

Several months ago the board asked that I present a talk on the history of the medical society. It quickly became apparent to me as I read the minutes from the early years that such a talk would be much longer than the time we have available tonight.

One thing struck me though, and that is the areas in which we support our members today are much the same as they were back in the 1940's. The issues affecting our members and the practice of medicine have changed greatly but the core services of advocacy, education, member communication; networking, physician referrals and patient complaint remediation remain unchanged. The services our physician members valued in 1946 are very similar to the services you value in 2011.

The first meeting minutes of the society, dated June 3, 1946 detail a meeting of 8 local physicians who had gathered to discuss the manner to be approached relative to procuring the Naval Air Station Hospital (now Kadlec Regional Medical Center) for civilian use. Formation of the Columbia Basin Medical Society was also discussed at this meeting.

Temporary officers were elected and dues for active members were set at \$25.00 annually. The first permanent officers were elected two weeks later and our first President, Dr. Joseph Greenwell was named.

In August of 1946 it was reported in meeting minutes that the WSMA Executive Committee suggested we change our name to the Benton Franklin County Medical Society and this matter was approved by the board. The first bylaws were adopted at that same meeting. In November of 1946 a telegram was received from the WSMA to advise us that they had approved the Benton Franklin County Medical Society and strongly encouraged us to incorporate.

Our first articles of incorporation were filed in December 1948. Our purpose was to promote the art and science of medicine in the betterment of public health and to unite with other County Medical Societies in the State of WA to compose the WSMA and to function as a component thereof. The articles stated that the organization shall be non-partisan, non-sectarian and shall not be engaged in or used for political purposes in any manner whatsoever. Our first official office operated out of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital.

In 1947 dues were raised from \$25.00 to \$30.00. There were 37 active members and the bank balance was \$284.70. In contrast, today we have close to 250 members on our roster.

In January of 1947 the Medical Bureau committee began to discuss policies in the care of contract and indigent medicine and ultimately agreed to care for county welfare patients for \$1.50/client per month. Two years later, operations of the Benton Franklin Counties Medical Service Corporation officially began. They took care of all welfare cases and offered plans for pre-paid medical care for employed groups. Medical Service Corporation of Spokane took over the day to day operations of our medical bureau and ran it for years to come.

The networking function of the society has been in place since our inception. Membership meetings have been ongoing since 1946 when it was decided that the meetings were to be held on the third Tuesday of the month-a decision that is still in place today. The meetings began much later, usually at 8 pm and wouldn't end until after 11 pm. Several events in the 50's were joint events with both the Benton Franklin County Bar Association and the local veterinarian association and were very popular with members. In fact, in the Feb. 1958 minutes, I read that "Dr. Freund called the meeting to order at 8:30 pm. Since the previous meeting was held with the BFC Bar Association, there were no minutes because the secretary was too inebriated to fully know what was going on."

As I stated, we continue to offer 6 membership meetings annually that include dinner and a speaker. We vary the topics between clinical, non-clinical and social presentations and always welcome input on these topics from our membership. Next month, Dr. Sen will be with us discussing the new opioid prescription regulations and in November we will be having a legislative event with all of our local legislators and legislative staff from the WSMA invited to attend. We also offer periodic social events geared towards families such as our Dust Devil's base ball night that we've done the past 2 summers. We're currently looking at other family activities that might be interesting to our members.

The women's auxiliary was formed in 1949 by physician wives. Annual dues were \$3.00 per member/and paid by their husbands. The ladies had a booth at the fair in 1951 to promote the medical service bureau and their goal of taking care of the welfare patients in the county and in 1955 they organized annual physicals for the members of the medical society. They provided nursing scholarships over the years in addition to the many other charitable contributions they made in our community. In 1967 the auxiliary worked on the "Measles Must Go" campaign and hosted the first Christmas party, to be known as the Noel Ball, in December 1967. In 2010 the Noel Ball was changed to the Society Ball and the event was moved to January

to accommodate busy holiday schedules of our members. The infamous Mission Ridge ski trips were in full swing in the 1970's with all profits from these activities going to local charities as well. By the early 1980's participation in the auxiliary had dropped and they ceased to exist in 1983.

At the urging of the WSMA, the first grievance committee discussions began in spring of 1951 and a fee schedule was adopted for the society and members used it as a basis for fees. The majority of the grievances received in the 1950's and 60's involved fee disputes as compared to today- the majority of the complaints we review concern communication issues between physicians and patients. We actively maintain an ethics and grievance committee whose goal it is to mediate those communication issues that arise.

Advocacy issues appear early in the society minutes. In 1962 the board members urged members to oppose the King-Anderson Bill, a bill designed to help pay for hospital and nursing home care through Social Security for those over 65. Our membership was very involved in this matter, writing letters to both our state and national legislators on this issue and this precursor to Medicare was initially defeated. Tort reform was first mentioned in our minutes in 1982 and has been an issue we've supported ever since. In fact, when I started in 2005 we were in the heart of the

I330/I336 campaign. I was impressed by the participation among our physicians in supporting this cause. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, we received numerous compliments from the WSMA regarding our support of that campaign.

As early as 1960 our board members and physician members were participating in the WSMA Legislative Day in Olympia which still takes place annually. Every January your board members and I along with interested physicians travel to Olympia to meet with our local legislators to discuss the medical issues affecting your practice. I would encourage anyone interested in attending to contact myself or a board member for more information. It is a great experience that I would encourage you to take part in.

Our physician referral service began in 1979 and remains in place today. Currently, our most pressing need from the public is primary care physicians who are accepting Medicare patients. If you are a primary care physician who accepts Medicare, please see me after this program so that I may make sure I have your name.

Our first CME Seminar took place in 1984. In April 1986 the WMSA CME Committee visited our offices for our first ever accreditation site-survey.

We have maintained CME Accreditation through the WSMA ever since. In fact, we're preparing for a re-accreditation site survey this spring. Shortly after receiving our initial accreditation, the CME Committee was formed and Dr. Anjan Sen appointed Chairman. He remains an important fixture on our CME Committee to this day.

Perhaps the most changed area in our society would be that of our member communications. There were times when member communications were non-existent. Not too long ago, we still relied on the US postal service to deliver the newsletter to our physicians. I'm happy to say, the majority of our members now receive their communications via email. This has been a significant cost, time and labor savings for us and we appreciate your willingness to share those email address with us. Our monthly newsletter is undergoing some cosmetic reconstruction and we're excited for input you may have regarding those changes. We always welcome ideas, comments and suggestions from our members. I would love for our newsletter to include pieces from our membership, so if you have any ideas about that, please see me. Our website is always available for you to utilize as well. I'm hoping that our website can receive some cosmetic surgery next year as well. So stay tuned for that.

I'd like to touch briefly on our relationship with the WSMA. You've heard in this presentation that we've had a relationship with them since day 1 of our society. We have close contact with their staff and a very good working relationship with them. I regularly attend county medical society leadership meetings with their staff and other county leadership and partner with them on a variety of issues. In fact, we have an opportunity to work with their foundation this coming year on access to care issues in our counties and we're really looking forward to that. Even though we don't require our members to be members of the WSMA, we certainly do encourage it. They have been constant supporters of our county society and are always willing to help us. A special thank you to Dr. Myers and Bob Perna for attending tonight.

Once again, on behalf of our board of directors, I'd like to thank you for attending and for supporting us with your membership. We value each and every one of you and wouldn't be where we are today with your support. I've said it many times before, but I am honored to work for such a great group of physicians. I consider it a privilege to represent you all and I look forward to getting to know our new members and supporting you in any way that I can. Please enjoy the rest of your evening and if you have any comments or questions, be sure to catch me after dinner.