



# THE MAGNET™



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NORTH CAROLINA'S SOURCE FOR IMPORTANT PHYSICIAN INFORMATION

## Risk Management Tips

### Monitoring Answering Service— Key To Great Customer Service

Many physician practices rely on outsourced answering services to handle calls when the office is closed. However, since they serve as the 'face' of your practice your answering service should follow clear guidelines to ensure the proper patient care and customer service.

1.) When answering a call, the service should immediately tell the caller he/she is speaking to the answering service and not to the physician's office. In some cases, patients may immediately begin to explain a confidential problem and then become upset later upon learning they're speaking with someone other than the physician's staff. **The answering service should have instructions from the physician about what to ask callers and what to tell them if they have an emergency.**

2.) The answering service should be as courteous to callers as your office staff. Your rapport with patients can be easily diminished by an insensitive or rude answering service. If the answering service operator has to interrupt a caller several times to answer other calls or does not answer within five rings, the service may be too busy to handle your practice.

3.) Stay personally aware of your service's reliability and courtesy by regularly telephoning it yourself. Portray various situations, ranging from emergency to casual inquiry – and tell them that you'll be monitoring them!

Consider these points:

- **Was your call answered promptly or on the sixth ring?**
- **Was it handled with proper manners and respect?**
- **Was the important information relayed to you properly and timely?**

*(Continued on page 2)*

## By Physicians. For Physicians.

### Premium Rates Decrease 8% for North Carolina Physicians

MAG Mutual Insurance Company is pleased to announce a premium reduction averaging 8% in North Carolina, beginning September 1, 2008 for new and renewing policyholders.

"We're excited to be able to make this rate reduction announcement and along with this year's dividend, most policyholders will see a significant premium decrease as they renew, said Dr. Roy W. Vandiver, Chairman and CEO of MAG Mutual. "As a physician-owned and led company, our mission remains focused on providing insurance at the lowest cost possible."

Individual policyholders may see fluctuations in their actual premium due to changes in their practice, the amount of policy limits purchased or claims-made year calculations, but the average base rate will be reduced by an estimated 8%. In addition to the rate reduction, MAG Mutual's Board of Directors recently declared a \$15 million policyholder dividend distribution that began June 1, 2008.

Coupled with the 2007 dividend of \$10 million, MAG Mutual policyholders will receive \$25 million in dividends from June 2007 through May 2009. The company has distributed dividends in 10 of the last 14 years.

If you have any questions, or would like a premium quote, call your representative or call **1-800-282-4882** or visit [www.magmutual.com](http://www.magmutual.com).

## Risk Management Assistance - At Your Fingertips

Visit us online at [www.magmutual.com/risk](http://www.magmutual.com/risk) for CME programs, frequently asked questions, ready-to-use forms and more!



**MAG MUTUAL®**  
Because your patients come first.

INSURANCE • FINANCIAL SERVICES  
OFFICE SOLUTIONS • PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

## In Practice. In Life.

### Group Personal Lines Insurance Program - A Big Hit!

With more options for your growing business, **MAG Mutual Insurance Agency (MMIA)** now offers the **Travelers Benefits Plus**® Insurance Program.

Easy to set up, the Benefits Plus® program through MMIA is designed for medical practices with as few as 5 employees and provides auto, home and personal liability coverage for your employees at discounted group rates.

Call **Donna Freeman** for a quick, no-obligation quote today at **1-800-295-5120**.

## Congratulations

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Congratulations goes out to MAG Mutual insured physician, **Joseph W. Stubbs, MD, FACP**. Dr. Stubbs is the **2008-2009 President elect of the American College of Physicians (ACP)**, the national organization of internists. Dr. Stubbs will assume the post of ACP President in April 2009.

**Please send physician announcements, new offices openings, etc. to: rbarnes@magmutual.com**

*(Monitoring Answering Service—Key To Customer Service, continued from page 1)*

4.) If you experience problems, it's best to try and work them out before dismissing the service. Notify the owner or manager of the specifics and any shortcomings. Make the complaint in writing as well as by phone so it drives home both your concern and your surveillance. And, just like your own staff, if you discover a particular operator who provides excellent service every time, compliment him or her to the service supervisor.

5.) Finally, if an answering machine is used in the office, we suggest taking the following steps to minimize liability and help ensure patient satisfaction:

- a) Inform new patients that when the physician is unavailable, telephone calls will be handled by an answering machine.
- b) When treating a patient whose medical problem may involve complications, provide the patient with written instructions in case the complications occur while the physician is unavailable and the office's answering machine has been activated.●

## MAG Mutual Awarded Financial Strength Rating of A- (Excellent)

MAG Mutual Insurance Company, the Southeast's leading professional medical liability insurer and the 8th largest medical professional liability insurer in the U.S., is pleased to announce that the A.M. Best Company has again assigned the company an **A- (Excellent) rating with a "Stable Outlook" for the future.**

"We are pleased that our leadership position and financial strength have been reaffirmed," said Dr. Roy Vandiver, Chairman and CEO. "This rating is proof positive that our physician led Board of Directors puts our insureds first."

The A.M. Best rating was based on 2007 financials and cited MAG Mutual's capitalization, operating profitability and favorable loss reserve development. The rating also recognizes MAG Mutual's leadership position in providing medical professional liability coverage for physicians in Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee and Virginia.●

**ATTENTION NORTH CAROLINA PHYSICIANS!**  
**Medical Professional Liability Rates Decrease Effective September 1, 2008**



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