



GEORGIA'S SOURCE FOR IMPORTANT PHYSICIAN INFORMATION

Tort Reform: The Battle Continues

Medical societies in Georgia are galvanizing their membership on the issue of tort reform. To cite just two examples: The Medical Association of Atlanta and the Medical Association of Georgia are both conducting "town meetings" in locations all over Atlanta and around Georgia.

The **Medical Association of Atlanta's** civil justice reform task force, headed by MAG Mutual board member Dr. Ralph Haynes, has scheduled a number of meetings for metro hospitals. Dr. Haynes recently led a forum at St. Joseph's Hospital during which he delivered a slide presentation entitled, "Is Tort Reform Just a Doctor Issue?"

Holly Snow, Vice President for Government Affairs of the Georgia Hospital Association, also gave a presentation that featured a 10-minute video entitled *Making Sense of Georgia's Medical Liability Insurance Crisis*. GHA is encouraging physicians to purchase the video for use in their office practice.

The **Medical Association of Georgia's** *Operation: Tort Reform* is currently underway with its "road trip" initiative: grassroots meetings at a dozen cities across the state. The goal is to energize physicians, raise money for the tort reform campaign and get the word out to the media. At a recent meeting in Macon, Dr. Michael Greene, president of the Medical Association of Georgia and a MAG Mutual board member, enlisted everyone's help for a grassroots effort to influence legislative activity.

Currently, the Medical Association of Georgia is working to enlist District Captains across the state as part of its *Operation: Tort Reform* initiative. These grassroots activists are meeting with legislators to educate them on the tort reform crisis in the state as well as legislative solutions to the problem. If you would like to become part of the MAG grassroots network, please contact MAG's Government Relations Department at 404-881-5044. ●

Risk Management Tips

Reporting Test Results to Patients - Is Your Office System Reliable?

Georgia Composite State Board regulation requires a physician to attempt to inform the patient of the receipt of laboratory test results within 14 days of the physician receiving those results. Each practice should establish a notification procedure and system to ensure compliance with this requirement. Every employee should be trained and the system closely monitored.

Remember:

- (1) It is acceptable to ask the patient to call back for their reports if they haven't been contacted within a specified time frame. However, the office should make a solid attempt to convey the test results.
- (2) If the patient refuses to make a recall appointment, the office staff should record this in the medical record and notify the physician.
- (3) Follow-up attempts include one or two phone calls; if unsuccessful, then a postcard or first class letter should be sent.
- (4) If the condition is serious, then a more concerted effort should be made, including sending a registered certified letter with return receipt requested. Retain the receipt in the patient's chart. If the certified letter is returned, both the letter and the envelope should be kept in the medical record.

(continued on page 2)

Savannah's Third Annual Health Care Heroes Awards

The Georgia Medical Society held their third annual Health Care Heroes Awards Banquet on October 30 at the Alee Shrine Temple. The winners are:

Community Outreach

Chris Foley

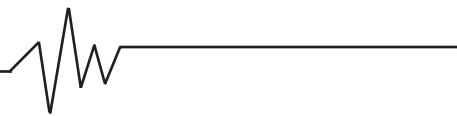
Allied Health Professional
Patricia J. Adkins

Lifetime Achievement
Jane B. Jennings, M.D.

Health Care Innovation
Martin H. Greenberg, M.D.

Community Outreach
Chris Foley

Congratulations to the winners, finalists and nominees. You've certainly proven yourselves worthy of the word "hero".



(Risk Management Tips, continued from page 1)

(5) If a letter is returned due to an invalid address, attempts should be made to obtain the correct address. A second copy of the letter should be sent by registered certified mailed to the new address.

(6) Post card usage and electronic messaging or “telephone in” systems, by which patients can directly access their test results, are time-efficient ways normal test results may be communicated.

Notifying patients of all test results encourages patients to be informed members of the healthcare team, accept responsibility for their own healthcare, and helps build their confidence in the physician’s care and treatment.

For a detailed discussion of the topic, see the *Healthcare Risk Manager*, Vol. 9, Number 19, 2nd quarter 2003 online at www.magmutual.com. ●

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Did you know?

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America.

The allure of the crime is its ease, the high payoff and very low arrest rate. **Georgia ranks 13th in the nation in the number of reported identity theft cases.** The most common identity theft involves credit card fraud, according to the Federal Trade Commission. When your credit card number is stolen, the thief can use it to buy goods and services under your assumed identity. The time involved in clearing one’s name can be substantial.

Some ways to limit your exposure to identity theft are:

- Review your credit report each year for accuracy
- Guard your social security number - never put it on checks
- Consider buying a shredder to destroy personal documents
- Go through your wallet or purse. If it were stolen how much information could a thief obtain?
- Review all bills and statements closely – an inaccurate charge could be the first warning sign of a larger problem

For more information, please call MAG Mutual Insurance Agency at 404-842-5600 or 800-282-4882.

MAG Mutual Service Tip!

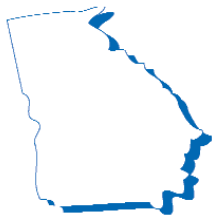
Adding a new physician to your practice? If so, obtaining timely medical professional liability coverage is one of the myriad of tasks to accomplish as he/she enters your practice. MAG Mutual typically may need up to 30 days to gather the necessary underwriting information in order to assure coverage eligibility. We encourage the earliest notification possible to avoid this becoming an employment issue.

MAG Mutual Insurance Company rated A- Excellent by A.M. Best

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