

# THE MAGNET™



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NORTH CAROLINA'S SOURCE FOR IMPORTANT PHYSICIAN INFORMATION

## Risk Management & Patient Safety Tips

### Recommended Guidelines for Dispensing Samples

Everyone loves a freebie! - A little bonus for just being in the right place at the right time. However when the free item is sample medication, caution should be taken in order to reduce liability risks. Giving patients samples of prescribed medication can be of benefit in many ways:

- Cost savings to the patient
- Helps to access if a new medication will work for the patient
- Patients seem to feel a greater sense of value from the appointment
- Can help to build good will with the physician

However, when the management of samples is too informal, patients, physicians and their staff may be at risk.

Incidents have been reported when staff dispensed inappropriate medications to patients, themselves or to other staff members without physician awareness. Such activities, although often unknown to the physician, can delay proper treatment while exposing the physician to potential liability.

Another liability exposure can happen when medication is dispensed according to physician orders, but without documentation of the quantity administered, dose schedule or other instructions.

It is imperative to keep in mind that when patients observe physicians treating samples matter-of-factly, the serious nature of the medications and usage instructions are more likely to be undermined. In order to minimize risks related to sample medications, consider the following guidelines:

- Reasonably secure all medications, including samples.
- Inventory all samples monthly and discard any about to expire.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Policyholders to Receive Dividend For Third Consecutive Year!

"We're pleased to announce that MAG Mutual Insurance Company's Board of Directors has again announced a **dividend distribution to our policyholders,**" said **Dr. Roy Vandiver, MAG Mutual's Chairman of the Board.** Another example of how MAG Mutual remains "stronger than ever" in this economic climate, policyholders will begin receiving a \$7.5 million dividend on June 1, 2009.

The distribution will be made to all eligible MAG Mutual Physicians and Surgeons Professional Liability policyholders of record as of the close of business April 1, 2009. This year's dividend means that eligible policyholders will have received **\$32.5 million in dividends from June 2007 through May 2010. MAG Mutual has now declared and distributed dividends in 11 of the last 15 years.**

Included in the \$7.5 million companywide dividend is \$4 million to be paid to Georgia policyholders as an early distribution from the Company's Georgia Tort Reform Contingency fund. This fund was established as a result of our pledge to return any excess medical liability insurance premiums collected after the Georgia Tort Reform Act was signed into law in February 2005 until the date the \$350,000 cap on non-economic damages is upheld by the state Supreme Court. While the Court has not yet ruled on the cap, the law's continuing positive impact on Georgia's medical liability insurance market has led your physician-led Board of Directors to declare another early distribution, repeating a similar action taken in 2008.

Dividend amounts are based on the number of years insured with MAG Mutual and the premium amount paid. Beginning with policies renewing on June 1, 2009, the Company will apply the dividend amount as a credit on the Declarations Page. For eligible policyholders who retire or do not renew their policy, the dividend will be applied to any outstanding balance or paid by check.

Your Board of Directors and all of MAG Mutual's employees thank you for your loyalty and trust. If you have any questions, please call us at **1-800-282-4882**.



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*(Recommended Guidelines for Dispensing Samples, continued from page 1)*

- Dispense samples by physician order only and document name of medication, quantities given and a description of any instructions and warnings given to the patient.
- When appropriate, give patient instructions as you would for any prescription medication in accordance with your state laws.
- Don't "dispense" samples to employees, or if you do, follow the same steps that you would for a regular patient.
- Record samples dispensed in the patient's chart along with the lot number and other information you can use to follow up, should there be a problem or recall.
- Ask sales reps for generic samples.
- Report significant thefts or losses of prescription drug samples.
- Contact your State Board of Pharmacy to ensure that your practices are in compliance with your state's laws. ☎

#### References:

1. <http://www.ismp.org/Consumer/Samples.html>
2. July 14, 1999 Institute for Safe Medication Practices, Medication Safety Alert. Sample medications: Safe management is a difficult but necessary process

## "Tail" Insurance Coverage Eligibility Revised

The Board of Director's recently revised MAG Mutual's Extended Claim Reporting Period Endorsement or "Tail" coverage, effective June 1, 2009.

The revision updates the eligibility to obtain free tail insurance coverage for physician policyholders to just one year of being a MAG Mutual insured. And reduces the age requirement to 50. To qualify, a physician must be fully retired from the practice of medicine.

Call us at **1-800-282-4882** with questions. ☎

## Triad-Area Healthcare Heroes Celebrated, June 25, 2009

MAG Mutual is proud to salute the finest providers, employers, educators and volunteers in the healthcare field at the Triad Business Healthcare Heroes Award dinner.

"As sponsors of this event, we are proud to honor outstanding individuals and organizations that have had significant impact on the community," said **Board of Director's Chairman, Dr. Roy Vandiver**. "They are all champions for a better quality of patient care in the Triad area."



Finalists in 10 categories will be recognized and winners named at a reception and dinner in their honor on **Thursday, June 25th**. For more information, go to [www.commercialbizjournals.com/triad/](http://www.commercialbizjournals.com/triad/) ☎

**Policyholders have received dividends 11 out of the last 15 years = \$64 million+**



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MAG Mutual Insurance Co.  
P.O. Box 52979  
Atlanta, GA 30355-0979

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