

# Philadelphia Medicine



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## LifeGuard helps physicians recover clinical skills

LifeGuard, a new program administered by The Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, helps physicians who have raised quality concerns or fallen behind in clinical skills or education.

“This is a vital program that will give help to physicians who need it without judgment or punishment,” said Peter S. Lund, MD, past president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

The four-step LifeGuard program is modeled after the Foundation’s Physicians Health Programs (PHP), which offers help to physicians struggling with addiction, mental illness, or physical disabilities.

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The program is nearing the end of its pilot phase and is accepting referrals.

“During the pilot phase, the Foundation has evaluated the need for the program, its potential funding sources, the success of the model, and the program’s consistency with our mission,” said Greg Gable, PsyD, assistant executive director of the Foundation.

“LifeGuard has the potential to be beneficial for physicians because it might offer clinical pathways to address practice issues,” Gable added.

Physicians referred to LifeGuard

because of quality concerns first undergo a cognitive and psychiatric screen, in which problems—such as acute psychiatric illness or cognitive deficits—are either ruled out or identified. Following this screening procedure, physicians can move on to clinical skill assessment using resources available from Pennsylvania medical schools, chart review, or testing modules.

If the need for advanced training is identified, LifeGuard develops individual remediation plans to refresh knowledge and skills in a medical school or protected practice setting.

LifeGuard then makes recommendations to the physician and the referral source about return to practice, modification of practice, and continuing education needs.

An additional category of physicians who may be able to benefit from the program involves those who want to reenter medicine after having been inactive for a period of time. Examples might include a physician who retired early and wants to return to work, or a parent who stopped working to participate in child rearing responsibilities and is now ready to reenter medicine.

These physicians are seeking a pathway for reentry that is designed for their particular needs and often includes a preceptorship or supervised re-entry work experience, among other components.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine and LifeGuard are working together to manage dyscompetency or re-entry to medical practice cases effectively.

A cooperative relationship between the State Board and the Foundation can be a valuable tool. The Board needs to know that physicians who want to

*Please see LifeGuard helps on p. 3*

## PCMS NEWS

### PCMS solicits nominees for awards

The Philadelphia County Medical Society requests your nominations for the following Awards:

- **Strittmatter Award** – Since 1923, the Strittmatter Award, the Society’s most prestigious scientific award honors a physician who has demonstrated to the Society the most valuable contributions to the healing art, surgical or medical. Requirements: A physician colleague should submit the nominating letter(s), and include the candidate’s current CV.
- **Cristol Award** – Presented to a PCMS member who has made valuable contributions to the Society. Requirements: Nominated by a physician member, the letter of nomination should include the candidate’s activities in the Medical Society.
- **Practitioner of the Year Award** – Presented to a PCMS member for excellence in patient care and community service. Requirements: Letter(s) of nomination may be sent by physician colleagues, medical students and staff. Please include a current CV and written examples of community service.

We will appreciate your nominating letters along with the candidate’s appropriate background information. Please send your nominations to Award Chair, c/o PCMS, 2100 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130. DEADLINE: December 31, 2009. For more information please phone (215) 563-5343, Ext. 113.

### Physicians wanted for speakers bureau

Speakers are needed to speak with the public and/or the local media on a variety of health topics. PCMS needs a range of medical specialties, including family medicine, geriatrics, occupational medicine, obstetrics, sports medicine, cardiology, and neurology. Please contact 215-563-5343, Ext. 102 if you are interested in participating.

# Philadelphia Medicine



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## Physicians eligible for EHR incentives under stimulus package

An estimated \$17.2 billion in incentives is available through Medicare and Medicaid to encourage providers to adopt electronic health records (EHR) systems.

### Medicare incentives

Most physicians are eligible for the incentives. The major exception is hospital-based physicians—such as pathologists, anesthesiologists, emergency physicians, or hospitalists—because they will use their hospitals' EHR systems. To qualify for Medicare incentives, the physician must use a "certified" EHR system in a "meaningful" way. Although meaningful use has not been fully defined, indications are that it will include reporting of quality data to Medicare and interoperability with other systems.

**Qualified EHRs are those that can provide an electronic record of health-related information, including patient demographic and clinical health information, such as medical history and problem lists.**

Qualified EHRs are those that can provide an electronic record of health-related information, including patient demographic and clinical health information, such as medical history and problem lists. Systems also must have the capacity to provide clinical decision support, support physician order entry, and exchange electronic health information with other sources.

Physicians using qualified EHRs are

eligible for incentives starting in 2011. Eligible providers can receive up to 75 % of allowable Medicare charges, with early qualifiers receiving up to \$44,000 in decreasing amounts each year over a five-year period.

Incentives phase out in 2013 and 2014 and are eliminated in 2015. Beginning in 2015, a 1 to 3% reduction in Medicare reimbursements will be assessed each year for physicians who are not "meaningful" EHR users.

### Medicaid incentives

States are authorized to make payments to Medicaid providers to encourage adoption of certified EHR technology. A physician may qualify for the incentive payment either under Medicare or Medicaid, but not both.

You must meet certain eligibility criteria to qualify for incentives under Medicaid. At least 20% of a non-hospital based pediatrician's patient volume must be on Medicaid. For other non-hospital based providers, at least a 30% of their patient volume must be on Medicaid.

At least 30% of patients seen by non-hospital based providers who practice in federally qualified health centers or rural health clinics must be disadvantaged or in need. That includes Medicaid, SCHIP, uncompensated care, and patients charged on a sliding scale based on ability to pay.

Meaningful use of a certified EHR is also a prerequisite for Medicaid incentives. However, unlike Medicare, there will be no reductions in Medicaid payments for failure to demonstrate meaningful use.

Medicare EHR Payments by Year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
<b>2011 adopters</b>	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	<b>\$44,000</b>
<b>2012 adopters</b>	\$0	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$0	<b>\$44,000</b>
<b>2013 adopters</b>	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$0	<b>\$39,000</b>
<b>2014 adopters</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$0	<b>\$24,000</b>
<b>2015+ adopters</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>

\*Providers in health shortage areas receive an additional incentive of 10%

## Book Review

### **Time to Care: Personal Medicine in the Age of Technology**

By William S. Frankl, MD

**Time to Care: Personal Medicine in the Age of Technology**, by Norman Markous, MD, is available at most bookstores and at Amazon.com. Cost is \$14.95. ISBN 978-0-9776686-1-8.

Headlines cross newspapers and television screens while talk radio dissects each nuance—about what?—“Healthcare Reform,” of course.

There’s no concrete plan. The planners know little about the practice of medicine. So, is there any safe harbor of sanity in all of this? Well... yes: *Time to Care: Personal Medicine in the Age of Technology*, the new book, by Dr. Norman Makous, a longtime member of the Philadelphia County Medical Society.

This attractive paperback could not have come at a more opportune time given the present healthcare debate. Dr. Makous, a distinguished cardiologist, investigator,



*“The writing is always lucid and punctuated by interesting family and professional photographs. It contains a great deal of important information and insights for both physicians and the general reader. There is a nicely constructed index and glossary of terms.”*

gifted teacher, and skilled clinician, provides a history of the past six to seven decades of medicine and his personal journey of discovery. He chronicles the amazing advances of the last half of the 20th and the first decade of the 21st centuries and the positive and negative impact these advances have had on patient care.

He illustrates clearly the critical need to rekindle the patient-doctor relationship, and the necessity to openly and honestly confront the difficult question of medical rationing, which has become an important part of the present debate.

The writing is always lucid and punctuated by interesting family and professional photographs. It contains a great deal of important information and insights for both physicians and the general reader. There is a nicely constructed index and glossary of terms.

Because of the many critical issues it raises, it absolutely should be read by physicians, the public, and our political representatives.

## LifeGuard helps physicians

continued from p. 1

reenter medicine after time away from the profession, as well as physicians about whom a significant practice concern has arisen, will be evaluated responsibly for knowledge and skill level, with remediation recommended when needed. The

Foundation needs to know that a physician who is capable can be handled in a constructive way to dispose of practice or reentry concerns. The collaborative effort between these two entities makes sense in carrying out their common goal to ensure quality healthcare for the citizens of Pennsylvania.

“A program that provides objective, fair and responsive assistance to physicians with clinical competency problems or reentry issues will enhance physicians’ skills and improve patient care,” said Raymond C. Truex, Jr., MD, FACS, chair of the Foundation board.

The Foundation is currently seeking resources to support the continuing development of the LifeGuard program. It will be requesting consideration for funding from a number of potential partners in this endeavor.

For more information, contact Gable at 717-558-7863 or Virginia Henning, Foundation executive director, at 717-558-7851.



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# pcms people



**Leonard Frank, MD**, Professor of Urology, Jefferson Medical College, has received the 2009 Leon A. Peris Memorial Award for excellence in teaching and superior patient care.

**Jerome Santoro, MD**, chairman of the Department of Medicine for Main Line Health, has received the first Dorrance H. Hamilton Chair in Medicine at Main Line Health.

### Change of address?

Phone 215-563-5343, Ext. 102 with any change of address, phone, fax number, or e-mail address.

The PCMS Website accepts typical classified ads. We also advertise upcoming events such as CME programs and seminars. Phone 215-563-5343, Ext. 102 for more information.

### PCMS people wanted!

Your colleagues would like to know what you're up to. Send news about academic or other appointments, achievements, awards, promotions, etc., to Philadelphia Medicine, 2100 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia, PA 19130

### PCMS Program

Resident/Fellow Physicians  
Thursday, November 19, 2009  
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM  
“Legislative & House of Delegates Update”  
Location: PCMS Headquarters  
RSVP: 215-563-5343, Ext. 113

### Temple Heart Center presents

“Atherosclerosis and Vascular Disease: Emerging Concepts in Disease Prevention and Management”  
Saturday, Nov 21, 2009  
7:30 am – 3:00 PM  
Radisson Plaza-Warwick Hotel  
Philadelphia, PA  
For more information and to register:  
Catherine Thomas-King, CMP,  
215-707-4787 or cathytk@temple.edu.

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