

Philadelphia Medicine



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Incoming president plans to promote PCMS' Philadelphia agenda and make the Society a stronger information source

By David Woods, PhD



This month, William VanDecker, MD, will be sworn in as the Philadelphia County Medical Society's 148th president. Asked what he'd like to accomplish during

his one-year term, the new president describes himself modestly as 'a plank in a platform' who will make no radical changes to the Society's work ... but rather take a step by step approach. In that context, he will build on the work of his predecessor, Theodore Christopher, MD, who, he says, 'did a great job,' especially in connecting PCMS to the local academic community.

Dr. VanDecker is Director of Nuclear Cardiology at Temple University Hospital, where he is also Director of the Cardiovascular Fellowship Program, and an Associate Professor of Medicine. He graduated from Georgetown University, did his residency and a cardiology fellowship at Temple ... and was on staff at MCP between 1989 and 2004. He has served PCMS as a board member for eight years, including a three-year stint as treasurer.

Part of the new president's step by step approach will include expanding PCMS' Philadelphia-based agenda, involving trainees, and enhancing physician interaction with hospitals. He also wants to make the Society a stronger information source for physicians, particularly utilizing *Philadelphia Medicine* and the website. "I'd like to create a buzz about what PCMS is doing," he says, "and create task forces and committees

with short-term goals that can be quickly disseminated and placed at the service of the membership as a whole."

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On the broader issue of healthcare reform, Dr. VanDecker sees this as a consensus issue. "In the fervor to do something different," he says, "let's make sure we don't do something bad." Moreover, in any reform movement or health policy changes, he believes, physicians must play a central role. In his own role in health policy, he has served in Washington on CMS and other committees, and is a past president of the American College of Nuclear Cardiology.

A self-described workaholic, VanDecker says his 'hobbies' are Temple, PCMS, and CME. He does spend some time though, watching his children—a daughter of 18 and identical twin sons of 16—play sports.

He is also proud of his wife Generosa Grava, MD: "the person I aspire to be." She is Chief of Oncology at Cooper University Hospital and has been featured in *Philadelphia Magazine's* Top Doctors for a decade. And yes, they do talk about work when away from the workplace.

Dr. Woods is the publisher of Philadelphia Medicine.

PCMS NEWS

Strittmatter Award Gerald J. Marks, MD, FACS, FASCRS

Member since 1957



A world renowned surgeon and pioneer for conservation surgery for colorectal cancer, Dr. Marks is currently Professor of Surgery at Lankenau Institute for Medical Research. A graduate of Jefferson Medical College, he also completed his internship and residency at Jefferson. A Professorial Chair in Colorectal Surgery has been established in his honor at Thomas Jefferson University. Dr. Marks has been president of numerous organizations including the 1st World Congress of Endoscopic Surgeons in Berlin, as well as Honorary President of subsequent World Congresses. Dr. Marks is a past founding President of the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons; founder and past President of the International Federation of Societies of Endoscopic Surgeons. In addition, Dr. Marks is a recognized published watercolorist and has had national and international one-person shows.

Humaneness in Medicine Award for resident/fellow physicians Jennifer M. Johnson, MD, PhD

Member since 2006



After graduating from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Dr. Johnson enrolled in the Medical Scientist Training program at the University of Pittsburgh and completed her PhD in molecular genetics and biochemistry. In 2008, she earned her MD degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Johnson is currently training in the Department of Internal Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital where she is completing her intern year. She hopes to specialize in medical oncology and to use her PhD training to teach basic science within the medical school setting.

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Philadelphia Medicine

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Editorial An Extraordinary Year

By Theodore A. Christopher, MD



As my presidency comes to an end, allow me to revisit an extraordinary year. We began by holding a strategic planning retreat where we redefined the Society's

mission, vision and goals for the next five years. These included: 1. Serving as the relentless voice and advocate for our physicians; 2. Being a champion of access to care and public health and policy for our patients; 3. Strengthening and enlarging our membership; and 4. Maintaining the resources and structure for a highly effective, nationally recognized county medical society.

Two new committees were added to the Society. The Government Affairs Committee was tasked with identifying City healthcare issues and lobbying for increased Society influence and representation on City health committees. The Academic Affairs Committee was charged with identifying issues common to both the leaders and rank-and-file physicians in Philadelphia's academic medical institutions.

I was privileged to be president during the Public Health Committee's 10th year Anniversary Block Captain Celebration, a tribute to our program bringing health awareness to the citizens of Philadelphia.

The Membership Committee continues to present innovative ways to increase our society's membership, including reaching out to area medical students and residents in training and continuing to work with PMS on group dues strategies with large physician groups and the academic medical centers.

The Finance Committee met more times than it wanted to, but acted decisively to enact cost-cutting budgetary measures to preserve our endowments.

Finally, we are very close to renting space in our Spring Garden building to bring in additional revenue.

The Executive Committee initiated weekly phone conferences, often with leadership from the Pennsylvania Medical Society, to discuss ongoing and developing issues of the week. This communication structure will provide continuity as society leadership transitions yearly.

This year, we have worked very closely with the Pennsylvania Medical Society in advocating for issues important to all physicians such as malpractice reform, membership, workforce and reimbursement issues.

We are a society of many medical specialties, but when we travel to City Council, Harrisburg, or Washington to meet with the legislators and politicians who lay down the laws and regulations that influence the practice of medicine, we must be unified. If we don't continue to break down our silos and speak as one voice, we will not be successful.

Last month, we convened a meeting with leadership of the Pennsylvania Medical Society and the Deans from the five Philadelphia medical schools to talk about ways we can all work together.

Last week, we followed up that meeting with a conference call which updated the Deans on the PMS's current Mcare fund strategy. Where continuation of an Mcare abatement for physicians seems unlikely in this economic climate, retirement of the Mcare fund without additional expense to physicians becomes a paramount concern. Pennsylvania's Deans have committed to lobbying with us in Harrisburg on June 2 to explain how retiring the Mcare fund in only two years would adversely affect not only the practice of medicine and physician recruitment throughout the state, but also medical school education and research initiatives.

This year's unprecedented economic crisis has resulted in severe healthcare challenges in Philadelphia. We met on several occasions with Deputy Mayor Donald Schwarz to discuss ways we can work together to avert closure of Philadelphia's vital health centers, which serve many of the city's uninsured population. We will also be working closely with the DOH to explore ways to utilize stimulus package money for individual physician and global health system electronic medical records.

In this volatile and unpredictable political and economic climate, we have accomplished much in a short

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PCMS NEWS continued

Cristol Award Lynn Lucas-Fehm, MD, JD

Member since 1986



Dr. Lucas-Fehm has consistently devoted her time and energy to serving on numerous medical society committees and boards at the local and state level.

She served on the PAMPAC Board from 1997 to 1999 and in 2002 she was appointed to the Board of KePRO. Since 2007, Dr. Lucas-Fehm has served on the PCMS Pfahler Foundation Board; she currently serves on the PCMS Board of Directors; and is the current Treasurer of PCMS. Dr. Lucas-Fehm has been a Delegate to PMS for 15 years.

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Practitioner of the Year Joel L. Chinitz, MD, MPH

Member since 1970



Dr. Chinitz is Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine. He is retired from the practice of nephrology but is active in community health and instrumental in

organizing and implementing training programs to prevent domestic violence. In addition, he is actively engaged in Philadelphia citywide efforts to reduce firearm related interpersonal violence. Dr. Chinitz is active with numerous associations including the Catholic Workers Free Clinics and Drexel University Homeless Outreach Project. He has also developed the ongoing Bullying Prevention Program which was adopted by the School District of Philadelphia.

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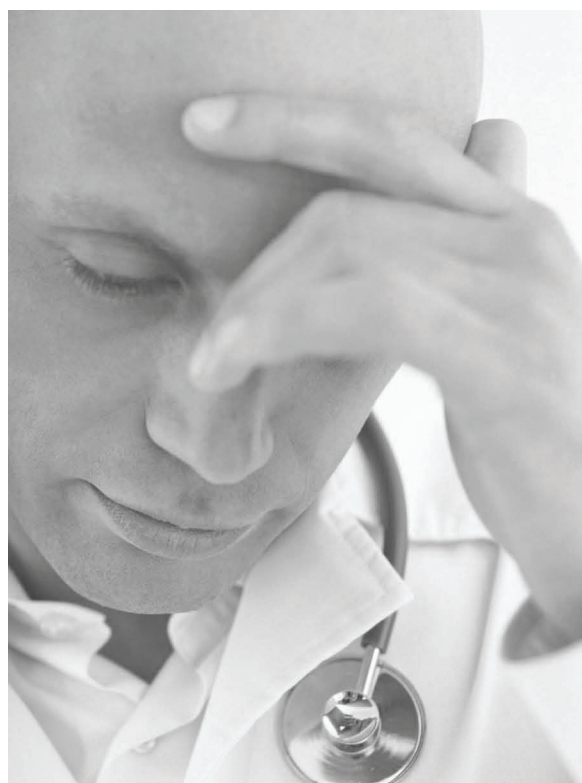
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year. With real healthcare reform on the horizon, we are well on our way to making the Philadelphia County Medical Society the voice of Philadelphia medicine, its physicians and our patients. But we have great challenges ahead of us. I look forward to continuing to serve the society and its mission with the same vigor and passion as I have this past year as your president.

Finally, I want to thank the dedicated board of directors, committee chairmen and members for volunteering their time and efforts in making our society function productively.

And personally, I want to thank the incredibly helpful and professional staff at PCMS—Mark, Tanya, Eileen and Louise. Without their commitment and passion for this organization, none of what we do would be possible.

Dr. Christopher is the President of PCMS.



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