

SMS: 160 years of making a difference



Raymond C. Zastrow, MD
SMS President

One of the proudest moments of my life was being sworn in as President of the State Medical Society of Wisconsin. Sure, I enjoyed the pageantry of the moment. But believe me, there are many more important reasons why I feel proud to serve in this role. The Society is, and has been for 160 years, an effective voice for physicians and, by extension, our patients.

I joined the SMS as a medical student and have been an active member since. So to have received the support of my colleagues to help lead an organization that provides such tremendous value for physicians is indeed a wonderful honor. Just think for a moment about some of the accomplishments and services the SMS is responsible for:

- Developed and publishes a medical journal to educate physicians and the public
- Has been instrumental in the development of the state's medical schools
- Led and accredited continuing medical education in Wisconsin
- Created one of the first peer review monitoring and physician health programs

By speaking with a unified voice on behalf of all physicians, the SMS has also been a health policy leader. The organization is receptive and responsive, and I've seen firsthand how the collective voice of physicians can influence public policy and public health.

This translates into better health care for patients and tangible savings for physicians. For example, the SMS has two seats on the Patients Compensation Fund Board, and your SMS representation has been instrumental in leading to a 20% reduction in fees this year and a 52% decrease in the last three years. On average, this saves well over \$1000 per year, depending on the physician's Fund class.

SMS membership also means a better deal on insurance. Physician-owned and operated, SMS Insurance Services provides a complete line of products tailored to the physician and offers premier policies and discounts to SMS members.

In addition, the SMS has embraced the Internet to help our members operate more efficiently. Our partnership with Medem allows physicians and groups to develop free customized practice web sites that include secure two-way messaging, as well as credible and trusted health information from the leading medical societies.

And speaking of education, our consulting service is second to none. Wisconsin Medical Society Consulting, Inc., keeps physicians and office personnel on the right track with complex coding and health insurance matters.

Be it a complex rule affecting reimbursement or a legislative proposal that affects the practice of medicine, the SMS is always on watch, dedicated to keeping you informed. In addition to the published materials you receive, visit WISMED (www.wismed.org) for daily, up-to-date information about information that affects you. As a service to the people of Wisconsin, WISMED includes the "Wisconsin Physician Directory," which patients can use to search for a physician. (Please take a moment to visit www.wismed.org to verify that your correct information is listed.)

I'm sure you can see why I am so proud to be president of this organization, in light of what we've accomplished already. But I'm even more optimistic about the future. The strength of the profession rests with Wisconsin physicians like you, who are working together. That's what this Society is all about.

Membership Demographics for Year Ending 2000

Total Membership: 8644

Female: 1729

Male: 6869

≤ 40: 2682

Resident/PG-I: 389

Student: 735

International Medical Graduates: 1002

University of Wisconsin Medical School Graduates Practicing in Wisconsin: 1582

Medical College of Wisconsin Graduates Practicing in Wisconsin: 1846

working together



The mission of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* is to provide a vehicle for professional communication and continuing education of Wisconsin physicians.

The *WMJ* (ISSN 1098-1861) is the official publication of the State Medical Society of Wisconsin and is devoted to the interests of the medical profession and health care in Wisconsin. The managing editor is responsible for overseeing the production, business operation and contents of *WMJ*. The editorial board, chaired by the medical editor, solicits and peer reviews all scientific articles; it does not screen public health, socioeconomic or organizational articles. Although letters to the editor are reviewed by the medical editor, all signed expressions of opinion belong to the author(s) for which neither the *WMJ* nor the SMS take responsibility. The *WMJ* is indexed in Index Medicus, Hospital Literature Index and Cambridge Scientific Abstracts.

For reprints of this article contact the *WMJ* Managing Editor at 800.362.9080 or e-mail wmj@wismed.org.

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