



BOULDER COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

# HeartBeat

6676 GUNPARK DRIVE, STE B, BOULDER, CO 80301 • (303) 527-3215 • BCMEDSOC@AOL.COM • WWW.BCMS.NET

Spring 2016

*From the President: Leto Quarles, MD*

## **BCMS and State Legislators Grapple Together with Tough Questions for Building Healthier Communities**

Physicians and legislators often go into our respective careers for many of the same reasons: to help people and communities to grow and to thrive. On Thursday, Feb. 18, the Boulder County Medical Society hosted our annual Legislative Forum, a lively discussion at the Boulder Country Club. Thirty-five BCMS physicians sat down to dinner with a panel of local members of our state legislature: Rep. Mike Foote (House District 12), Sen. Rollie Health (Senate District 18), Sen. Matt Jones (SD 17) and Rep. Jonathan Singer (HD 11). Three Colorado Medical Society staffers attended and provided excellent support: CEO Alfred Gilchrist, COO Dean Holzkamp and Program Manager Adrienne Abatemarco.

This year, after polling our BCMS membership to identify key concerns, we formally presented five tough questions to our panel, covering topics such as community stewardship, the Medicaid expansion, gun violence as a public health issue, mental health care, and the complexities of navigating our current health care and insurance landscape. Additional audience questions during the evening brought us into deep and meaningful discussion of the Amendment 69 “ColoradoCare” universal single payer proposal on the 2016 ballot, and exploration of end-of-life care and the politics surrounding patient autonomy in the dying process.

Our legislators generously engaged with us in thoughtful, collaborative discussion about how we can work together in meaningful ways to overcome limitations of law, resources and politics in order to build a healthier community, and everyone left the room with a deeper understanding of the issues, challenges and concerns our counterparts face. The realities of budgetary restrictions and partisan political divides remain challenging but the spirit of creativity, genuine curiosity and perseverance that our legislators bring to solving these challenges are encouraging as we in the trenches continue to care for patients within this complex health care landscape. The physicians and community of Boulder County are fortunate to have such a rich partnership with elected leaders who are truly committed to improving health throughout our community at every level.

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## **CMS Opposes Insurance Mega-Mergers**

Boulder County Medical Society has joined in wholeheartedly with the Colorado Medical Society's opposition to two massive proposed insurance company mergers: Aetna-Humana and Anthem-Cigna. In alignment with broader national efforts coordinated by the AMA, CMS recently [completed and published a survey](#) confirming widespread and deep opposition of CMS member physicians to the proposed mergers. Locally, several Boulder County physician practices have been invited to testify to the Department of Justice on the potential impact these proposed mergers could have on market competition, practice viability, patient safety and autonomy, and quality of care. [Click here](#) to see specific comments from all CMS members regarding the survey.

*(\* To read an AMA Antitrust Attorney Interview from Colorado Medicine, [click here](#))*

*(\* To read a statement from the AMA CEO in Colorado Medicine, [click here](#))*

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## **Facing the Limits of Our Mortality: BCMS looks at legislation and community conversation around dignity and autonomy at the end of life**

In January, a strong majority of BCMS members voted to support Colorado HB16-1054, the “Colorado End-of-Life Options Act” to create a legal process in Colorado, similar to what is currently in place in Oregon, for terminally ill patients who seek a dignified and autonomous conclusion of their dying process, to work openly and constructively with their health care team toward this end. While BCMS and individual member physicians did lend their support to this cause, the bill has ultimately “died in committee” again this year under partisan political pressures. Public opinion, political climate and health care culture continue to evolve, and BCMS will continue to support our members and the public in understanding the complexities of this issue, as it will likely remain on the legislative agenda or public ballot in coming seasons.

Last year, BCMS hosted a soiree event with Drs. David Hibbard and Charlie Hamlin, exploring the 2015 iteration of this bill in dynamic detail. This year, in 2016, look forward to a related discussion over the summer as a new upcoming soiree takes an in-depth look at “How Doctors Die Differently.”

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## **Added Access to Care, or Costly Duplication of Services?**

After a balmy January and February, the foot of glistening white stuff out my window reminds me it must be spring in Colorado. The bright sun (job security for our dermatologists?) is also a reminder that construction season will soon be upon us. In 2016, this means not only roadwork, but also the addition of several new massive medical infrastructure projects in Boulder County.

Toward the north of our County, University of Colorado Health continues to move ahead

with building a new full-scale hospital facility (UCHealth Longs Peak Hospital) to serve patients affiliated with what is now UCHealth Longmont Clinic, while Centura Health (which now owns Longmont United Hospital) continues to develop its own new network of outpatient feeder-affiliate primary care clinics and specialty offices. Currently, utilization of the existing Longmont United Hospital remains far below capacity, and demographic data from the realty world suggests that most of the population growth in the Longmont area is younger and demographically less likely to need or seek hospital-based services. It remains questionable whether northern Boulder County can sustain two hospitals, and to what extent empty beds and oversaturation with specialist practices may increase costs, drive unnecessary care and further fragment care for patients in the Longmont area.

Meanwhile, to the south, Boulder Community Health is moving ahead with its plans to convert the Community Medical Center Urgent Care in Lafayette to a free-standing ER. With numerous additional urgent care facilities nearby, five full hospitals in Boulder County (and 10 within a 25-mile radius around the county), and the uncertain regulatory and economic future of other current or future free-standing ERs throughout Colorado, this too has raised questions and community concerns.

In an era where advancing technologies, patient preferences and insurance reimbursement protocols are all driving care out of the hospital setting and back into the community, can local populations sustain this density of tertiary care facilities? How will these numerous competing hospital facilities affect the cost, quality, coordination and accessibility of care in our community?

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## Coming Very Soon: April 21st Telemedicine Soiree

This is NOT an April Fool's prank! Please RSVP ASAP as seating is limited for the Thursday, April 21 **Super Spectacular Telemedicine Soiree** at the Boulder Cork at 6 p.m. Presenters are Dr. Charolette (Charlie) Lippolis, DO, MPH (adolescent psychiatry), and Samantha (Sam) Lippolis, MPA, telehealth director of Centura Health. Come and learn about how [communication technologies are changing the face of health care delivery](#), and how your practice can thrive in the 21st century by providing timely care to patients in accessible and secure formats wherever they (and you!) may be.

The Boulder Cork is one of our finest restaurants and you will enjoy delicious and extensive appetizers that are locally sourced and hosted in a warm and refined setting. BCMS is hosting beer/wine for your pleasure. As you know there is no charge for BCMS member physicians and one guest to attend our dinner soirees, second guests are just \$30 each.

Please call 303-527-3215 to RSVP or email [BCMedSoc@aol.com](mailto:BCMedSoc@aol.com). Forget about your taxes! The Boulder Cork is calling YOU; come dine and relax with your friends and colleagues.

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## Launching The New CMS

Join Boulder County Medical Society on **Thursday, May 11** at the Fiske Planetarium for the Boulder Launch of The New CMS! The Colorado Medical Society believes in reaching for the stars and has built the craft to get us there. Welcome our very own stars, CMS President Dr. Mike Volz, CMS CEO Alfred Gilchrist, and CMS President-Elect Dr. Katie Lozano, for a tour of the expanding universe of the dynamic New CMS model of robust, responsive, member-driven representation and advocacy. The evening promises to be out of this world! After the business meeting we will have a special 30-minute live planetarium presentation of "Tour of the Universe." You won't want to be left out in the dark for either of these programs! RSVP to [bcmedsoc@aol.com](mailto:bcmedsoc@aol.com).

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### **In Memoriam: A tribute to Herbert S. Mooney MD**

*By John Leonard, MD*

I first met Dr. Mooney in an interview for a position at the Longmont Clinic in March of 1993. He and Chris invited me and Karen for coffee as we left town. In his usual forthright, honest and direct manner he made it clear that he thought me foolish joining a multiple specialty clinic. As an alternative he suggested that I join him.

The next time we met was in the doctor's lounge in the old Longmont United Hospital. He and some of the senior staff were discussing the problems with the destination of medicine in the face of advancing managed care. His thoughts had been well researched, thought out and organized, and presented in a clear manner.

Over the ensuing years we became fast friends. During our trips to the Denver Academy of Surgery we had many discussions about our profession, families and life in general. We developed a special bond.

Dr. Mooney was one of the most knowledgeable and thoughtful surgeons I have ever worked with. Tireless, honest, dedicated. His fund of knowledge was broad and for the most part current.

He will be missed by this community, colleagues, friends and fellow workers, but mostly by his patients. And me.

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### *MEMBERSHIP UPDATE*

**Welcome to our new members!**

**George Chaus, MD**

ORTHOPEDICS

Front Range Orthopedic Center

1551 Professional Lane, Suite 200  
Longmont, CO 80501  
303-772-1600

**Daniel Freese, DO**  
GASTROENTEROLOGIST  
Poudre Valley Medical Group  
1925 W. Mountain View Avenue  
Longmont, CO 80501  
303-776-1234

**Darren Herzog, MD**  
ORTHOPEDICS  
Boulder Medical Center  
2750 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80304  
303-440-3036

**Brian Lyle, MD**  
CARDIOLOGY  
Boulder Medical Center  
2750 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80304  
303-440-3057

**John Andrew Mengshol, MD**  
GASTROENTEROLOGIST  
Gastroenterology of the Rockies  
382 S. Arthur Avenue  
Louisville, CO 80027  
303-604-5000

**Anjali Sheth, MD**  
OPHTHALMOLOGY  
Eye Care Center of N. Colorado  
1400 Dry Creek Drive  
Longmont, CO 80503  
303-772-3300

**Emily Speer, MD**  
GENERAL SURGERY  
Alpine Surgical  
4743 Arapahoe Avenue, #102  
Boulder, CO 80303  
303-449-3642

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