

## **CSMS is No Longer an Island**



**A**S the calendar page turns to begin a new year, the Connecticut State Medical Society continues to evolve. CSMS today is an organization that is building a new reputation of bringing people together in the interest of providing Connecticut citizens with the best medical care.

In this edition of *Connecticut Medicine*, one of the newest Associate Members of CSMS writes about the team concept in the practice of medicine. Physician assistants have a strong and proud history of service to patients and physicians alike. They are on the front lines of helping us deliver care every day. It is in the interests of all CSMS members to forge strong relationships with PAs and to welcome them to CSMS as Associate Members.

All one need do is look at 2007 to see that when CSMS works together with our colleagues in other health-care areas, we are successful. The most striking example is the passage of legislation making the monitoring program we know as the Physician Health Program into the statewide Health Assistance Intervention Education Network, or HAVEN. This proposal had wound its way through the legislative process before, but never with such strong collaboration and support from a variety of health professionals: physician assistants, nurses, dentists, veterinarians and more, as well as the Department of Public Health. Hammering out the details required countless meetings, but with all parties resolved to make this program a reality, little formal opposition stood in its way.

The spirit of collaboration took CSMS to new places, as well, working with a coalition of health-care advocates, labor organizations and religious leaders in support of systemic health-care reform. This opportunity allowed CSMS to sit at a new table with new allies, all of whom shared a common goal of providing access to quality medical care for all Connecticut residents. Although the effort did not result in legislation, CSMS' willingness to take a leadership role sent a strong message to other advocacy groups that Connecticut physicians are a necessary part of a solution. Our work there has led to invitations to work with other organizations in support of mutual goals: access to quality medical care that is adequately funded, that respects the relationship between patient and physician; and that provides transparency in the way funding is allocated.

CSMS is no longer an island in its own sea. We shall continue working to make true allies of other allied health professionals. They are looking to CSMS for leadership; we are looking for partners to do battle against a hostile practice environment where we provide care to more than three million patients. We have now seen the benefits of being inclusive through the advancement of these and other legislative initiatives; together we can accomplish our mutual goals.

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