

PHYSICIAN SURVEY: INSURANCE CARRIERS IMPROVE SLIGHTLY, BUT MARKS STILL LOW

Most local insurance carriers showed some signs of improvement, but the group as a whole performed poorly again in an annual survey of physicians commissioned for the second year by the Physician Practice Advocacy Committee.

Humana, National Government Services, United Healthcare and Passport gained a few points in their overall score while Anthem's score decreased, but no insurer scored higher than what would qualify as a passing grade in school. Aetna and Cigna were included in the survey for the first time.

"There's still great need for improvement," said **Dottie Hargett**, director of professional relations for the Greater Louisville Medical Society.

The survey, conducted by Enalysis and commissioned under the direction of PPAC Chairman **Michael Dee, MD**, was comprised of 36 questions related to a variety of issues ranging from timeliness of claim payments to the knowledge and helpfulness of the carrier's customer service representatives. The survey respondents represented 305 physicians, which comprise a sample size of 19 percent of the total Greater Louisville Medical Society physician population.

Ms. Hargett said in many cases the results of the survey reflect issues the insurers have already identified.

"There aren't too many big surprises," Ms. Hargett said.

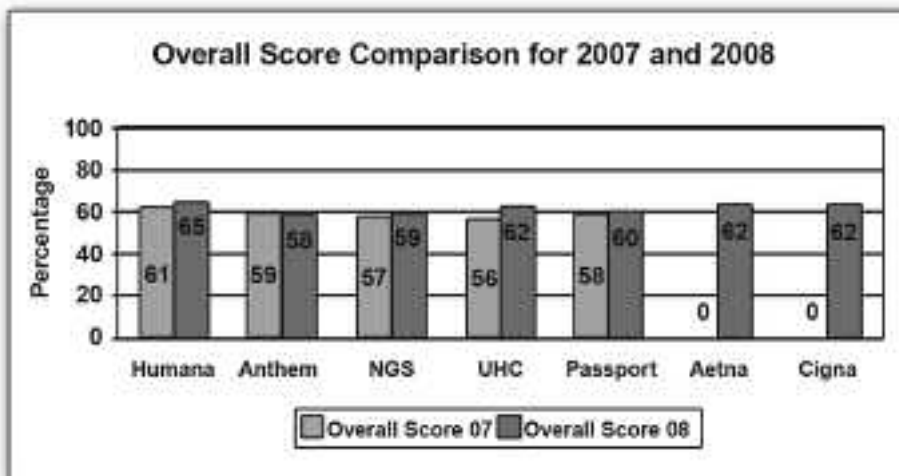
Ms. Hargett said the survey quantifies many of the issues physician practices are faced with in their dealings with insurers.

"Because we are able to get a viable response from physicians that is statistically sound the carriers aren't able to deny the results," Ms. Hargett said. The survey has a 95 percent confidence interval, indicating that the results are accurate within plus or minus 4 percent, according to the report issued by researcher **Michael Bewley, PhD**.

The data collected are being discussed by physicians and representatives of the individual carriers who attend quarterly meetings of the PPAC's Insurance Issues Resolution Committees. The findings are also being included as the main focus of discussion at the open forums PPAC is holding with insurance companies throughout the year. All GLMS members and their office staff are invited to attend the open forums to address their concerns directly with leadership from each of the major carriers.

Ms. Hargett said the survey results have been provided to the administrators of all seven carriers identified in the report. She said the insurers have been "very cooperative" since the survey initiative began last year.

More information on the payer survey and the open forums is available on the Practice Advocacy page of the GLMS website at www.glms.org.



The Payer Survey was comprised of a total of 36 questions in seven categories. Each of the responses received from the questionnaire were converted into a numerical score on a scale of 1-100 with 100 being the highest rating received and one being the lowest. For this summary, each question in the seven separate categories was calculated as mentioned above, and an average score was calculated for each category. These scores were also calculated to give an overall score for each insurance carrier.

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MEMBERSHIP STATUS

As of January 2009, active GLMS membership numbered 2024, which is 82 percent of physicians practicing in Jefferson County.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY 9, 2009

- The board had a lengthy discussion of the ongoing economic credentialing issue related to Ford UAW's Humana Preferred Network and its exclusion of certain physicians based on cost.

Attorney **Charles "Mike" Cronan** told the board that a group of podiatrists were recently successful in getting back into a similar Humana Preferred Network being used by Medicare Advantage. Mr. Cronan also discussed various legal strategies with the board related to physicians who have been excluded – about 25 percent of primary care physicians and about 50 percent of specialists.

Board member **Charles Shane, MD**, said the issue of economic credentialing is one he could see going nationwide.

"I can see a national case coming out of this," said Dr. Shane, adding that he wanted GLMS to encourage every excluded physician to appeal.

Board member **Bruce Scott, MD**, called economic credentialing one of the biggest issues facing GLMS and its membership in several years.

"I think we need to keep this out there and keep it on the front page," Dr. Scott said.

- Board member **Edward Halperin, MD**, dean of the UofL School of Medicine, reported on the December meeting of the Kentucky Commission of Human Rights held at The Old Medical School Building. The meeting was held to discuss the question of whether African-Americans and minorities have been fairly represented in appointments to the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure in light of an accusation that the board hasn't had an African-American member in the last 25 years and that minority doctors appearing before the board are being treated unfairly.

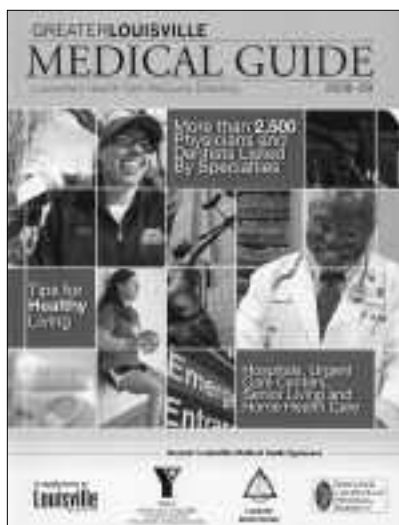
Dr. Halperin, a member of the board along with the deans of Kentucky's other two

medical schools, said he reviewed the appointments made to the board since its inception in 1972 and found that there have been 38 physicians appointed by the governor. Of those, 68 percent have been male 32 percent female, 5 percent African-American and 11 percent of Indian or Pakistani descent.

Board member **Gordon Tobin, MD**, said this particular accusation of racial bias against the licensure board is one of a series of attacks that have been made "in large part from physicians who have been disciplined."

- Executive Director **Lelan Woodmansee, CAE**, reported that Kentucky Medicare intermediary contract is expected to be transferred from National Government Services to Highmark in six months. Professional Relations Director **Dottie Hargett** said there will be an opportunity for those who oppose the change to file a protest.
- **Jessica Williams**, a compliance specialist in the GLMS professional relations department, gave a brief presentation on the results of the 2008 payer survey. With the exception of Anthem, satisfaction with insurance carriers increased in the results compared to the first year of the survey last year, but overall survey respondents are still mostly unsatisfied with the insurance companies they deal with on a regular basis.
- Dr. Halperin reported that over the last five years applications for medical schools nationwide have increased 18 percent with decreases over the past two years. UofL has seen applications increase by 70 percent in the same time frame.

DEADLINE TO UPDATE DATA FOR 2009 MEDICAL GUIDE APPROACHING



The deadline to submit changes or opt-out of the 2009 Medical Guide published through a partnership between GLMS and Louisville Magazine is Feb. 28.

If you have not submitted changes or opted out and would like to do so, please go to www.glms.org and click **Update Member Data for Medical Guide** to view your current data on file. You will be required to first log in with your member number and password. If you do not know your member number or password, call 502-736-6362.

The annual physician directory will be published in the spring of 2009 and will reach

approximately 50,000 health-conscious readers. All active and associate GLMS member names, office addresses and office phone numbers will be listed in alphabetical order by ABMS certified specialty(ies). Photos and other information will not be included in the directory.

Physician members who would like to advertise in this publication beyond the free listing may contact Stacey Hallahan at 502-625-0100 ext. 32. To receive a 10 percent discount, make sure to mention you are a GLMS member.

KENTUCKY PHYSICIANS PAC PROMOTES PRO-MEDICINE CANDIDATES

With the help of physician contributions, Kentucky Physicians PAC, the political action arm of the Kentucky Medical Association helps to increase the medical community's impact on the pro-medicine makeup of the Kentucky General Assembly.

During the 2008 general election, pro-medicine candidates supported by the action committee – like local lawmaker **Bob DeWeese, MD** – had a great deal of success.

In fact, all but one of the contested state and federal candidates supported by the PAC won their elections. The winning percentage of 97 percent was the highest in the political action committee's history.

Physician support is needed to continue backing candidates favorable to organized medicine. PAC membership dues range from \$20 for medical students and residents and \$150 for physicians to \$5,000 for a platinum level contributor.

For more information on the PAC and the work the organization does to aid organized medicine in the state, visit www.kppac.org or contact **Whitney Meadows** at 502-426-6200, meadows@kyma.org.


NOMINATIONS FOR 2009 DOCTORS' BALL BEING ACCEPTED

Your input is needed to select the best and brightest in Louisville's medical community.

Nomination forms have been faxed and e-mailed to members and are available on the GLMS Web site.

Be sure to take a moment to nominate a colleague whose accomplishments deserve distinguished recognition. Categories include the Ephraim McDowell Physician of the Year, the Compassionate Physician award and Doctors' Ball awards for excellence in research, education, community service, mental health, international humanitarian service and nursing.

The deadline for all nominations is March 2. The 15th annual Doctors' Ball charity gala, sponsored by the Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's Foundation, will be held at the Downtown Marriott on Saturday, Oct. 17.



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GLMS OFFERS ADVICE TO OBAMA-BIDEN HEALTH CARE TRANSITION TEAM

A four-page white paper outlining three health care-related priorities was submitted by Greater Louisville Medical Society staff at a community forum held at the University of Louisville by the Obama-Biden health care transition team.



Kenneth Zegart, MD, spoke about electronic medical records and the Louisville Health Information Exchange of which he is a board member. LouHIE is a local effort to maintain a digital bank of health information for patients in and around Louisville.

The forum – held at the Brown & Williamson Club at Papa John’s Cardinal Stadium on Jan. 7 – was one of hundreds held around the country that gave community members an opportunity to provide input for President Barack Obama’s administration. The forum was sponsored by the University of Louisville, U of L Health Care, Passport Health Plan and Save the Children.

Organizers had planned to send a videotape of public comments, survey results and other written comments to Obama’s transition team.

The three items identified by GLMS in the white paper were:

1. Addressing the growing physician workforce shortage.
 - a. the uninsured.
 - b. practice expenses surpassing revenues.
2. Funding Electronic Medical Record systems for physician practices.
3. Stopping economic credentialing by health insurance companies.

The GLMS white paper also pointed out the need for legislators to fix the flawed Medicare physician reimbursement formula. To read the white paper in its entirety, go to GLMS.org and use your GLMS ID and password to log in.

More than 80 people attended the event, including several physicians. **Kenneth Zegart, MD**, who serves on the Louisville Health Information Exchange (LouHIE) board, touched specifically on one of the three items identified in the GLMS white paper – funding for Electronic Medical Record systems.



Garrett Adams, MD, of the Kentucky Physicians for a National Health Program, addressed the audience. David J. Tollerud, MD, of the University of Louisville School of Public Health, a moderator of the event, looked on.

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“The problem is most physicians are not willing to front the cost of EMRs because it’s very expensive and they don’t want to change,” Dr. Zegart said.

A few of the speakers including **Garrett Adams, MD**, and **Denise Puthuff, MD**, talked about a single payer health care system and voiced their support for HR676, a congressional bill that seeks to expand Medicare to cover all Americans.

In his remarks, Dr. Adams referred to the current health care system as an “immoral, inhumane and unethical” system “supported by politicians who are rewarded with millions in their campaign checks.”

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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE SEEKING KEY CONTACTS

The GLMS Legislative Quick Action Committee is on the look-out for members with personal, professional or family connections to state and local lawmakers who would be interested in acting as key contacts.

Key contacts are a crucial part of the legislative process and help us bypass obstacles in communicating the physician perspective to legislators on important laws that affect health care.

If you are interested in being a key contact or know a physician with an affiliation to a lawmaker who might, please contact **Bert Guinn, MBA**, GLMS communications and membership director, at bert.guinn@glms.org or 736-6334.

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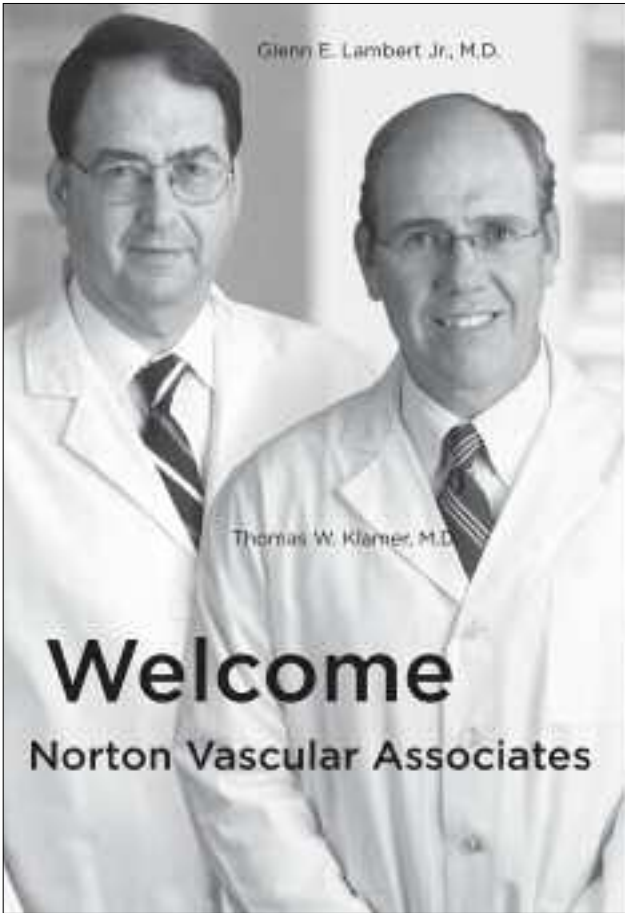
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Norton Healthcare welcomes Norton Vascular Associates, the practice of Drs. Glenn E. Lambert Jr. and Thomas W. Klamer, to the organization. Drs. Lambert and Klamer, both well-respected and board-certified general and vascular surgeons, have maintained a close working relationship with Norton Healthcare for many years. They also serve as clinical professors of surgery at the University of Louisville. Drs. Lambert and Klamer will continue to see patients on the campuses of Norton Suburban and Norton Audubon hospitals and will resume patient care at Norton Medical Plaza at Old Brownsboro Crossing later in the year.

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UOFL MEDICAL BRIGADE SEEKING PHYSICIAN VOLUNTEERS

A team of 13 first-year medical students from the University of Louisville is seeking volunteer physicians and pharmacists to join them on a two-week trip to Ecuador beginning in late June.

The UofL Medical Brigade trip is being organized in conjunction with Ecuador-based nonprofit Quito Eterno and the Timmy Foundation in Indianapolis, two organizations that frequently work together to bring medical care to indigenous regions of Ecuador's Amazon.

During their stay, the brigade will seek to provide primary medical care by administering antibiotics, antifungals and vaccinations, treating injuries and providing various other medical treatments.

The cost of the trip is approximately \$1,500, which includes airfare, transportation, lodging and meals. The group is scheduled to leave June 29 and return July 10.

For more information, contact **Courtney Miles** at cnmile01@gwise.louisville.edu or 502-558-3953.



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