

### Wisconsin Alliance Board 2004-2005

**President**

Chris Iglar

**President-Elect**

Ken Strmiska

**Vice-President**

Barb Feider

**Secretary**

Delphine Taft

**Treasurer**

Lynette McCool

**Past President**

Linda Minnihan

**Treasurer-Elect**

Adiene Zickerman

The State and County Alliance Network (SCAN) is the official publication of the Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance. Articles submitted should be typed and are subject to editorial review and changes. For more information, contact Kathy at the Alliance office:

330 E. Lakeside Street  
PO Box 1109  
Madison, WI 53701  
ph: 608.442.3737  
fax: 608.283.5424  
KathyM@wismed.org

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Chris Iglar

As the second year of my term as president of the Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance unfolds we are continuing to revitalize our organization. One of the major things we are working on at the state level is putting together a new state health project. We discussed this at length at our Annual Meeting last April, devoted a portion of our September Board of Directors meeting to this subject and have a special committee devoted to this task. Our hope is to present a plan for the implementation of a new state health project at our Annual Meeting, April 7 in Madison.

At our 2005 Annual Meeting we watched the Meg Meeker video, "The Rules Have Changed," which highlights the need for attention to teen health and sexuality. This subject is one possibility we are looking at for a long term health project. Committee members Carol Harding, Susan Tarm, Delphine Taft, Sondra Shove, Maggie Marquis, Lynette McCool, Roberta Baldwin and Ken Strmiska would welcome your input on this subject.

Membership and legislation continue to be concerns. There is a report on each subject in this newsletter. We put together a new membership brochure last year. Copies are available at the state office, [KathyM@wismed.org](mailto:KathyM@wismed.org). Please be sure and read Sherry Clarke's very comprehensive legislative report regarding the State Supreme Court's ruling on the cap on non-economic damages in medical liability cases.

As this issue of SCAN is going into the mail, Carol Harding, Delphine Taft and I are headed to Chicago for a Leadership Development Conference. This is a really dynamic leadership seminar with great speakers and informational sessions. The next opportunity to attend this conference is February 5-7. It is wonderful leadership training tool and within driving distance of most of our county leaders in

Wisconsin. A new feature of LDC this year is the option to participate in one or two days of the session instead of having to commit to the whole package. A similar, scaled down seminar takes place March 3-5 in Minneapolis, the North Central States meeting. More information about both of these sessions will be available later this fall.

It is again a privilege to be a part of this organization of physician spouses. We can make a tremendous impact on our communities. Please always feel free to contact me, [cniquest@aol.com](mailto:cniquest@aol.com), with questions regarding the aforementioned training opportunities, health projects or alliance concerns.

## THREE ATTEND AMA-A MEETING

Three Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance Board members attended the American Medical Association-Alliance Annual Meeting, June 19-21, in Chicago. President Chris Iglar, Past President Linda Minnihan and Health Promotions Chair Carol Harding represented the state alliance.

The most significant action by the 2005 House of Delegates was the vote to amend the Bylaws to remove the criteria of an alliance member's spouse being a member of the American Medical Association as a prerequisite to serve as an Annual Meeting delegate. Delegates also created the category of Honorary Membership, then promptly voted to bestow the honor on recently retired Executive Director Hazel Lewis. A membership category was also created for medical students.

## BOARD APPROVES VISTE MEMORIAL DONATION

At its recent fall meeting the Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance board voted to donate \$50 to the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation in memory of Dr. Kenneth Viste. Viste, who died in August, was the spouse of state board member, Jan Viste. An Oshkosh neurologist, Viste was a member of the Foundation board and an active member of the medical society for many years. Jan is currently the AMA WMS foundation chair and represents the state alliance on the Foundation board.

## WINNEBAGO COUNTY TEAM EARNS FREE STATE MEMBERSHIPS

While exercise pays off in health benefits it had a more direct pay off for the four members of the Winnebago County Alliance walking team who won paid state memberships for 2005-06. They logged the most miles in the WMSA county alliance walking competition held last fall. From September 1 through November 30 team members Carol Harding, Sherry Clarke, Peg Larson and Gail Knier totaled 1,273 miles.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE-CAPS ON NON-ECONOMIC DAMAGES DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

By Sherry Clarke, Legislative Chair

The July State Supreme Court decision declared the cap on non-economic damages (pain and suffering) in medical liability cases was unconstitutional and therefore eliminating them has caused much concern in the State of Wisconsin for physicians, as well as persons seeking medical care. The cost of health care increases for everyone when high jury awards of non-economic damages cause medical liability insurance premiums to soar.

Enacted in 1995 the cap served to assist Wisconsin as being a state of stability in medical liability insurance premiums as well as having good access to patient care. In many states without caps, such as Illinois and Nevada, the premiums have forced many doctors to leave their respective states, causing people to drive many miles to seek medical attention and leaving many areas without obstetricians or trauma surgeons for accident victims. Until recently, the lower premiums and favorable liability market have made it easier for Wisconsin to recruit providers to provide care in rural areas and throughout the state.

The following issues should be considered (taken from *Keepdoctorsinwisconsin.org* website)

- **Cost of care** - the cost of medical care will increase as physicians are more likely to practice defensive medicine, ordering costly unnecessary tests and referrals for fear of being sued.
- **Access to care** - patients in rural areas have benefited from a stable medical liability environment that has attracted physicians to Wisconsin and kept them practicing here. This could all change if escalating medical liability insurance costs keep physicians from locating here or force Wisconsin physicians to retire, move or limit the care they provide.
- **Timeliness of care** - patients may have to travel longer distances to receive medical services. Many crisis states have entire rural counties without emergency care or physicians available to deliver babies.
- **Quality of care** - patients throughout

Wisconsin will no longer have access to the most experienced physicians as more doctors are forced to retire early because their insurance premiums rise significantly every year.

A special Medical Liability Task Force which is headed by Curt Gielow has had several meetings in which testimony from the several groups including the Wisconsin Medical Society, Wisconsin Hospital Association, Physicians Insurance Company of WI (PIC), Wisconsin Trial Lawyers Association have all had opportunities to express views related to the how caps affect medical liability. The Task Force is made up of five legislators (three Republicans, two Democrats) and five members of the public. They are/will attempt to craft a new law addressing the issues that caused the Supreme Court to throw out the previous law and are working toward October recommendations for restoring Wisconsin's caps on non-economic "pain and suffering" damages.

The legislators need to have the caps be reasonable and effective to be constitutional. This will maximize the chances of reinstating it by the Governor. If this fails-then the potential of looking at a constitutional amendment by means of a referendum will be addressed. Because of the steps involved in this process most likely this will occur April of 2007 at the earliest.

More information, talking points and frequently asked Q & A can be found on a new website: *Keepingdoctorsinwisconsin.org*. This website is newly developed and is a "go-to" place for grassroots efforts, including posters, pamphlets, and educational means. Continue to read the INSIDER (newsletter emailed by the WI Medical Society) for ways that you can help and talking points to your legislators to make sure that the caps become reinstated.

**Legislative Day at the Nation's Capital**-stay tuned for more information coming from the AMA-A at the Chicago meeting in October. A legislative day in

*continued on page 3*

## MEMBERSHIP

By Barb Feider, Vice President, Membership

The arrival of fall each year brings the Alliance dues statements to your mailbox. Please take the time to renew now, before your bill gets lost in the flurry of "life". Bills are broken down into County dues (which vary by county), State dues (\$40) and National dues (\$40). Please support all three dues levels, as we are one organization, composed of three parts that do not stand alone. They play very different roles, but lose effectiveness without each other. Many thanks to those of you that offer support at all levels, and we encourage the rest of the membership to follow suit.

The benefits of Alliance membership are many, but I would like to highlight just a few:

- Networking and fellowship opportunities
- Legislative impact
- Medical family support
- Health promotions - both statewide and in local communities
- Leadership development
- Volunteer opportunities

The Alliance invites you to invest in yourself, your community and better health care. We welcome all levels of participation through sharing your talents, donating your time or contributing your dues. Remember, we consider you an active Alliance member just by paying your dues!

I welcome any suggestions or comments. Feel free to e-mail me at [feiderjbarb@hotmail.com](mailto:feiderjbarb@hotmail.com).

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE...

*continued from page 2*

Washington DC in March 2006 is being organized. The hope is to have representation from all 50 states at the same time meeting with respective Senators and Congressional representatives at the Capital. Together we can make our presence known. Wisconsin's legislators should not be exempt from hearing from us about our concerns regarding a federal cap on non-economics damages for medical liability and other health care issues.

## GREATER MILWAUKEE MEDICAL SOCIETY ALLIANCE COUNTY REPORT

By Delphine Taft

September 15, 2005

Pink breast cancer bracelets and notices of the 2005 Wisconsin Breast Cancer show house were given out at the June 6, 2005 breakfast board meeting held at the Wisconsin Club. A number of members got together on June 13 to tour the old Uihlein home on Lake Drive to support a cure for breast cancer.

Our first fall board meeting took place at Panera's in Mayfair mall on Thursday September 8. Projects on the agenda included ordering 1000 bookmarks and 500 booklets that discuss bullying. These will be distributed to schools and libraries that we have partnered with in the past. We will also try to include bookmarks in the packets given out at The Sugar Plum luncheon held in November to benefit Children's hospital. We continue to support two charities, La Casa and the Greater Milwaukee Free Clinic, by earmarking donations from luncheons held in their honor during the year. Two of our most dedicated members Theo Baier and Kathy Schneider have donated time and energy to these worthy agencies. A luncheon meeting held in downtown Milwaukee is currently being planned for October with the hopes of getting Alberta Darling as guest speaker. Invitations will be sent to all members to invite them to join the board in supporting the Milwaukee Symphony Fashion Show and Sugar Plum Luncheon to be held in November by sharing tables at these events. Because our membership is small our Alliance often partners with other agencies to support various community projects and agencies. Our dedicated board looks forward to another challenging and exciting year.

## WINNEBAGO COUNTY UPDATE

By Sherry Clarke, Past President

Winnebago County voted at the summer meeting to create a Board of Directors to govern our Society as a trial for a year in an effort to reorganize and determine the future of the organization. Member participation has been dwindling to a core group of individuals while the number of members paying dues has not fallen. As a result it was decided to continue the Alliance in the county and rethink the budget of time and revenues for health promotion projects.

We will continue to provide our Hands Are Not for Hitting in it's entirety as we have for well over 6 years. Members split the responsibility of remaining projects among individuals or teams. Reports on the outcomes/successes of the projects will be given at meetings throughout the year to evaluate future programs.

This is a year of transition, but we have a core of enthusiastic people that continue to work toward the success of the Winnebago County Alliance so that it will maintain a strong presence in our community.

## BROWN COUNTY UPDATE

By Rachel Johnson, President

It's an exciting time to be a member of Brown County Medical Society Alliance. After experiencing the same dip in membership numbers as many other county alliances, we took the bull by the horns and under the leadership of last year's president, Ken Strmiska, we've been on a membership drive.

This year, we've sold 200 tickets to our annual Fall Fundraiser, and we're continuing the membership drive through the end of the year. We don't know yet how many more paid members we'll have until the billing cycle is complete, but it's a safe bet that our numbers are up.

Along the same lines, we're going after the growing number of male spouses this year also. In November, we've planned a beer tasting at Title Town Brewery in downtown Green Bay. We hope this meeting/event will attract the potential male members more than our usual luncheons do.

In February, we're hosting a joint dinner with the Medical Society and launching a talent show to boot. We hope that with all the talented members in Brown County that this will become a popular annual event. All in all, it's an exciting year we've got planned.

Brown County's newly installed officers include (from left) Rachel Johnson, President, Dia Zent, Vice President and Barb Bachhuber, Secretary.



## PROMOTING HEALTH

By Carol J. Harding, Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance Health Promotion

As Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance Chairman of Health Promotion for 2005-2006, I am encouraging your County Alliance's involvement in one or more health projects in your community.

"The mission of the Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance is to improve the health of Wisconsin families through statewide health initiatives, local Alliance activities and partnership with the Wisconsin Medical Society." Our WMS Alliance tag line is, "Promoting healthy lifestyles for Wisconsin families."

Healthy Connections, an e-newsletter brought to Alliance members by the AMA Alliance 2005-2006 Health Promotion Committee, is sent out bi-monthly and is intended to keep members informed of the latest health promotion information. Our Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance President, Chris Iglar, is a member of this committee.

### HEALTH LITERACY

Health Literacy programs are available to all AMA Alliance members. Studies have shown that Health Literacy is not a race, cultural, age, geographical or income-specific issue. Yet it is one of the biggest problems for physicians and health care providers across the country. When patients misunderstand their medical instructions, it can lead to further complications, frustrations, extra costs and increased liability for everyone involved.

The AMA Foundation, with the help of Alliance members, has developed Health Literacy kits designed to help physicians, health care workers and patients communicate so that the best possible health care is given. The short video included in the kit is an excellent tool designed to improve communication skills for physicians, nurses and others involved in the health care process.

### CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the online equivalent of schoolyard bullying and is a growing problem, although few parents are aware that it even exists and of the danger it imposes. Kids and teens, boys and girls, are on both sides of cyberbullying. Some as young as 9 year olds, are finding themselves harassed via

weblogs, websites, text-messages and instant-messages. Many retaliate by becoming cyberbullies themselves.

The easiest and most effective way to stop cyberbullying is to ignore it. Most bullies are looking for a reaction—they want to know they have frightened or embarrassed someone. We must teach our children how to respond to cyberbullying, and when to ignore it. Solutions include: blocking the screen name of the offending cyberbully; using monitoring software that can gather and save evidence that law enforcement may need; and blocking communication from everyone but trusted friends. More ways to help solve this problem will be included in an upcoming issue of Healthy Connections.

### SAVE TODAY IS OCTOBER 12

Is your Alliance looking for some new Stop America's Violence Everywhere (SAVE) project ideas? Download the AMA Alliance Planning Guide at [www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/7986.html](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/7986.html). This incredible guide has everything you need to know about SAVE! Download this guide and get an overview and SAVE history, plus sections on how to address school violence, bullying, domestic violence, child abuse, media violence and helping children cope with war and terrorism. There is even a media kit and suggestions on how to build coalitions and partner with community organizations. Each section of this guide offers statistics and other useful information you can use in putting together your SAVE project. The AMA Alliance celebrates SAVE Today on the second Wednesday of October. Be ready to join the fight against violence in your community with a project this October.



## **FAUX PAW THE TECHNO CAT HELPS TAKE A "BYTE" OUT OF INTERNET CRIME**

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition (IKSC) awarded the 2005 Keep Safe Award to the AMA Alliance and its volunteers for their "exceptional contribution to the protection of children." The award was presented at the AMA Alliance Meeting in Chicago in June 2005. The AMA Alliance has adopted the Faux Paw the Techno Cat Program into its SAVE initiative and AMA Alliance members will be able to receive training at the Faux Paw "Train the Presenter" workshop at the Leadership Development Conference 1 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago on October 10, 2005. Alliance members are encouraged to take the program into area schools this year. Internet predators are a rising and lethal risk to America's children, but unlike other threats, the problem of Internet predators is preventable, through education. If children learn early how to protect themselves, they will not become victims of Internet crimes.

## **U.S. SCHOOLS DEVELOP WELLNESS POLICY**

The U.S. Congress has mandated that all schools develop a Wellness Policy by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. This policy must address campus food choices (including vending machines on site), teaching of wellness issues and exercise requirements for our children. The committee needs to include community members.

What a perfect opportunity for Alliance members to be involved with promoting healthy lifestyles! Volunteer to serve on your school's committee. The AMA Alliance has great resources available to help your local school, including the activity books, "I Can Be Healthy" and "Be a Winner-Shape Up for Life," to help get the message out to elementary school children. Utilize the Healthy Lifestyles CD, print out posters promoting healthy foods, show the animated PowerPoint presentation that accompanies "I Can Be Healthy." or share some of the activity sheets appropriate for classroom use. Remember the AMA Alliance tagline, "Building healthy communities," and begin to build that partnership with your local schools. For more information about the Wellness Policy go online to: [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html)

## **UNDERAGE DRINKING IS NO SPORTING MATTER**

While the American public would never tolerate sporting events sponsored by methamphetamine manufacturers or cocaine cartels, we seem willing to "turn a blind eye" to the proliferation of sporting and other recreational events sponsored and

endorsed by the alcohol industry. Even our television airways have numerous commercials linking alcohol consumption with recreation. The AMA recently determined that approximately 11 million American youth under the age of 21 drink alcohol. Nearly half of them recurrently drink to excess, and alcohol is the most frequently used drug by high school seniors.

Consider these facts:

- Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all automobile crashes, the leading cause of death among teenagers.
- Alcohol use contributes to youth suicides, homicides and fatal injuries - the leading cause of death among youth after auto crashes.
- Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.
- Alcohol is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

New underage drinking resources will be introduced at LDC II in February 2006. The AMA Alliance Health Promotions Committee can be contacted for more information.

The AMA Alliance Project Bank booklet includes guidelines for successful project planning. It features more than 5 different projects in 22 different topics.

Assess the needs of your community, and also what other groups are doing. Perhaps you could establish a coalition with other organizations, including your Medical Societies. No matter what you choose to do, remember your efforts are needed and will be appreciated by your community.

## **MARATHON COUNTY REPORT**

*By Lynette McCool*

We will again have a new member brunch in October. We will also have a dinner for an introduction of the new MDs and spouses. In November we have the scholarship auction where we add over \$5000 to our Community Foundation. Money is then added to the endowment fund for allied health scholarships. In the spring we had a legislative event with a local politician and our annual officer installation coffee.

## **RACINE COUNTY UPDATE**

*By Mary Malinowski*

The Racine County Medical Alliance had a wine tasting party for a summer fundraiser this year. It was very much fun and we were pleased to raise more than \$1100.00. Our Alliance also distributed "prom cards" to area florists stating "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" which were included in all corsage and boutonniere boxes for the proms in Racine. At our spring meeting we reviewed and updated our county by-laws -- always so much fun.

Because of successful fundraising, the Racine County Medical Alliance will be awarding scholarships to medical students who have graduated from Racine area high schools. We hope to award two \$1000.00 and one \$500.00 scholarship to help defray the cost of second semester tuition. During the holiday season we will send our annual sharing card to all members and in November we will disburse financial aid to area health related community organizations and projects.

As with many of the county alliances, we are looking for new members to join our already dedicated group of members for friendship and the opportunity to help the Racine community.

# STATE ALLIANCE SCHEDULE

October 9-11	<b>AMA-A Leadership Development I</b> Chicago, IL
October 21	<b>Board of Directors</b> Conference Call 10am
December 1	<b>Board of Directors</b> Conference Call 10am
January 20	<b>SCAN Deadline-Winter Issue Board of Directors Meeting</b> Fort Crawford Room Medical Society Headquarters Madison, WI, 10am-3pm
February 5-7	<b>AMA-A Leadership Development II</b> Chicago, IL
March 3-5	<b>North Central Meeting</b> Minneapolis, MN
March 10	<b>Board of Directors</b> Conference Call 10am
April 7	<b>Annual Session House of Delegates</b> Madison Club, Madison, WI 10am - 4pm



President-elect Ken Strmiska and Brown County President, Rachel Johnson avoided rush hour traffic when traveling from Green Bay to Madison for the fall state board meeting. Ken is a licensed pilot and weather permitting, flies to meetings in his own Beechcraft.



Jena Howard, 2004-2005 American Medical Association Alliance President, chats with members of the Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance delegation to the 2005 AMA-A Annual Meeting in June.

(left to right) Carol Harding, Jean Howard, Linda Minnihhan and Chris Iglar

5	RACINE COUNTY UPDATE.....
5	MARATHON COUNTY REPORT.....
4	PROMOTING HEALTH.....
4	BROWN COUNTY UPDATE.....
3	WINNEBAGO COUNTY UPDATE.....
3	ALLIANCE COUNTY REPORT.....
3	GREATER MILWAUKEE MEDICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP.....
2	DAMAGES DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL.....
2	WINNEBAGO COUNTY TEAM EARNS FREE STATE MEMBERSHIPS.....
2	BOARD APPROVES VISTE MEMORIAL DONATION.....
1	THREE ATTEND AMA-A MEETING.....
1	MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.....

## THIS ISSUE:

FALL 2005

# SCAN

Wisconsin Medical Society Alliance  
PO Box 1109  
Madison, WI 53701



FIRST CLASS  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
MADISON WI  
PERMIT 2693