

Welcome to the **September 2017** issue of OCMA Connect, our new monthly publication focusing on issues specific to Orange County physicians. We hope you enjoy our newsletter and we welcome your input. Please send your comments, ideas or questions to Holly Appelbaum at happelbaum@ocma.org.

President's Message

By: **William M. Thompson, IV, M.D.**



I want to begin by sharing one of my first memories of the Orange County Medical Association. When I was a little boy, my dad often brought me to OCMA events. As many of you may already know, my father, William Thompson III, M.D., served as OCMA President in 1978-79. One time, he was responsible for arranging for the guest speaker at an event and he told me that I was going to be meeting a man who would someday be very important. At the time, I didn't know exactly what that meant or who this friendly, smiling man was. All I really recall is that he was very nice to me, sat me on his lap and talked to me. That man, as my father foretold, did become an important man. That man was President Ronald Reagan.

I am humbled and honored to be your new OCMA President for 2017-18. It seems like I've been around OCMA in some capacity for a great majority of my life in one way or another. Now, I am serving as the president of this organization that has been serving physicians and their patients for more than 128 years. Thank you for this opportunity. I'm often amazed with the commitment and hard work by our physician leaders.

The effort, time and dedication it takes when physician leaders come together for committee and board meetings, trips to Sacramento, meeting with local elected officials and other community leaders - understanding that they are taking time away from their patients, their practice and their family - **to make a difference.** It would be very easy not to get involved, not to be a member of organized medicine, but many years ago I became tired of just complaining about the things that ail medicine and decided to participate in the process.

As physicians, we are benevolent. We just want to be doctors and take care of our patients. Unfortunately, that strategy has left us somewhat behind in today's modern healthcare. The MBA's have inserted themselves into all aspects of medicine, to focus on profits off the backs of our patients and fellow physicians.

We physicians are the experts on the front line of medicine. We see how business and political decisions affect our patients. **We are that last barrier of protection between our patients and insurance companies, hospital corporations, government, big pharma, etc.** What might seem like a good idea to law makers or an MBA, may have disastrous consequences for our patients. We must be at the table to provide consultation to those who make laws. We must educate and work with our elected officials to show them what happens at bedside. **We must make sure that not just some of us are members, that a few of us get engaged, but all physicians - it's really a moral obligation.**

My father once told me, **"It is YOUR privilege to be able to care for a patient; not the other way around. You practice medicine because you love what you do."**

It's true, and I've never forgotten that.

Orange County Health Care Agency Releases Its Report on Opioid Overdose and Death in Orange County



The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) recently released the "Opioid Overdose and Death in Orange County" report. [The Executive Summary](#) of the report has been reprinted below:

Drug overdose (poisoning) is now the leading cause of unintentional injury death in the United States, causing more deaths than motor vehicle crashes. Opioids - both prescription painkillers and heroin - are responsible for most of those deaths. The number of Californians affected by prescription and non-prescription opioid misuse and overdose is substantial, with rates varying significantly across counties, and even within counties. In Orange County, there were 7,457 opioid overdose/abuse cases treated in emergency departments (ED) between 2011 and 2015. Importantly, seven of every 10 overdose deaths investigated by the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner during this five-year period involved opioids. While Orange County has lower opioid mortality rates compared to some other states and the nation, notable disparities and risk factors were identified for some of our residents. For example, males were nearly two times more likely than females to overdose and/or die from an opioid-related incident. [Geographically, cities along the coastal and southern regions of Orange County tended to have higher rates of ED visits and death than other cities.](#)

[Learn More](#)

CalOptima Achieves Certification to Strengthen Electronic Transactions

System improvement demonstrates commitment to streamlining health care payments



CalOptima
Better. Together.

CalOptima recently achieved a certification for adoption of standardized and enhanced electronic business transactions. The certification is known as CORE (Committee on Operating Rules for Information Exchange), and it is awarded by the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare. [CORE certification is considered the health care industry's gold standard for administrative data exchange.](#)

["CalOptima providers deliver high quality care to our members, and we want to ensure our electronic transaction capabilities meet high standards as well,"](#) says Len Rosignoli, Chief Information Officer, CalOptima. "Adopting standards and increasing the accuracy of data exchanged with our provider partners are key actions to reduce the overall cost of health care delivery."

CalOptima implemented Phase I, II and III of the CORE operating rules, and each phase has benefits for the provider community:

[Phase I: Real-time automated member eligibility](#)

* Providers can determine members' eligibility at the time when they schedule services or have an office visit.

[Phase II: Real-time automated claim status](#)

* Providers can determine the current disposition of a claim sent to CalOptima for payment at any time or correct and resend a claim that did not adjudicate with a resulting payment.

[Phase III: Electronic funds transfer \(EFT\) and electronic remittance advice \(ERA\)](#)

* Providers can receive quicker payments because remittance is electronic, thereby eliminating the administrative time and cost of paper checks and remittance advices.

[Providers must first register to submit claims under the new CORE standards,](#) and they may do so by calling 714-246-8600 or contacting their CalOptima Provider Representative.

OCMA Welcomes Its Newest Members

Matthew Clark, M.D.
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Newport Beach

Rakhi Dayal, M.D.
Anesthesiology
Orange

Eric Dec, M.D.
Clinical Genetics
Dana Point

Luis Garcia, M.D.
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Anaheim

Kathy Le, M.D.
Preventative Medicine
La Palma

Atashi Mandal, M.D.
Pediatrics
Huntington Beach

Mai-Tram Nguyen, M.D.
Pediatrics
La Habra

Alan Rushovich, M.D.
Pathology
Irvine

Holly Sata, M.D.
Anesthesiology
Orange

Alexander Taghva, M.D.
Neurological Surgery
Mission Viejo

New and Noteworthy: Books by OCMA members

Many OCMA members are physicians who write more than prescriptions. OCMA has dedicated this space to promote new releases by OCMA members.



If you are a member of OCMA who has recently released a book that you would like to announce here, please forward your name, the title of your book and website for the book to Holly Appelbaum at happelbaum@ocma.org.

Business Partner Profile: MediQuest Staffing



Your Healthcare Staffing Resource

- Temporary, Temp-to-Hire, Direct Hire, and Payroll Services
- 20+ healthcare positions, including:

Medical Assistant (front & back office)
Scheduler
Biller
Case Manager
Referral Coordinator

- 50+ years of medical staffing experience

Benefits:

OCMA members receive **discounted VIP** pricing that includes numerous à la carte benefits **at no charge**, including background checks, drug screening, and license verification, among others.

Contact:

Tom Megonigal

949.529.3064

tmegonigal@mediqueststaffing.com