

American Medical Women's Association

Message from the AMWA President: Getting Older or Half Full, Half Empty

Beatrice S. Desper, MD



Is it just me, or do others worry about our country and the people living here? On some days it is too depressing to listen to the news or to read a newspaper (or to watch online). It seems as if our politicians have decided to disagree on everything. There was a time in the not too distant past that people of opposing views could disagree during the day, but meet for a drink that evening.

This doesn't seem to occur anymore.

The problems facing this country seem insurmountable at times: immigration, the economy, education, health care, overpopulation, the environment, and education, just to name a few. There seems to be so much bitterness and I fear Deadlock.

On the other hand many exciting things are happening. In medicine giant strides are being made daily in genetics. It is possible to find the genetic makeup of tumors and to target chemotherapy to that exact tumor. There are better ways of delivering the chemo and radiation so that normal tissue is spared. Also robotic surgery is growing in popularity and it results in less blood loss, shorter hospital stays, and quicker recovery. It is said that there is a good chance that cancer and heart disease will be cured (or prevented) by 2020 and most will live to be about 200 years of age!! Not sure I want to live that long. Technology is also advancing rapidly and we are easily linked with anyone anywhere in the world. Because of this, we can instantly share information and advances. Now that people are living longer, it is up to us to ensure that there is good quality of life for all.

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AMWA Headquarters Update/ Provider Profile

AMWA Board Members Convene in the City of Sisterly Love

By Lindsay Groff, MBA, AMWA Executive Director



The AMWA Board of Directors met face-to-face at AMWA Headquarters in Philadelphia on September 12th and 13th to discuss several important issues. Much was accomplished in this two-day meeting, including discussions surrounding: membership growth/retention, managing AMWA finances, a review of the strategic plan, student activities, the Annual Meeting and much more.

AMWA Meeting Manager Monica Mobley, MBA receives her CMP

AMWA's own Meeting Manager, Monica Mobley, was recently awarded the CMP designation, as a Certified Meeting Professional by the Convention Industry Council (CIC). Through the CMP program, individuals who are employed in meeting management pursue continuing education, increase their industry involvement, and gain industry-wide recognition. The requirements for certification are based on professional experience and a written examination. As the premier industry certification, the CMP distinguishes holders as career professionals who have demonstrated a high level of experience, skill and knowledge. Please join us in congratulating Monica on her latest accomplishment.



Provider Profile – Jan Werbinski

Tell us about yourself.

I am a board certified ObGyn who has been practicing medicine for 33 years. I had a deep interest in science and biology from my early years. I was fascinated when my father cleaned fish and showed me the “inner workings and recent meals” of the fish. One of my favorite TV shows, even in grade school, was “Medic,” which showed live surgeries. I chose ObGyn as a specialty because I love taking care of women and because in combined the upbeat bringing life into the world, and the surgical and anatomical skills that I loved. When I finished medical school in 1975, only 7% of physicians were women, so I endured my share of sexism and job discrimination, but it just made me more determined to do what I was trained to do. I often made the comment that the “feminization” of medicine would someday make the job more humane and family friendly, and I am proud to see that this is happening today.



Tell us about your practice.

I married in 1979 and moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan to be with my husband, who owns a large trucking company there. I decided I would have to “bloom where I was planted.” So my first job was in a private practice with a generous, giving OBGyn in town. He was very busy and gave much charity care. The hours were long and hard, but I learned much and had two babies during those years. After my partner died, I began looking for an employed position because I didn't like the business side of practicing. I was hired as an independent contractor by one of the hospitals in Kalamazoo. About 4 years later, the Women's Health movement started, and in 1988, the hospital asked me to be the Director of a new Women's Center, which would not include any obstetrics. About that time is when the rigors of maintaining an obstetric practice began interfering with my time with my family, so I decided to take the position. I didn't know much about Women's Health (outside OBGyn) at that time, but boy did I learn! The hospital sent me to several conferences and it was during the next 10 years that I developed relationships with many outstanding national voices for Women's Health, not only in medicine, but in politics, general studies, and even in religion. I became a national vociferous advocate for not only changing the

Provider Profile (Cont.)

way we take care of women, but also changing the way we educate young physicians in the field. When, the hospital began changing their approach to the way they were developing the Women's Health program, I was hired by a competing hospital in town to join a group of 11 MDs and 8 midwives. I was allowed to continue to practice gynecology and women's health, without the obstetrics, and am now the Medical Director of that practice. We are in the process of developing several programs which expand the scope of our practice beyond the simple "bikini medicine" practiced by most OBGyn practices. We have developed Shared Medical Appointments for midlife women, Special classes for osteopenia, Centering Pregnancy visits, Continence and Interstitial Cystitis Clinic, a Fibroid Center, and are working on a hospital wide program to address Interpersonal Violence. We also conduct a WomenSense lecture series, asking local doctors in other fields to showcase the services they offer specifically to women to fill their specific needs.

What have been the major challenges you have faced as a woman physician?

Having to perform twice as well in order to be considered half as good. Fortunately, I was able to develop a good reputation and have been able to practice quality care, which has carried me through some of the times when I am doubted as a woman, and sometimes even doubted by myself. If it were not for my self esteem, and the encouragement of some very loyal friends, I am afraid I may have given up many times along my career. The good times, and times of feeling that I have achieved much, many times carried me through the tougher times. Working grueling hours, nights, and weekends, added to the anxiety and stress of a difficult labor or a complex surgery could be devastating, but when the difficulty resolved, the positives kept me going on.

What do you find most satisfying about being a doctor?

The gratitude of happy patients, and the victory of figuring out a patient's problem and taking care of it. My daughter once told me, "Mom, you look at butts all day, how can that be fun?" And I answered her that I consider myself a detective agent of my patient, who brings me her case and symptoms, and it is my job to take that information, process it with the knowledge I have collected over the years, and find a way to diagnose and solve her problem. That becomes very gratifying at the end of the day.

How long have you been a member of AMWA?

I have been a member of AMWA since 1985. I was not always very active, only attending the annual meetings every other year or so. In those days, there was no internet, so most of my contacts with other women

physicians were at the AMWA annual meeting or other Women's Health meetings. I got very interested in AMWA when Lila Wallis was president, and she developed the Women's Health Curriculum courses, which I attended. The networking with other likeminded women was probably the most valuable perk I felt from AMWA. It was very nice to find other people who were struggling with the same balancing, career, and family issues as I. It was also nice to hear of gender discrimination issues and how others have handled them.

What advice would you give to women going into medicine today?

I think that women in medicine today need to set the standard for what their career can be. I personally think that our entire country needs to do a better job with healthcare coverage, safe affordable childcare, leave to take care of sick children, and pre-maternity as well as post-maternity leave. It's important that we elect folks who will move us toward that end. I think that salary scales should be transparent, and that women physician's salaries should be equal to men's. There is still much discrimination in the higher paid fields.

I also think that surrounding ourselves with a network of people who will help and support us is essential. My career would have been miserable and isolated if I had not found like-minded support people to bounce situations and ideas with. I am very heartened that the percentage of women in medicine is increasing, and that our voices will hopefully no longer be so timid and isolated.

AMWA Attends AMA/NMA Commission to End Health Care Disparities Meeting

AMWA was represented at the fall 2009 meeting of the Commission to End Health Care Disparities, held September 2-4, in El Paso, TX. Dr. Susan L. Ivey attended the Commission meeting and co-chaired a meeting of the Data and Research Committee which is working to ensure data are collected on race and ethnicity, among other determinants of health care disparities. Better data are a first step to both documenting disparities and raising awareness of the many ways in which health care is not distributed equitably in our country. The Commission to End Health Care Disparities discussed and took action on issues relevant to health care disparities, particularly in light of current discussions of health care reform.

In order to ensure that the goal of ending health care disparities remains high on President Obama's health

reform agenda, the Commission to End Healthcare Disparities wrote a letter to President Obama earlier this year urging that any health care reform plan include:

- Access to high-quality health care coverage including a focus on prevention, wellness, chronic disease management and mental health
- Collection of demographic and epidemiologic data throughout the system to detect and understand the causes of disparities and focus efforts to eliminate them
- Strengthening the health care workforce, increasing both its diversity and cultural competence
- The next meeting will be held in March, 2010. Dr. Ivey will serve as co-chair of the data and research committee for two years (2009-2011). If you want to hear more about the work of the Commission, you can contact her at susanivey@pol.net.

Call for Physicians Interested in Global Health and Leadership

Engeye Health Clinic, Uganda Seeks Resident Medical Director

Passionate about providing healthcare abroad? Interested in applying your medical degree where it will make a difference? The Engeye Health Clinic in Ddegeya Village, Uganda is seeking a Resident Medical Director to partner with Ugandan clinic staff in operating the clinic and directing healthcare policy in the Ddegeya catchment area.

We are interested in bringing a seasoned physician onto our team who will be able to:

1. Review and update our current healthcare diagnosis and treatment protocols
2. Collaborate with Ugandan clinic staff in management of daily operations
3. Maintain a list of medical action items to be addressed and effectively communicate needs to the U.S. team
4. Practice medicine in Ddegeya Village for a minimum of 9 months

Previous international experience preferred. If you are interested in this amazing opportunity, please contact misty.richards@engeye.org. Additionally, for more

information on Engeye's current operations and past achievements, please visit www.engeye.org.

Engeye's mission is to improve living conditions and reduce unnecessary suffering in rural Africa through education and compassionate health care. Implicit in every project that we undertake is the understanding that it will ultimately be sustainable with little or no outside assistance. The Engeye Health Clinic is a non-profit organization built from the ground up in 2006 to provide healthcare for a village in desperate need. Since the first medical mission in 2007, over 15,000 patients have been treated. The clinic functions due to equal partnership between Ugandans and Americans who share a common goal of making the world a better place through practicing compassionate medicine.

On the 5th of September Clinic Nepal transported 11 patients, and their accompanying family members, to a hospital in Bharakpur for urgent treatment that was long overdue. Each patient was examined on arrival, and although one patient unfortunately had blood pressure that was too high to permit her to be operated on, all other patients went on to receive the necessary operations. All the operations were successful, and for that reason Clinic Nepal and their patients are extremely grateful to Gibraltar (GBC) for the continuing support that they demonstrate. The following case is just one example of how much difference sponsorship can make to the life of an individual, and an entire family.

AWHS Update - Ashsa Mahato ***By Alycia and Hari***

Ashsa Mahato is a 35-year-old woman who is a mother to six children: four daughters and two sons, who are between the ages of nine and twenty years. Ashsa and her husband are farmers, tending two buffalo and two goats, which earns barely enough money to feed and clothe their family.

Ashsa developed a tumor in her esophagus in 2004, which caused intense pain and made it extremely difficult to perform essential activities such as, eating and drinking, thereby causing inadequate nutrient intake. Ashsa was also unable to complete many of her duties as a farmer, mother, and wife as lifting any weight caused unbearable pain. Thus, Ashsa's family had to compensate for her inability to work.

In 2007 Ashsa visited Clinic Nepal in Meghauli where she was examined, and subsequently referred for further

examination and treatment in Bharakpur. Clinical Nepal sourced sponsorship for Ashna to have an operation, to remove the tumor from her esophagus, which was finally completed this September. Although the operation appears to have been a success, Ashsa is currently (at the time of writing) awaiting test results that will determine whether the tumor was cancerous.

Ashsa was visited in hospital by a representative from Clinic Nepal three days after the operation, and although she was experiencing post-operative pain, Ashsa was positive that after a few days rest she can look forward to a life free from pain. Thus, returning to work, fulfilling her duties as farmer, mother, and wife. Ashsa and her husband are most grateful for the help Ashsa has received from Clinic Nepal.



AWHS Update - Yam Narayan Mahato *By Alycia and Hari*

Yam Narayan Mahato is a 26-year-old man who is unmarried and currently unemployed. Regrettably, Yam developed a heart defect which was first detected when he was 21. The heart defect means that one of the four valves of his heart is not functioning as it should and therefore needs to be replaced if normal functioning is to be restored.

Due to poor economic circumstances, Yam was unable to access the necessary treatment, as he did not have the financial resources to pay for medical intervention. Subsequently Yam had no alternative but to live, and endure, a difficult life resultant from his untreated heart condition. Yam envisaged such difficulties to last a lifetime until he attended a Clinic Nepal 'Free Health Camp', which was held in Mardi, Chitwan, in October 2008. It was at this time that Clinic Nepal recognized Yam's desperate situation, and after time, successfully sought sponsorship that enabled Yam to access the necessary treatment; open heart surgery.

Yam underwent open heart surgery in August at Sahid Gangalal Hospital located in Kathmandu. Clinic Nepal staff visited Yam in hospital and were



pleased to find Yam in good health following his operation. Yam reports that he is feeling better now and is looking forward to living a life that is not hindered by a heart problem.

A special 'thank you' is extended to Dr. Klaus Harbig, Hari Bhandary, and all the staff of Clinical Nepal, as well as all those who helped to bring Yam to the hospital to have the heart operation, which has afforded him a new life.

AMWA Awards – Nominate Today!

Over the past century, women physicians have blazed new trails, opened closed minds, lifted downcast spirits, and profoundly impacted medicine in countless ways. Through our awards program, the American Medical Women's Association, AMWA, celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of these remarkable American medical women. I invite you to nominate a deserving woman healthcare provider/researcher/policymaker for one of our awards to be presented at the AMWA annual meeting in Washington, DC, March 27, 2010.

AMWA awards range from showcasing a life-long commitment to promoting women's health and rewarding research excellence, to acknowledging service to AMWA. The specifics for each award are noted on our website, www.amwa-doc.org, and listed below:

- **Bertha VanHoosen Award:** This award is named in honor of the Founder and first President of AMWA, and honors a woman physician who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and service to AMWA.
- **Elizabeth Blackwell Medal:** This award honors Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., the first female physician in the United States. The award is given to a woman physician who has made outstanding contributions to the cause of women in medicine.
- **Woman in Science Award:** This award is given to a woman physician who has made exceptional contributions to medical science, especially in women's health, through her basic and/or clinical research, her publications and through leadership in her field.
- **Anne C. Carter Student Leadership Award:** This award honors the memory of Anne C. Carter, MD, by recognizing a national student leader in AMWA. Dr. Carter was dedicated to the welfare and success of women medical students.
- **Lila Wallis Women's Health:** This award is given to an individual whose lifetime achievements,

accomplishments, motivation, mentorship, energy and enthusiasm for women's health, education, and research reflect the trailblazing achievements in women's health exemplified by Dr. Lila A. Wallis.

Acknowledging commitment and excellence couldn't be easier. Simply visit AMWA's website, www.amwa-doc.org, click on Awards fly-out, fill out a Nomination Form and submit the required information. Please have submissions in by January 15, 2010. Self-nominations are welcome. We look forward to receiving your nominations and helping to venerate these deserving women.

AMWA Governance Committee Report *Elinor Christiansen, MD, Governance Committee Chair*

The Governance Committee has served as the Nominating Committee and prepared a slate of officers and directors for terms beginning with the annual meeting in March 2010. Election of officers and directors will take place in late November.

The Awards Committee, chaired by Dr. Nancy Church, is receiving nominations for the annual AMWA awards. If you wish to nominate a candidate please send a letter to AMWA stating your reasons for the nomination and designate the award for consideration. Also forward the candidate's CV to Sarah Hagy at the AMWA office.

In addition, the Governance Committee has prepared a letter for Branch presidents informing them of the new IRS annual reporting on form 990 required from all non-profit organizations, including AMWA Branches. The letter also includes a form to be filled out by Branches for our national AMWA office with current contact information and other important information. We need to devise a solution to the membership problem of how to transition local Branch members of AMWA to national members and are asking each Branch to propose how they want to achieve this goal. Would having national collect dues for the Branch be helpful? Let us know.

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 *By Eliza Lo Chin, MD, MPH*

President-elect Eliza Lo Chin, MD, MPH recently met and spoke with Lilly Ledbetter, namesake of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 which President Obama signed into

law this past January. Ms. Ledbetter spoke of her own personal saga as a former supervisor at Goodyear whose lawsuit regarding pay discrimination ultimately reached the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled 5:4 against her, stating that Ms. Ledbetter should have filed the case within the 180-day statute of limitations. In response, The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, passed by Congress and signed by the President Obama, states that the 180-day statute of limitations applies "each time wages, benefits, or other compensation... [are] paid." This legislation is a landmark victory in the fight for women's rights to equal pay.



AMWA Annual Meeting March 25-28, 2010 - Washington DC

By AMWA Program Co-Chairs, Laurel Waters, MD and Eliza Chin, MD, MPH

The Program Committee has been busy planning the AMWA's Annual Meeting which will be held in conjunction with the 18th Annual Women's Health Congress. The conference takes place at the Crystal Gateway Marriott, conveniently located near Reagan National Airport and the Washington DC metro.

Advocacy Day starts on Thursday, March 25 with a White House tour for the first to sign up. We will proceed to the Hill for advocacy training, discussion of important active bills, and meetings with Legislators.

The 18th Annual Women's Health Congress has an outstanding group of speakers packed with three days of CME, plenary speakers, exhibits, and poster sessions. There will be an entire day of student programming on Saturday, culminating in the ever popular mentoring reception.

On Saturday evening, AMWA will hold a special gala to commemorate its 95th anniversary. We will honor past leaders, present the AMWA awards, view historic AMWA photos, and unveil the AMWA Woven Word Healthcare Quilt. Special keynote speakers have been invited so check the website for updates on who is coming. We look forward to seeing all of you in Washington DC!

Results are in! AMWA Members Overwhelmingly Support a Public Option

By Claudia S. Morrissey, MD, MPH, Immediate Past President

As part of AMWA's ongoing commitment to be the vision and voice of women in medicine, AMWA recently fielded a membership survey on access to healthcare. The survey was designed to update information gathered from previous assessments to better inform our policy efforts at this critical juncture in US history.

Of the survey respondents, the majority are physicians (69%) and physicians in training (26%); 3% are residents and 1% non-physician providers. The age of responders mirrors that of AMWA's membership with 40% 55 years or older, 31% 34 to 54 years, and 29% 18 through 33 years. Although physicians from over 20 specialties responded, the top specialties represented are Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrics and Psychiatry. Forty percent of respondents work at an academic institution and 29% is in private practice. Others are retired or employed at HMOs or public institutions.

The overwhelming majority of AMWA members who responded, 98%, favor AMWA taking a leadership role in improving access to healthcare. Ninety-two percent supports universal access with 79% favoring administration at the Federal level and 21% at the state level. When asked which services should be covered in the "basket of services" over 80% of responders selected the following:

- Preventive care/screening
- Primary care
- Chronic disease management
- Immunizations
- Emergency care
- Addiction/substance abuse treatment
- Vision and hearing services
- Mental health services
- Prescription drugs
- Family planning
- Rehabilitation medicine

Ambulance services, health education, dental services, home care, nursing home/long term care, dental services, and abortion services are included by 60% of responders.

Most important to the current debate about how to structure healthcare reform, 89% believes a public option should be included in healthcare reform legislation. AMWA member's support for a public option is consistent with findings from recent surveys of both the American public and other healthcare practitioners. AMWA encourages legislators to heed the opinions of patients and providers rather than serve the interests of the insurance industry by ensuring that a robust public option is included in any healthcare legislation that is passed.

AMWA Student Update



Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine (TouroCOM) and AMWA share common missions in community outreach, mentorship and advocating for the equality of all individuals regardless of socioeconomic status, race or gender! Illustrating unique ideas, AMWA's TouroCOM-Harlem Chapter has initiated

three exciting programs, Be One Teach One Teach, Fun with Medicine and the Woven Word Healthcare Quilt Project.

Be One Teach One

TouroCOM-Harlem chapter has created a fresh and innovative approach to community outreach, mentorship, and health promotion! Through a series of monthly workshops from November - May 2010, young high school girls in Harlem and surrounding boroughs will be exposed to nutrition, the hazards of smoking and alcohol, sexual and reproductive health, anatomy, physiology, and osteopathic principles. Based on the medical training model of "see one, do one, teach one," TouroCOM's Be One Teach One (BOTO) program reached over 50 female high school students during its inaugural year! A few comments from last year's participants include, "Thank you so much, because of Be One Teach One, I am more determined on becoming a Pediatrician" and "I really enjoyed how everyone was so welcoming and it really felt like a family."



Fun with Medicine

Geared towards upper elementary aged boys and girls, Fun with Medicine is a one day program taking place on November 22, 2009. TouroCOM AMWA members



will transform one entire floor of the medical school into a virtual medical wonderland! Students will travel through stations such as a Triage Tent, a mock Dentist's Office and play games like Operation, Pin the Bone on the Body, Twister and a Scrub Relay. In collaboration with the AMWA TouroCOM-Harlem Chapter, medical student volunteers from other student organizations will be teaching the students first aid skills, wound care, dental hygiene, discussing the career and skills of a surgeon, musculoskeletal anatomy and osteopathic principles! We are excited to bring this first-ever one-day event to the Harlem Community geared entirely to enrich the minds and curiosity of young elementary aged children! After the conclusion of the program, we look forward to sharing the stories, feedback and pictures from TouroCOM's Fun with Medicine program.

Woven Word Healthcare Quilt Project

As stated by President Barack Obama "now is the time to deliver on health care" and AMWA's TouroCOM-Harlem Chapter is looking forward to being front and center! In collaboration with the National Student Advocacy Chairs, the TouroCOM-Harlem Chapter will be hosting the Woven Word Healthcare Quilt Webinar taking place in December 2009. The Webinar will focus on how health reform affects women and will include a panel of women who are strong advocates for health reform! All interested chapters and physicians will be able to forward their questions and comments and be able to watch the Webinar live via the internet. To receive your Woven Word Kit, including fabric swatch, decorating ideas and instructions for the Webinar, please register with Siatta Dunbar at siatta.dunbar@student.touro.edu. Decorated fabric swatches from AMWA student chapters and participating physicians will be quilted into one large mural and presented at the AMWA National Convention in Washington, DC, March 26-28, 2009!



AMWA Women's Health Working Group Update

AMWA Women's Health Working Group has found, and hired, a wonderful person to be the coordinator of the Women's Health Digital Resource Library project, and she will have the task of placing our materials on the Medpedia.com site, as well as marketing the site to students, residents, practitioners, and educators. This project will initially be financed by AMWA and the American College of Women's Health Physicians (acwhp.org), and we will be looking for other funding sources to continue it past year one.

This new Managing Editor is Jodi Godfrey, MS, RD. She is a medical writer/editor as well as a dietitian. You may have seen her special feature in the Journal of Women's Health. She writes the "Conversations with the Experts" columns, where she interviews experts on a broad range of women's health topics. She has experience with some of the high powered NYC public relations firms, and she also has experience as Associate Program Director of the Congress of Women's Health from 1997-2006. She did a stint as editor for PainView, a member newsletter for the American Society of Pain Educators so she's already familiar with narrowing the focus of a project. Jodi is quite computer/digital competent and she has some great ideas about how to use social networking (blogs, tweets, etc.) to engage the students and educators we want to engage in the site.

She will be contacting the members of the WHWG committee, and all appropriate sources to ask for articles, teaching tools, curricular materials and anything else that is pertinent to the creation of our WHDRL on Medpedia.

Please welcome her inquiries and requests. She knows how busy we all are and she is prepared to do the time consuming work you need her to do in order to help you help us create this library

Calling all AMWA members!

The student division is requesting your help! Your experiences, successes and stories have helped pave the road for women in the medical field. We are asking you to share these stories with us in order to be incorporated into our Medical School Guide. This guide will be designed in the spirit of the AMWA motto embracing the voice and vision of women in medicine. To take part in this endeavor, please email Risa Siegel at risa.siegel@student.touro.edu or call 908-400-1468 to have a survey mailed to you.