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Inside this
issue:

Lead Article 2
Continued

President's 2
Article

NKMS Alliance 3
Article

Foundation 4
Article

NKMS Society

Rounds

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Budget is Top Priority for Legislators, but Health Care Issues also on Agenda

The 2016 session of the Kentucky General Assembly began January 5 and legislators see the biennial budget as their top priority. Couched in that discussion will be significant debate about the state's public pension crisis and funding for Medicaid expansion.

The 2015 fiscal year ended with a \$165 million surplus, but the administration of new Gov. Matt Bevin forecasts a \$500 million shortfall for fiscal years 2016-18. Balancing the state budget, which is constitutionally required, will prove challenging and every sector of the economy likely will be impacted. KMA will monitor the budget process closely to assess how physicians and patients might be affected.

KMA also will focus on a specific set of priorities that, if adopted by the General Assembly, would improve the practice of medicine in Kentucky.

- **Tort Reform:** KMA and its partners, such as the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, are coordinating efforts for meaningful tort reform in order to address Kentucky's broken, imbalanced civil justice system.
- **Smoke-free Kentucky:** KMA is promoting improved pub-

lic health by advocating for comprehensive, state-wide smoke-free legislation that would eliminate secondhand smoke in public places and workplaces. The Association also is working with state policymakers, media and public/private health insurers to push and publicize effective smoking cessation policies and programs.

- **Maintenance of Licensure/Maintenance of Certification:** KMA is continuing to promote action by state policymakers, as well as relevant national organizations, to address the effect of maintenance of certification, osteopathic continuous certification and maintenance of licensure principles on workforce, costs, access to care and quality improvement in patient care.
- **Fair Contracting:** In response to problematic business practices being utilized by some commercial insurers when contracting with physicians, KMA, along with the Greater Louisville Medical Society, is working with

state legislators and other stakeholders to bring greater fairness to the contracting process.

KMA has developed advocacy toolkits to support the Association's four legislative priorities. The toolkits include one-page issue summaries, talking points, recommended steps for legislator meetings and other advocacy tips. Download these materials from the KMA website (kyma.org) and contact your legislator to advance these very important issues.

If you need assistance in identifying your legislators, please contact Cory W. Meadows, Director of Advocacy and Legal Affairs, for further information.

Physicians can be involved in several other ways.

- Subscribe to the *KMA Legislative Alert*. The fresh, new-look *KMA Legislative Alert* is a weekly publication that offers members timely information about significant legislative issues being debated by the General Assembly and the United States Congress.

- Continued on page 2 -



Upcoming Events

February 10, KMA Physicians' Day at the Capitol

February 16, NKMS Executive Board Meeting



Budget is Top Priority for Legislators, but Health Care Issues also on Agenda

-Continued from page 1-

The publication will include a new feature called the *KMA Legislative Minute* that will allow members to conveniently stay up-to-date by watching a short video to receive a summary of the *KMA Legislative Update*. If you would like to receive the bulletin, please email legislativebulletin@kyma.org or call (502) 426-6200 to state your preferred method of receipt.

- “Like” KMA on Facebook (www.facebook.com/kymedassn) and/or follow KMA on Twitter

(www.twitter.com/kymedassoc). Members can receive time-sensitive “calls to action,” as well as the latest developments in state and national health care news.

- Attend the *KMA Physicians’ Day at the Capitol* on **Wednesday, Feb. 10**. The day will consist of state legislative briefings, legislator visits, lunch with legislators and CME at the Kentucky History Center that will include a presentation regarding medical cannabis as well as a two-hour program on the safe and re-

sponsible prescribing of opioids. For more information on the program and other events visit kyma.org. Register at <https://2016physiciansdayatthecapitol.eventbrite.com>.

The 2016 regular session will be an active legislative cycle. It will run for 60 days before adjourning April 12. Let us join together with a united voice to make it successful for patients and physicians.

Cory Meadows, Director, Advocacy & Legal Affairs, KMA

President’s Report



At one of my daughter’s cross-country meets last year I saw a t-shirt with the phrase, “All it takes is all you’ve got.” This motto, with its simplicity and sense of devotion, has resonated with me ever since I saw it that first time. I have been waiting for the right opportunity to put those words into action. Now is the right opportunity. As the newly elected President of the NKMS I want to assure you I will give you all I’ve got. Why?

Because the doctors of Northern Kentucky are a great group of individuals and deserve everything I’ve got to give.

Our organization has yet to live up to its full potential. We need to serve our members better and our community at-large better. In the next two years I hope to use this office to further the treatment of heroin addiction, to make our roads safer and to give increased service to our members.

Do you have a concern, a complaint or an idea? Then contact me. Let’s make good things happen.

I know I cannot do this alone. I know you will help me. I want you to know that I will give you all I’ve got.

Mark Schroer, MD, President, NKMS

NKMS Alliance Report

NKMSA had another successful Christmas Party event on December 3, 2015 at the beautiful Ft. Mitchell Country Club. Over 100 attendees were present to celebrate our annual fundraiser and Doctors' Day Retiree honorees. We had over 70 wrapped gifts for the children at the Brighton Center, over 50 pairs of white socks for the Pike Street Homeless Clinic and raised over \$2,200.00 for the Women's Crisis Center with our silent auction. (Special thanks to Karla for delivering them and Barb Salzman, Patty Heeb, Nancy Bunnell, and Renee Fagel for setup).



We were honored with the attendance of our NKMS Foundation Scholarship recipient, Sarah Nester, who attends UK Medical School. KMA President, Dr. Ted Miller, and KMA President-Elect Dr. Nancy Swikert were present at the installation of NKMS President, Dr. Mark Schroer.



Late November, the NKMS Foundation donated 4 grants of \$5,000.00 each to these charitable events in our area, Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, Welcome House, Women's Crisis Center and Redwood school. Dr. Mike Gerwe (NKMS Foundation President) and Karla Kennedy delivered the checks.



Nancy Swikert, MD, NKMSA President



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Foundation Report

I'd like to thank everybody for the opportunity to be the foundation president for the last two years. One of my last duties was to distribute donation checks to four important organizations that serve our community. These organizations were very appreciative of these donations. Karla Kennedy and I were given short tours of their facilities and work which was quite impressive for each of the four organizations.

Also important to the foundation is the continuance of our University of Kentucky medical student scholarship. The scholarship is for the third and fourth year of medical school tuition. It is awarded to a student with strong Northern Kentucky ties and a desire to return here to practice. Steve Hiltz did a great job in the establishment of this scholarship during his foundation presidency.

The monies for the donations and scholarship have come to the foundation through a settlement years ago, individual contributions, and from the Northern Kentucky Medical Society President's Fund. Monies into the NKMS President's Fund come partially from yearly dues. So everyone in the NKMS deserves credit.

Thanks,

Mike Gerwe, MD, NKMS Foundation President

