connecticut through the advancement of the art and science of Family Medicine, the specialty of Family Medicine and the professional growth of Family Physicians.

“Our attempts at always doing the right thing for our 129,000 members should be the expected norm, not the unexpected.”

Family Medicine has a Champion: You

Health care plays a major role in the nation’s economy and directly affects quality of life. The future actions of the federal government in areas such as reimbursement, family medicine training and access to health care coverage will also have a significant impact on the financial health of your medical practice.

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Ten State Conference

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to come up with a campaign to promote the specialty of family medicine. All the presentations offered some very creative ideas that I’m certain would exceed their mythical million dollar budget.

My presentation focused on the strategic priorities of the AAFP. Our ongoing charge is to listen to our members and not simply talk at them. Our duty to members is not to harm them, but to “do the right thing” for them. As Samuel Clemens indicated, doing the right thing will gratify some people (members), and astonish the rest. Our attempts at always doing the right thing for our 129,000 members should be the expected norm, not the unexpected.

The conference concluded

with a poignant lecture by Dr. Michael Good. He gave a riveting historic account of Jews who were forced into the Lithuanian Vilna ghetto during Nazi Germany occupation (1941-1943). During this period Jewish births were forbidden. Both the pregnant mother and baby were executed if discovered. There were also orders to execute Jewish citizens with known psychiatric disorders.

Dr. Good shared the memoirs of the physicians who attempted to save Jewish lives during the holocaust in the three-block area of the city deemed the Vilna ghetto. This reminded all in attendance of the tremendous responsibility we have to do the right thing for society despite overwhelming external pressures to do otherwise.

The New York Academy of Family Physicians will have a tough act to follow when it hosts the Ten State Conference in NYC next year. The membership, officers, executive administration and staff of the Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians certainly did all the right things to make the 2018 Ten State Conference one of the best I have ever attended. Their programming, lodging, meals (they had a cheesecake that was worth the price of admission alone!), hospitality and attention to detail was top shelf from beginning to end. It was a privilege to represent the AAFP at such a grand event. It was more than just gratifying – it was an astonishingly wonderful experience.



Attendees from New York and New Hampshire were, left to right: Sarah Nosal, M.D., James Mumford, M.D., Marc Price, D.O., and Marie Ramas, M.D. The New York Academy will host the 2019 Ten State Conference.

Ten State Conference Photo Highlights

Attending from Connecticut were, left to right: Stacy Taylor, M.D., Fonda Gravino, M.D. (CAFP President), Ross Winakor, M.D., Emmanuel Kenta-Bibi, M.D., Rufino Acevedo and Yadira Acevedo, M.D.



Arthur Schuman, former CAFP Executive, left, and Ray Saputelli, New Jersey Executive Director, participated in a discussion on changes in managing an Academy chapter over the past 50 years.



Why I Support Health Horizons International

by Craig Czarsty, M.D.

In the fall of 2004, I received a call from a young man who went to high school with my older daughter. He was a freshman at Tufts University and was going to the Dominican Republic on a medical service trip. He asked if I would be willing to accompany the group. The rest, as they say, is history.

After a few more trips, I had fallen in love with the D.R. and the people we were treating, many of whom live in abject poverty. Also, after a few more trips, as a family physician I was unsatisfied with the lack of continuity of care we were providing. With several others who were also by then veterans of the medical service trips, I co-founded Health Horizons in 2009 with the goal of providing care in a more sustainable way.

Two of the other co-founders, both in that first Tufts class, Laura McNulty and Angi Kang, moved to the D.R. for a year. They lived in very modest conditions, but the work they did was anything but small. First and foremost, they went to the people we serve, sat on their porches and asked them for advice about the care we might provide. Next, they set up a network of community health workers chosen from people recommended to us by the leaders of the villages in which we intended to operate. Everything we have done since has been built on the bedrock of those

two actions.

And what a success it has been! We continue to provide clinical care in conjunction with international volunteers and our community health workers, most of whom have been with us from the beginning. We work in close partnership with the Dominican Ministry of Public Health to educate generalist physicians in the treatment of diabetes. We train community health workers to identify people at risk for diabetes and refer them for screening. We have a program in several communities called “*Sano y Feliz*” (Healthy and Happy), in which we train local volunteers to teach their friends and neighbors about healthy lifestyles and healthy eating choices. There is more to come.

We started with two international volunteers and now have a full time staff of twelve, all of whom are Dominican. One of those volunteers, Laura, is now the President of HHI. The other, Angi, remains on the Board of Directors. Edgar Castillo, our Executive Director, brings a wealth of experience and a dy-



namic personality. He is working hard to increase our ties to the local communities.

I hope you can tell that I am pretty proud of HHI. We couldn't have done it without the generous support of our donors. I invite you to support HHI and join us in our mission to empower local leaders, strengthen the delivery of primary care and promote the public health in the Dominican Republic.

For more information about participating in our next service trip or how you can contribute to HHI, please feel free to contact me at the CAFP Executive Office (P.O. Box 30, Bloomfield, CT 06002) or at info@hhidr.org.

New CAFP Members Welcome!:

Lucinda Cassells, M.D.
Enfield, CT

Kadesha
Collins-Fletcher, M.D.
Hartford, CT

Sarah Hilding, M.D.,
M.P.H.
Mansfield Center, CT

Michael Joel Liftman,
M.D.
Bristol, CT

Tiana Larsow, M.D.
Bridgeport, CT



CAFP Foundation

I am pleased to make a contribution of \$_____ to the Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, which will enable the Academy to expand its activities to promote quality healthcare in CT. Donations provide financial resources for CME programs, support for medical students who are interested in pursuing family medicine, and assist residents in establishing practice within the state.

I wish my contribution be applied to:

The Joseph & Roberta Czarsty Endowment Fund

The Markley Practice Management Education Fund

The CAFP Foundation General Fund

Contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible.

Name _____ Date _____

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We are ready. Are you?

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