

# Cobb County Medical Society

# News

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE COBB COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2009

## President's Message

by Robert A. Underwood, MD

Welcome to the spring edition of the CCMS newsletter dedicated to items of interest to Cobb and surrounding county's physicians. This, along with our webpage and member emails, provides effective and efficient lines of communication amongst each of us in these times of ever more demanding work, family and social commitments. The practice of medicine is in particular becoming exponentially more tedious and onerous and our patient care activities dictated and diverted by non-physician influences which would smother the basic principles of medicine as a profession. The CCMS remains critical to our medical community as the only physician chartered organization allowing us to meet, discuss, and debate issues, problems, and concerns of mutual interest, as well as directly access with a unified voice the higher tiers of our peer organizations across the state and country such as the MAG and AMA amongst others. In addition, the more recent development of our PAC has allowed unprecedented access and influence in the political arena, and is poised to generate far more impact, if only each of us would participate at a reasonable level.

This is a critical time for our profession, and thus the CCMS. Our membership remains stagnant at best with

currently 304 active members, and 105 retired members amongst 1,500 Cobb County physicians. The financial commitment remains nominal and the organization exceedingly sound (with much credit to our tireless advocate and Executive Director, Joanne Thurston, CPA). Should our society and others like it falter and disappear, our voice and any meaningful effective role in medicine (aside from being the "doctor-cog" grinding along on the gears of the medical corporate heavy machinery) will evaporate. And this, although it may come with little more than a whimper, will have dramatic adverse longterm ramifications. All of us in the profession and practice of medicine enjoy the privilege of education with its press for personal ambition and allure to financial success, but the associated insidious peril remains timid apathy. Very simply, the CCMS can do nothing for you; but it can be anything and everything with you towards the goal of true physician driven and patient centered healthcare.

Please browse through this edition of the newsletter to see the numerous activities in which your colleagues are involved – join them, help them. And if you are currently a non-member, welcome, please join us.



Robert A. Underwood, MD

## Calendar

**May 2**

Smith-Gilbert Gardens  
Kennesaw, Georgia  
5:00 pm to 9:00 pm  
rain date - Sunday, May 3

**May 19**

General Membership  
Meeting  
Jon A. Neiditz  
Nelson Mullins Riley &  
Scarborough LLP  
"Red Flag Rules"

**October 4 - 5, 2009**

MAG House of Delegates  
Westin Savannah Harbor  
Resort

# Best Practices for Healthcare Employers

by Carole Mogan, PhD and Bob Surrusco

Physicians and healthcare executives who employ workers need to recognize their ultimate responsibility and liability for the selection, screening and supervision of personnel.

Existing screening procedures for doctor's offices and hospitals, if they exist at all, involve computer-based data searches and vary in cost according to the vendor used. While this may initially seem to be cost-effective, the practice fails to address potential risks.

- Employers can be held liable for workers who commit a crime while on the job.
- Businesses lose an estimated \$50 billion annually due to employee criminal behavior, with \$4 billion lost through embezzlement alone.
- Almost 1/3 of all business failures result from negligent hiring practices.
- Over 50% of resumes contain exaggerated or fraudulent information and/or significant omissions (according to Human Resource Executives surveys). 66% of negligent hiring cases that go to trial, result in jury awards averaging more than \$600,000.
- Healthcare employees, with access to controlled substances, have unique opportunities to commit criminal acts that can threaten patients and the public. Employees can use their "insider" knowledge about the processing of prescriptions and the relationship between those who write and those who dispense medications to commit illegal acts.

In the Metro Atlanta area, prescription drug abuse now exceeds the abuse of methamphetamine and cocaine.

- According to local law enforcement, there has been a significant increase in incidents involving criminal behavior at doctor's offices and pharmacies.

The popularity of prescription drugs and the profit motive are factors for the growth. One Oxycontin tablet with a retail cost of \$1.00 can be sold for \$55-\$85 on the street.

## Recommendations

The problem of negligent hiring is one with a relatively easy, efficient and effective solution. While several firms currently offer standard on-line searches,

they fail to provide the one screening component for healthcare employees that has proven to be critical for identifying at-risk individuals. A personal interview conducted by a skilled professional with interview and interrogation skills can provide incomparable benefits to the employer, applicant and the public. Since the applicant signs a release/waiver, the objective interviewer can initiate a more in-depth inquiry than a potential employer. The skilled interviewer is able to gain insights into the character of the applicant and recognize possible leads regarding ethical issues and potential criminal behavior. Past applicant problems that are typically missed in records searches are commonly identified by the interviewer. INTERVIEWS ARE AT NO COST TO THE POTENTIAL EMPLOYER. Those applicants successfully completing this enhanced screening process could be given preferential hiring consideration as pre-qualified candidates. The report can be released in a manner similar to a validated college transcript.

While most physicians have chosen their careers to help and heal their patients, they must also be aware of business management problems and best practices. They need to appreciate their responsibility as employers and be able to consider proactive problem-solving approaches to minimize their risks of negligent hiring.

Dr. Carole Morgan for additional information regarding employee screening services at 678.401.5100 or 404.723.9745. NOTE: Other business risks associated with negligent retention, failure to train, failure to supervise, employee stress, emotional intelligence, etc. will be discussed in forthcoming articles, along with insights from law enforcement investigators and executives, emergency medical and financial professionals.

**Joanne M Thurston**  
Certified Public Accountant

[jmthurston@bellsouth.net](mailto:jmthurston@bellsouth.net)

Member of American Institute of CPAs Georgia Society of CPAs	66 Mt. Calvary Road Marietta, GA 30064 Phone 770-795-1556 Fax 770-422-4884
--	---

# New Members

**Munjal Shroff, DO**  
Georgia Psychiatry & Sleep, LLC  
4015 South Cobb Drive, Suite 110B  
Smyrna, GA 30080  
770-438-7199

**Farah B. Williams, MD**  
Cascade Radiology  
900 Circle 75 Parkway  
Suite 480  
Atlanta, GA 30339  
770-980-8970



**Monica Y. Moore, MD**  
North Cobb Pediatrics  
205 Hawkins Store Road, Suite B1  
Kennesaw, GA 30144  
770-928-0862



**John B. Chastain, MD**  
ENT Associates of North Georgia  
320 Kennestone Hospital Blvd  
Cancer Center, Suite 107  
Marietta, GA 30060  
770-793-7613



**Shatul L. Parikh, MD**  
Northwest ENT  
80 Lacy Street  
Marietta, GA 30060  
770-427-0368

**Juana M. Braverman**  
LaVista Medical Group  
2415 Beaver Ruin Road, Suite B  
Norcross, GA 30071  
770-446-2820

**Edward F. Spilker, MD**  
West Cobb Family Practice  
3707 Largent Way, Suite 100  
Marietta, GA 30064  
770-792-9250

**NOW** is a good time to invest  
in health care real estate...



Kennestone Hospital Area  
in Marietta is expanding—  
be a part of the growth!

Contact Tom Wilder, Broker



**WILDER REALTY, INC.**

770-973-1422

or [tom@wilder-realty.com](mailto:tom@wilder-realty.com)

*Tom is a former State Representative with local and  
national health care development experience.*

## Resources for your medical practice.

At United Community Bank, we are committed to providing resources and expertise to help your practice succeed. Our experienced financial professionals develop a relationship with you and customize services for your needs.

With a variety of the latest business services and tools, you'll have more time to focus on your patients and employees. You can take advantage of:

- **United Cash Management**
- **Business Online Banking**
- **United ACH Origination**
- **Payroll Services**
- **Compact Disc Statements**
- **United Account Reconciliation**
- **Merchant Services**
- **Remote Deposit**

For more information, we invite you to call or visit us today at one of our five locations in Marietta, Powder Springs and Hiram. 770-424-2000



The Bank That **SERVICE** Built.™

# Alliance Opportunities: Legislative Days at the Capitol and Medshare Information

**C**CMSA is ready to go for the 2009 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly. Phone calls, e-mails and personal visits are all part of our strategic plan. Last year, CCMSA participated in the "Days at the Capitol" and we will be doing so again this year. We plan to participate on Tuesday, March 3rd. Anyone interested in attending should contact Anne Staley at 770-419-7806. We will carpool with those who are interested.

An Alliance Day at the Capitol usually starts with a briefing from the MAG Legislative Team or General Counsel followed by a plan of action for talking with our representatives and senators or committee members whose vote we would like to have on a particular issue. During the legislative session, we will work closely with the MAG Director of Government Relations Larry Lanier and the rest of the legislative team to determine when Alliance members need to make phone calls to legislators, committee members, or the leaders under the Gold Dome.

MedShare is a volunteer organization located here in Decatur. MedShare recovers surplus medical supplies and equipment that are no longer needed in the U.S. and redistributes them to qualified healthcare institutions in developing countries. Surplus supplies come from hospitals, clinics, surgi-centers, manufacturers and distributors both locally and nationally. MedShare depends on hundreds of volunteers

monthly to help sort the incoming supplies. MedShare's sophisticated sorting



process and online inventory allows recipients to choose exactly which supplies will be included in MedShare's 40-foot containers.

In 2007, MedShare distributed almost \$13 million worth of medical supplies and equipment in 78 forty-foot containers. These containers have been distributed to over 71 countries throughout the world. MedShare strives to build relationships with its recipients and depends upon the support of individual, community and corporate donors to ensure a steady supply of product donations, financial support and volunteer hours.

If you would be interested in volunteering at MedShare or if your office/clinic/hospital would be willing to donate useable supplies, you can contact me at 678-290-8172 and I can get you in touch with the appropriate persons. See all the good things accomplished by MedShare at [www.medshare.com](http://www.medshare.com).

## Message from the Executive Director

*by Joanne M. Thurston, CPA*

**D**ues statements went out and for the first time you may pay your dues online. Many have taken this opportunity to renew this way. You may pay your dues, donate to the PAC and pay your spouse's. Your website [www.cobbdoctors.org](http://www.cobbdoctors.org) is a great place to find announcements, other physicians, and pay your dues. Do you know a physician that is not a member? Together we make a strong organization. If you have questions or comments please call me or email me at [joanne.thurston@cobbdoctors.org](mailto:joanne.thurston@cobbdoctors.org). Together we make a difference.

**FREE  
LIFE  
INSURANCE**  
Non-Medical Term  
Up to \$350,000  
Return of all Premiums  
**TAX FREE**  
**1-800-844-3862**  
The Insurance  
Hotline

# Physician Must Comply With the “Red Flags Rules”

The Federal Trade Commission established the “Red Flag” requirements. The requirements were published on November 9, 2007 with full compliance not required until November 1, 2008. Enforcement of the rules was delayed until May 1, 2009. Under the Red Flags Rules, financial institutions and creditors must develop a written program that identifies and detects the relevant warning signs – or “red flags” – of identity theft. These may include, for example, unusual account activity, fraud alerts on a consumer report, or attempted use of suspicious account application documents. The program must also describe appropriate responses that would prevent and mitigate the crime and detail a plan to update the program. The program must be managed by the Board of Directors or senior employees of the financial institution or creditor (the physician), include appropriate staff training, and provide for oversight of any service. Your program should include the following:

- alerts, notifications, or warnings from a consumer reporting agency;
- suspicious documents;

- suspicious personally identifying information, such as a suspicious address;
- unusual use of – or suspicious activity relating to – a covered account; and
- notices from customers, victims of identity theft, law enforcement authorities, or other businesses about possible identity theft in connection with covered accounts.

To facilitate our Physician’s compliance with these rules our General membership meeting on May 19th will feature Jon A. Neiditz, attorney from Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP. Jon will address this issue as well as other current healthcare topics from a legal perspective.

Jon is known nationally for developing and implementing cost-effective information governance and management programs that effectively address the risks, costs and opportunities associated with electronic information, and as a trusted advisor on data management issues. As a lawyer, consultant and community leader, Mr. Neiditz focuses on practical, cost-effective solutions to complex problems and on establishing innovative relationships of trust and transparency.

## Cobb Medical Reserve Corp

by Dr. David Caras

The Cobb Medical Reserve Corps is making steady progress on the organizational structure needed to effectively integrate into the Cobb emergency system.

Our progress thus far:

- 1) Designed a one page medical record that will be used at all incident command sites requiring medical response.
- 2) A standardized “Go-Kits” for all medical volunteers are being developed.
- 3) Developed the process of registering, credentialing, with the necessary background checks, is underway and will lead to IDs that will allow physician to quickly integrate into any emergency response scene at which we may be needed.
- 4) Developed program to receive CME for participants.

Major goals for the next year will be:

- 1) Recruit at least 50 physicians to join our group.
- 2) Continue the ongoing education that we need to respond appropriately to the numerous incidents for which we will be needed. Pandemic flu, mass medical evacuations, or more sinister actions like bioterrorism or mass casualty incidents are just some examples.
- 3) Review Cobb County’s plans that require medical response.

In the current climate of doctor bashing and reimbursement issues it is nice to be involved with something that is pure service to the OUR community.



# CCMS 2009 Officers



## **Dr. Robert A Underwood - President**

Dr. Underwood is a board certified general surgeon at Surgical Arts, PC in Marietta, GA. After graduating from Medical College of Georgia, residency at Barnes Hospital in St Louis Dr. Underwood joined his fathers, Dr. Charles Underwood, practice in Marietta. Dr. Underwood is married to Susan and they have one son Charles Robert. The family enjoys the outdoors by hiking, camping, and biking.



## **Dr. Tom Emerson – President Elect**

Dr. Emerson is a board certified urologist at Urology Associates. Dr. Emerson graduated from Medical College of Georgia and completed his residency at Medical Center of Central Georgia and Oschsner Clinic in New Orleans. Dr. Emerson moved to Marietta in 1989 to begin his practice with Urology Associates. Dr. Emerson is married to Christy and they have three children.



## **Dr. Melissa Bruce Rhodes – Secretary/Treasurer**

Dr. Rhodes is a pulmonologist at Respiratory Consultants of Georgia. After graduating from Indiana University School of Medicine and residency at St Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana Dr. Rhodes moved to Marietta, Georgia. Dr. Rhodes is married to Calvin and they live in Marietta.



## **Congratulations !**

Dr. Bryan Piedad of Kennestone Heart Physicians Group was named one of the top twenty rising stars under 40 by *Cobb Life Magazine* in their March 2009 issue.

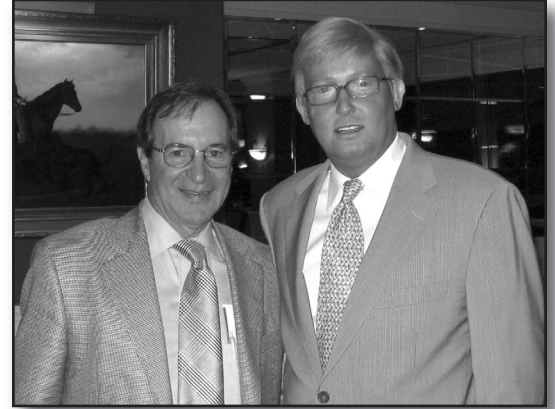
*Dr. Bryan Piedad*

# CCMS: A Report on Activities

## October 22, 2008 – General Membership Meeting

### Speaker: Matt Towery of Insider Advantage

An attorney, Towery began his career in politics and later in the media after having won the National Bicentennial Debate Championship and becoming a member of the staff of a United States Senator, and a debate and campaign strategist for Newt Gingrich in the early 1980s. He is a graduate of England's Cambridge University (M. Phil International Relations) as well as Stetson University's College of Law (Cum Laude). He is the author of several books including the groundbreaking *Powerchicks: How Women Will Dominate America*. Matt Towery writes a nationally syndicated column for *Creators Syndicate*, and is CEO of a major nonpartisan opinion research firm which polled the entire 2008 presidential contest as reported by major national newspapers and news networks as well as exclusively for *Politico*. Matt enlightened the group on the expectations for the November elections.



## November 14, 2008 – Holiday Wine Tasting

The Cobb Medical Society christened the Strand Theater. No one was disappointed in the opening night. Earl Reeves, General Manager of the Strand, gave tours of the theater to the group. As guests entered they were welcomed by beautiful decorations by Susan Underwood, fabulous food from the Party Girl, music from a string trio, and great wine. Our party was on the third floor with plenty of room to socialize. The rain stopped and many stepped onto the balcony. The square was beautiful with lights and song. We were serenaded by a group of Carolers standing on the Square. This is an evening to meet, greet and renew acquaintances. The only business was election of officers for 2009. Your officers are: President – Robert Underwood, MD, President-Elect – Tom Emerson, MD and Secretary/Treasurer – Melissa Rhodes, MD.

## January 21, 2009 - Legislative Dinner

The annual Dinner with our Legislative Delegation took place on the second week of the 2009 Legislative Session at the Georgian Club. Legislators who have CCMS members that live or work in their districts were invited. Networking, information sharing and dinner were the agenda. Each table comprised several physicians to each legislator. This allows communication to flow in both directions. We emphasized that CCMS wants to be a resource for the legislature in healthcare issues. Attendees included: Senator Judson Hill, Chip Rogers, and John Wiles; State Representatives were Representative Ed Setzler, Calvin Hill, Judy Manning, and Pat Dooley.

## January 28, 2009 Annual Meeting

CCMS's Annual meeting was held at the Georgian Club. Dr. Rob Underwood took charge of his first meeting as President. Our speaker, Dr. Richard E Besser, Director of Coordinating Office for Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response at Centers for Disease Control, had been scheduled for six months. Dr. Besser was excited about coming to Cobb County and speaker to our physicians. The week before our meeting Dr. Besser was named Acting Director of the CDC. On Tuesday Dr Besser was directed to Washington, DC by President Obama. At the last minute Senator David Shafer stepped up to the plate and became our Speaker. Senator Shafer described bills that were dropped and bills that might be dropped which related to Healthcare. Over 120 attendees enjoyed the time to make new friends and reacquaint with old friends.

---

Cobb County Medical Society  
P.O. Box 1208  
Marietta, GA 30061

---