Wisconsin's physicians have an exemplary commitment to education—for the public and for physicians at all levels of training and practice. We are active in a number of programs, from those for pre-medical students to those for physicians in practice and even retired physicians. In my role as Chair of the Wisconsin Medical Society (Society) Council on Medical Education, I have a unique view of those activities.

Formal programs supporting medical student education include those of the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation, which last year redefined its mission as advancing the health of the people of Wisconsin “by supporting medical and health education.” The Foundation’s scholarships and awards are projected to total $42,000 in 2003, and approximately $320,000 in student loans will be awarded as well.

To ensure that we are responsive to the needs of Wisconsin’s medical schools, we have established an active Medical Schools Section. That section has led to the formation of a task force to work to support the expansion and diversity of the pool of applicants to medical schools.

We will continue to seek ways to support the education of future physicians, and as part of this, we will explore ways to expand our support of resident physician education.

For physicians in practice, the Society has a long history of developing and sustaining continuing medical education. We do this through the accreditation of hospitals, specialty societies and other groups who provide continuing medical education for physicians. In 2002 we accredited 17 organizations in Wisconsin. At the same time we are working with those providing continuing medical education to help them do the best job possible and to be sure that the presentations are relevant, effective and free from commercial bias. This is done both through accreditation consultations and the biannual “It’s Essential” conference, scheduled this year for November 13 in Madison. We are working to decrease the hassles of accreditation included sessions on error reduction, reducing youth violence, bioterrorism, asthma, and back pain.

The Wisconsin Medical Society is developing new educational programs as well—programs that will be important to all of our members, regardless of specialty. As a start, we are offering “Dissatisfaction to Action,” a conference in Green Lake November 7-8, 2003 designed to help physicians achieve higher levels of professional satisfaction and effectiveness of care.

In our public education programs, we have collaborated on several initiatives, most recently the Youth Violence Prevention activities of Immediate Past President Mark A celebration of education—
Wisconsin physicians and their Wisconsin Medical Society

By John W. Beasley, M.D.

While the most obvious education mode for the general public is through community programs and media events, it is likely that our most effective public education is through our daily contacts with our patients.
Andrew, M.D. Other examples include the Wisconsin Antibiotic Resistance Network (WARN) to decrease the unnecessary use of antibiotics; “Smoking Truth or Dare,” a program designed to educate primary and secondary school students about the dangers of tobacco; and efforts to increase organ donation.

As far-reaching as these formal programs are, the informal contributions by individual Wisconsin physicians to education—contributions of expertise and enthusiasm applied over thousands of hours of personal teaching activity—have even more impact.

Our personal educational contributions range from teaching about health and health care in primary and secondary schools to teaching students in college and medical schools, and of course to teaching residents and practicing physician colleagues. We teach in the lecture rooms, in seminars, and in the hallways and cafeterias as we talk with colleagues.

While the most obvious education mode for the general public is through community programs and media events, it is likely that our most effective public education is through our daily contacts with our patients—education one patient at a time!

The Council on Medical Education plans to expand its work with Society members to increase the scope and effectiveness of all of our educational activities. We welcome your suggestions and participation! Let us hear from you.
The mission of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* is to provide a vehicle for professional communication and continuing education of Wisconsin physicians.

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