

California Academy of Preventive Medicine
Report on the CMA House of Delegates 2009

CAPM was represented by Caroline Peck as Delegate and Ron Hattis as Alternate Delegate for three and a half days at the annual House of Delegates of the California Medical Association. CAPM is part of the Specialty Delegation, made up of all the recognized medical specialty societies. Because some of the delegates from other specialties were absent, Ron was able to vote as a full delegate.

The rather complex process at CMA begins with deliberations within one's delegation, starting in "mini-committees" each assigned to consider the resolutions before one of the seven Reference Committees. The "mini-committees" gave reports to the full delegation, which then voted on their recommendations. Assigned to the Science and Public Health and Health Care Reform "mini-committees," Caroline and Ron participated vigorously in the discussions of the Specialty Delegation on behalf of CAPM positions, particularly those regarding: Smart Growth and Air Pollution Reduction, Labeling and Use of Air Fresheners, Antibiotic Use in Livestock, Use of Flame Retardant Chemicals, Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals, Increased Alcohol Taxes for Health Care Costs, Taxes on Sugar to Offset Health Costs, Health Benefits of Physically Active Video Games, CDC Proposed HIV Rule Change (deleting the exclusion of HIV positive immigrants), Teenage Alcohol Education, and Ecological Health Footprint for Health Care Facilities, as well as those mentioned below that dealt with Medicare, Medi-Cal, and health care reform.

The following day, Caroline and Ron contributed testimony at three Reference Committees (shuttling between them because they all were going on the same morning). Whenever our resolutions achieved majority support of the delegation, testimony delivered at Reference Committees and later on the House floor represented the full delegation, a more powerful voice than that of CAPM alone. Caroline or Ron in some cases testified on behalf of the delegation, or left that to the "mini-committee" chair but added additional comments if needed, representing CAPM. The Reference Committees, as in past years, recommended editing of most of the resolutions, and support without changes or total rejection of others. The Reference Committee reports were in turn presented to the full House of Delegates, where they were debated before final votes.

Ron's Resolutions supporting Medicare Coverage for HIV Screening, and Prevention Services in Health Care Reform, both introduced on behalf of CAPM, were adopted by the full House of Delegates as CMA policy, with Reference Committee "wordsmithing" that watered them down but left the main ideas intact. Ron was challenged on the floor to eliminate Prevention Services in Health Care Reform, but his arguments were successful in achieving House adoption. Similarly adopted by the House was Ron's emergency resolution on Cutbacks in Adult Medi-Cal Benefits (opposing the recent elimination of dental, vision and hearing, psychology, podiatry, etc. services), although it was weakened to delete specific mention of legal challenge and political action to restore the cuts. Caroline obtained unanimous Specialty Delegation approval for Peter Kerndt's resolution on Adult Film Industry Safety and Health, which was adopted as CMA policy without

amendment (a weakened version suggested by the Reference Committee was defeated) after being argued successfully on the floor of the House of Delegates.

On the floor of the House, Caroline spoke to Resolutions on Seasonal/Pandemic Influenza and Adult Film Industry Safety and Health, and on a successful amendment to the Taxes on Sugar resolution that supported increased taxes on sodas and other high fructose corn syrup beverages, with revenues to be utilized for public health education and other health purposes. Ron spoke successfully on the House floor in support of his three resolutions mentioned above, and on a resolution encouraging the voluntary use of approved ski helmets by alpine skiers and snowboarders. He also attempted unsuccessfully to delete wording in a resolution entitled Thoughts on Health Care Reform that implied that many of the 46 million reported uninsured are not “truly” uninsured.

CMA Policy on public health issues was very strong this year. We noticed a slight shift to the left by the House as a whole on major issues; however the Board of Trustees seemed to be somewhat more conservative than the House as a whole, and the incoming President, J. Brennan Cassidy, gave a speech skeptical about health care reform, which disappointed Caroline and Ron. CAPM policy positions were often closely if not completely consistent with that of Family Physicians, Pediatricians, Internists, Obstetricians/Gynecologists, Pulmonary Medicine Specialists and Infectious Disease Specialists and the Council on Scientific Affairs. Being a part of the Specialty Delegation is extremely advantageous to CAPM.

The big issues identified by the specialties in the Specialty Delegation were health care reform, obesity, upholding MICRA, medical home and midlevel practitioners. The Specialty Delegation will be changing the way it bills specialty societies for membership. The first invoice will be for the Dues of the specialty society. This will be \$450 per delegate for the first two delegates and \$350 for subsequent delegates. The second invoice will be for the direct costs while attending the Specialty Delegation, such as food, drink, internet access, etc. As always, Ruth Haskins, Chair, did a fantastic job of running the Specialty Delegation meetings.

The Speaker of the House, James T. Hay, will be running for President Elect 2010. He has done a superb job for the years we have been in the House, and we are looking forward to his election to this position. Luther Cobb, current Vice Speaker, is running for Speaker in 2010, and we are supportive of his nomination as well, based on his performance in filling in for Dr. Hay. Ted Mazer, ENT solo practitioner, is running for Vice Speaker in 2010 in competition with Ben Schwachman, an anesthesiologist and pain management specialist.

The House is moving towards electronic posting of all resolutions and testimony, including access to this information on the House floor via laptop. Caroline found this helpful, but the rate at which the House converts to an all electronic session will be slower than expected due to general resistance. A movement to shorten the House of Delegates to two days was predicated on converting the initial delegation deliberations and testimony for the reference committees to a totally online process, so that the House

would begin with Reference Committee reports prepared with no live testimony. This is not likely to occur in the short term.

At present, there are no physicians in the state legislature. Democrat Dr. Richard Pan and moderate Republican Dr. Don Kurth are running for the State Assembly. They would greatly appreciate your support, especially financial! Contributions can be made online at www.PanForAssembly.com and www.donkurth.com. This across the aisle physician duo would be valuable to CAPM and public health in general.

CMA, rather than supporting any particular congressional bills, adopted principles of health care reform in 2008. In July 2009, a letter was sent to the Chairmen of the House of Representatives Sub-Committee Chairs, Henry Waxman, George Miller and Pete Stark, detailing CMA Policy and recommendations for health care reform. A similar letter was sent to the Chairmen of the Senate Sub-Committee Chairs, Senators Max Baucus and Christopher Dodd.

The final CMA resolutions of interest to public health are attached.

A9, A11, A3

B1, B5, B12, B4, B15, B17, B18, B22, B23

C17, C18, C19

E13, E4, E1,

F8, F9, F11, F21, F23

G1 - 28