

Together We Are Stronger

Welcome to another academic year, and our fall edition of ISMS Rounds. For recent graduates, I hope this publication is a useful source of information. Taking into account our busy schedules, we strive to use this newsletter to provide quick, high yield information for residents and fellows.



Amol Soin, MD

The strength of physicians standing shoulder to shoulder in the fight for meaningful medical reform cannot be understated. Residents have successfully lobbied to obtain better work conditions with the institution of the 80-hour work week. Recently, with the help of the ISMS, the state of Illinois passed a medical liability reform bill. It is only through hard work, remaining politically active, and standing together that we continue to achieve favorable reforms to ensure our future as physicians. Today we are each faced with grueling work hours, a heavy debt burden, and an increasing amount of dynamic information to be mastered – often in a short amount of time. Together we can continue to create a favorable work environment for us all.

I encourage you all to consider joining the ISMS RFS, as well as recruit those around you to join. With nominal \$5 yearly dues, and immense benefits, this organization is an invaluable way to stay informed, network, and remain active in the medical community. Even if your individual participation is minimal, the strength we gain as a group will benefit us all.

Enjoy the coming fall season, and please remain active in your respective medical communities. If you are interested in contributing, please email rfs@isms.org.

Sincerely,

Amol Soin

Amol Soin, MD • CHAIR
ISMS Resident and Fellow Section

Medical Litigation Reform – Victory for Physicians and Patients

On Thursday, August 25, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed comprehensive medical litigation reforms into law. This law is the culmination of ISMS/ISMIE Mutual-supported medical liability reform legislation, **S. B. 475**, the Illinois General Assembly passed in late May.



Key provisions of the bill include:

- \$500,000 cap on non-economic damage awards for physicians, and a \$1 million cap for hospitals
- No change in the payment of unlimited compensation for all of an injured patient's economic damages ("average weekly wage provision" is included)
- Improvements to the affidavit of merit and enhanced expert witness standards including required disclosure of the reviewing physician's name in the affidavit of merit

Previously, the Illinois Supreme Court has twice ruled that caps on non-economic damage awards are unconstitutional. However, a substantially changed court may this time uphold the reforms contained in **S.B. 475**, because keeping doctors in Illinois is in the public interest. Also language in the bill has been overhauled to address concerns in previous Supreme Court rulings.

The current General Assembly's passage of a cap on non-economic damage awards, and the Governor's willingness to sign such legislation, are extraordinary achievements brought about by politically active physicians, residents, medical students, and the public they helped to educate. ■



Resident Work Hours



One of the top medical student and resident advocacy issues continues to be duty hours. In July 2003, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) implemented new guidelines that limit resident duty hours to 80 hours per week and restrict their on-call schedule to no more than every third night. No specific guidelines exist for medical students.

The AMA conducted a survey in Spring 2005 which examined the effect of the ACGME guidelines on medical students' and residents' work-hour experiences during their most recently completed rotation. Specifically, the survey probed members' opinions on:

- Duty hours worked and on-call schedule;
- Effects of sleep deprivation/fatigue; and
- Reporting of excessive work-hours.



The 12-question survey was sent to 65,208 medical student and resident members. A total of 2,136 members completed the survey (1,126 medical students; 1,010 residents).

Key Survey Findings

Based on key findings from this survey, sleep deprivation and fatigue continue to plague residents' and students' experiences, and many feel uncomfortable reporting excessive duty hours.

- Approximately two-fifths of both residents (44%) and medical students (39%) experienced periods of prolonged sleep deprivation about once a week or more often during their most recently completed rotation.
- One-half of residents and 45% of medical students believe that sleep deprivation or fatigue may have had a negative effect on the quality of patient care they delivered.
- Approximately two-thirds of both residents (69%) and medical students (66%) also believe that sleep deprivation or fatigue may have had a negative effect on the quality of their learning.
- Approximately one-fourth of residents (29%) and medical students (26%) believe that sleep deprivation or fatigue put them in physical danger. Eighty-two percent of those residents and 77% of those medical students report that they had a motor vehicle accident or near miss because of sleep deprivation or fatigue.
- While seven out of 10 residents (69%) know how to report excessive duty hours, only two out of 10 medical students (23%) know how to report excessive hours.



When asked how comfortable they would be in reporting working excessive duty-hours, one-half (50%) of residents and three-fourths (75%) of medical students stated that they would be uncomfortable reporting working excessive duty-hours.

ISMS RFS and the ISMS Council on Education and Health Workforce will discuss this issue, as well as resident burnout, to better assist Illinois residents and fellows. Mary Jo Fidler, M.D., ISMS Resident Trustee will lead the discussion at a September meeting. ■

Article source: AMA Web site, www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/15185.html



Illinois Residents in Action

The 2005 annual meeting of the AMA Resident and Fellow Section was held June 16-17, in Chicago. Representatives from around the country debated resolutions and discussed issues ranging from medical liability to health literacy to funding for preventative medicine residencies.



The ISMS RFS hosted an educational forum and welcome reception for attendees on June 17 at the Mid-America Club in Chicago. Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative sponsored the event which focused on health disparities.

Below are photos from the event.



ISMS RFS Governing Council members strike a pose at the Mid-America Club during festivities on June 17.

Interim Meeting to be in Dallas

The AMA RFS interim meeting will be held November 4-5, in Dallas, TX. Illinois will be represented by a delegation from the ISMS RFS. Interested in learning more about advocacy? Legislation? Networking with colleagues from across Illinois and the country? Call ISMS RFS to attend our next meeting, 800-782-4767, ext. 2466. ■



Jeff Gonzalez, M.D., AMA RFS Immediate Past-Chair; Joseph Craft, III, M.D., AMA RFS Chair; Raul Perea-Henze, M.D., MPH, guest speaker; Mary Jo Fidler, M.D., Resident Trustee, ISMS Board of Trustees.

To view more detailed information and final actions from the 2005 AMA RFS annual meeting visit, www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/16/2005_digestofactions.pdf ■

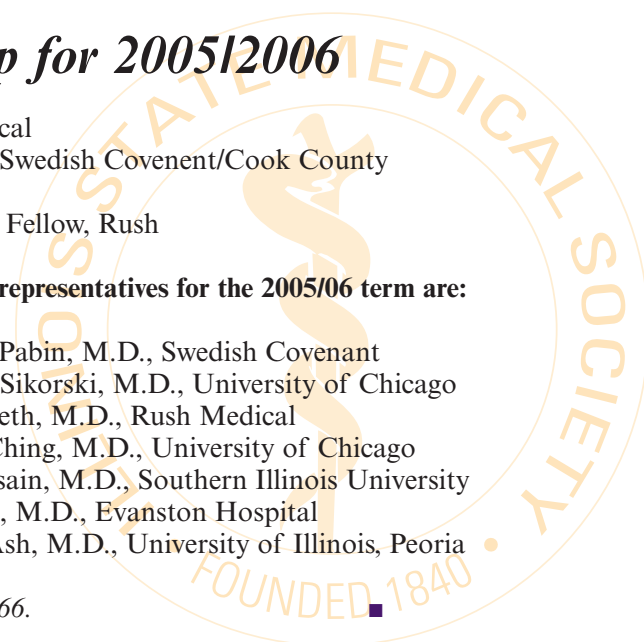
ISMS Resident and Fellow Leadership for 2005/2006

CHAIR	Amol Soin, M.D. Anesthesiology, Rush Medical
VICE CHAIR	Christine Pabin, M.D., Emergency Medicine, Swedish Covenant/Cook County
SECRETARY	Janette Holub, M.D., Surgery, Northwestern
TRUSTEE	Mary Jo Fidler, M.D., Hematology Oncology Fellow, Rush

Residents are also represented on ISMS councils and committees. Your representatives for the 2005/06 term are:

Council on Economics	Christine Pabin, M.D., Swedish Covenant
Medical Legal Council	Christian Sikorski, M.D., University of Chicago
Governmental Affairs	Mehul Sheth, M.D., Rush Medical
Council on Medical Service	William Ching, M.D., University of Chicago
Council on Education & Health Workforce	Syed Hussain, M.D., Southern Illinois University
Communications	Aman Ali, M.D., Evanston Hospital
Council on Membership & Advocacy	Jennifer Ash, M.D., University of Illinois, Peoria

For more information, email rfs@isms.org or call 800-782-4767, ext. 2466.



New Membership Benefit

EPOCRATES® Products Discount

We're happy to offer a new benefit for ISMS Resident & Fellow Members – 50% off Epocrates products including Epocrates Essentials, RxPro, Dx, Lab, and Online.



Members can save by visiting ISMS website, www.isms.org and look for the Epocrates link; or follow these steps:

- ▶▶ Go to www.epocrates.com
- ▶▶ Choose a product
- ▶▶ Enter code ISMSSTU506 at checkout

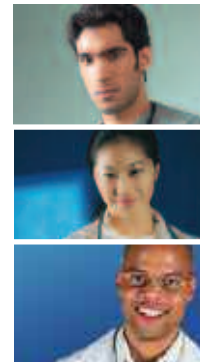
Resident and Fellow members also enjoy other benefits such as **free** disability insurance, professional/educational programs, medical legal library and online contract information (ISMS members-only access). Please let your non-member colleagues know about the advantages of joining their strongest advocate in Illinois, ISMS. Call ISMS membership at 800-782-4767. ■

Have You Moved?



Be sure to call
800-782-4767,
ext. 1682

to update your contact
information. Or email
rfs@isms.org. ■



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A Newsletter for Resident & Fellow Physicians!

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