

Quarterly Communicator

The Official Newsletter of Colorado MGMA

Past President's Column By Ellen Boyd Immediate Past President

It's a new year and CMGMA will soon have a strategic planning meeting. We welcome all membership's input into how you would like to see our organization grow and plan educational programs. Please contact us with your input.

The past president's job changes with each year. My job for year 2005 consists of being the liaison to the corporate affiliate chair, helping to plan educational programs, securing new officer candidates and other myriad little jobs and needs. We at CMGMA welcome any membership that would like to work with the committees and special projects. Come join us to make your organization better.

To all our corporate affiliates, I would ask that you contact the affiliate chair with ideas of change. We will be revamping the new affiliate packet and want to include any and all needed information that answers your immediate questions when you join. We are entertaining changing program conference timeframes to be more efficient with your time meeting and showing your company to membership. We will be changing our table and space planning approach and fees. Let us know what you think and how we can be most efficient with all of our time and monies. Remember to inquire into writing articles for this newsletter. These articles educate membership, while letting membership know of your company. The articles are most welcome. CMGMA values our corporate affiliates and wish to include you in all we do.

Thank you for a great year in 2004 as your past president. If I can do 2005 better, let me know. Rev your engines. Clear your desks. Mark you calendars. Here we go, 2005.....

President's Column Consider Your Future By Jim Knight, President

In Gerry Roach's book *Colorado's Fourteeners*, he describes the route to the summit of Capitol Peak (14,130 feet). In that description he uses the phrase "consider your future" at a crux point in the climb. His point is that the route ahead is risky. At this time of year (January) I attempt to evaluate things and consider it an obligation as President of your association to share with you its future as I see it. Hang with me now and I will get to that sharing after I describe the climb that made me think of this way to share.

Capitol Peak is considered one of the toughest 14teeners to climb. My climbing mates Tom and Brian and I decided we were ready to give it a go and left Denver one fine day headed into the Elk Range. The day long hike into the mountains is quite spectacular and we found a prominent campsite just at the base of the climbing route. We camped that night and awoke at 4:30 am for our adventure. The first part of the route was steep but along a good trail and it was no problem even in the dark.

We reached the top of the ridge at daybreak and noted the increasing difficulty ahead. After a few hours we saw the rugged point 13,644 better known as K2. It's a jagged point that gives the seasoned climber pause and it must be crossed to get to Capitol Peak. It was actually easier than it looked from a distance but just beyond this point was the infamous knife edge. This is where you "consider your future". It is a 100 foot long stretch of ridge with significant exposure on each side. Crossing it is a major adrenalin rush and one of the most enjoyable pitches I have completed. From the knife edge there is some class 4 climbing along some loose rock shelves and in a short while the summit was reached. Clouds were beginning to build so summit time was minimal and we began our descent back across the knife edge to get another adrenalin high. On my re-crossing of the knife edge, my water bottle from my summit pack fell out of its pouch and headed down the mountain. It must have fallen 1000 feet before hitting the rocks (and exploding) below. The three of us became more serious after that realizing just how significant this exposure was and expedited our descent.

Now back to the consideration of the future. Just as in this climb, Colorado MGMA's future is not without some risk. Professional associations have challenges ahead that will make their existence more difficult-declining resources of our members, the lessening volunteerism, and changing sets of values. Our association is prepared to meet these challenges and move forward, even over

(cont'd on page 5)

2005 Conference Schedule at a Glance

Spring Conference
April 8, 2005
Doubletree Hotel
Colorado Springs, CO

Summer Conference
Details coming soon!

Visit www.cmgma.com
or call
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information

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**The College Corner
By Julie Kjack, FACMPE**

New Years Greetings to All!

Now that the hustle and bustle of the Holidays is over we have to settle down to business and our goals for the coming year. It is my hope that one of your 2005 goals will be to join the American College of Medical Practice Executives (ACMPE) and proceed to Fellowship. The process is involved and the result rewarding.

As of December 1, 2004, ACMPE had 3,185 Nominees; 1,515 Certified Medical Practice Executives; 432 Fellows; 163 Life Fellows; 24 Distinguished Fellows and six honorary Fellows. Numbers include 346 students and 44 uniformed services members.

Each year, ACMPE sets goals for new ACMPE members and advancements within the certification process. Fiscal year 2005 (July 2004-June 2005) goals and actual numbers as of December 6, 2004, are shown below.

ACMPE Classification

	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
New Nominees	933	378	41%
New Certified Members	223	91	41%
New Fellows	40	28	70%

Why should CMPE's advance to Fellowship?

- ♦To set themselves apart from their colleagues with their commitment to continuing professional development and advanced knowledge of their profession;
- ♦To create new networking opportunities;
- ♦To verify their professional knowledge; and
- ♦To improve career and advancement opportunities.

The steps to become a Fellow are outlined in the ACMPE Advancement Manual and on the ACMPE portion of the MGMA Web site.

I challenge all the Certified Medical Practice Executives in the State of Colorado to achieve Fellowship status in 2005. I will personally take you to dinner at the MGMA convention in Nashville if you walk across the stage with the 2005 Fellowship class!

My very best wishes to all of you. Please contact me at 303-597-4444 (desk), 303-535-4444 (cell phone) or email me at j.kjack@nwneuro.net if I can assist you in any way!

**Assess Reimbursement
in Your Practice**

Physician practices in Colorado reporting actual reimbursement amounts netted 7.53 percent less on average than those practices reporting contracted reimbursement amounts. Are you getting all that was negotiated? Find out with this pioneering report — the 2004 Payer Performance Survey for Colorado Report.

Done with support from the Colorado MGMA (CMGMA), this report presents critical, detailed information, to help practices assess the reimbursement for office-based evaluation and management (E&M) services in primary care practices within the state.

Find comparative information on physician service reimbursement, revenue and key payer satisfaction indicators, and satisfaction measures by region, experience, payer guidelines and revenue. Use the report to evaluate the consistency of market rates for similar practices, assess the effectiveness of your contract management and payer performance and establish performance targets for your payers.

Order today!

CMGMA members get a special discount on this report!

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Corporate Affiliate Corner

Salary Survey Report

By Jan Krause, Krause & Company, P.C.

In 2004 the CMGMA Employee Salary Survey grew exponentially! The 2003 survey report displayed 2,355 employees from 57 practices while the 2004 report contained 77 practices with 4,104 employees. CMGMA President Jim Knight recognized the need for additional intellect, time and energy to invest into the product, and laid the groundwork for a volunteer survey committee. As the first chair, I'm asking for guidance from the CMGMA board in setting strategic direction for the committee. Some of the key challenges are listed here for your consideration:

1. Collaboration with key outside entities-Colorado Dental Society, Colorado Medical Society
2. Revision and enhancement of current questionnaire and guide-job definitions, ease of use for respondent
3. How to make the salary survey self-funding
4. Managing relationship with national MGMA and with other states
5. Managing the relationships with CMGMA members and non-members

1. Collaboration with key outside entities-for example, Colorado Dental Society, Colorado Medical Society

Endorsement, cost sharing, additional participation and recognition are potential benefits. While broader participation will bring growth and reliability to the survey, the more participants who are able to obtain a free report, the fewer buyers exist.

How can CMGMA initiate these relationships, and what benefits can be attained?

2. Revision and enhancement of current instrument-job definitions, ease of use for respondent

These are good tasks for the committee, and can be accomplished with some time investment. The starting point will be to review comments that were received from participants, and then explore new positions that can be added.

3. How to make the salary survey self funding

Ideally, the survey process could be standardized so that from year to year there would be a template that would minimize volunteer time and provide consistent quality.

▷This year the volunteer-person hours required to produce the report were over 350:

- ◆Jan Krause and Krause & Company staff creating and proofing questionnaire, sending questionnaires, receiving and inputting data, writing programs, editing data, computing statistics and formatting the report
- ◆Mike Rohr and staff making phone calls to members who had not yet responded, and in some cases re-sending questionnaires
- ◆Jim Knight and Mike Rohr proofing the report and creating communication to Members
- ◆Others who supported and promoted the survey

▷Software (SPSS) used to produce the report published this year costs about \$1,000. Last year I was able to download it free for 30 days, and thus avoid any out of pocket expense. SPSS is a good product for data analyses, requires some expertise to use, and is also used by national MGMA.

▷Out of pocket costs this year were:

Printing (350 copies)	\$2,120.60
Temporary employee for one day:	148.00
Miscellaneous mailing costs:	37.10
Total	\$2,305.70

What resources does CMGMA want to commit to the survey, and can it develop into paying for itself?

4. Managing the relationships with CMGMA members and non-members

The original questionnaire distribution list came from the database shared with national MGMA and included MGMA members residing in Colorado as well as CMGMA members. Therefore, some survey participants were not CMGMA members. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter stating that each CMGMA member would receive a free report.

Fourteen participating practices representing 797 employees were not CMGMA members. Of these, four practices indicated an interest in joining CMGMA. Only one practice expressed some annoyance with the report distribution policy, and I ultimately did send them a copy of the report.

5. Managing relationship with national MGMA and with other states

Last year there were 67 write in employed physicians. Knowing that publishing this salary information would potentially compete with the MGMA Physician Compensation and Production Survey, we consulted with Bill Jesse and Dan Stech. They discouraged publishing the information, and we deferred to their opinion and did not publish the physician salaries.

Some job positions overlap with those published in the MGMA Management Compensation Survey.

While CMGMA does not need the approval of MGMA, the salary survey is a factor in the relationship.

There may be opportunities to join other states in conducting surveys.



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President's Column Cont'd

some rough terrain such as a knife edge. We have a solid financial base, strategic initiatives that are looking into improving our professional environment, better and improving relationships with key healthcare stakeholders, a supportive group of corporate affiliates, and a number of energetic members. During the past year I have met a number of members who have voiced support for our direction and have even said they would become more involved.

Our educational objective for this year will be to offer presentations and sessions of fundamental management issues — nuts and bolts, bread and butter topics that will give us a basis for the improvement of medical group management. As our membership grows, I see this objective as a strong attraction to emerging managers and middle level managers.

We will continue to improve our relationships with existing segments of our healthcare community and seek new ones. One specific new relationship that we are working on is with the members of our armed forces. We are also having dialogue with neighboring states about ways and means to help each other.

Our association is maturing, conducting our affairs in a professional manner, and reaching out to all areas of our beautiful state. You may be proud of the members who have volunteered their time and talents to help lead. Many serve without visibility and do not seek that type of attention. But they are there and are the backbone of the success we are experiencing. A continual challenge will be to attract these types of quality people who will step forward into service.

That's about enough of laudable projects and glimpses into the future for one year. It appears like it will be a good one and your help and support is needed and appreciated. Consider our future!

2005 Spring Conference Announcement

The 2005 Spring Conference will be held at the Doubletree Hotel World Arena in Colorado Springs on April 8, 2005. The planning committee has selected an excellent site and has assembled two national leaders in healthcare for educational presentations — Elizabeth Woodcock and Jeff Milburn. We are fortunate to have secured these eminent individuals for our conference.

Elizabeth is a professional speaker, trainer, and author specializing in medical practice management. She is a well known national presenter with focus on operations and revenue cycle management. In addition to her popular weekly email letter "Physician Practice Pearls", she has authored several best selling practice management manuals and textbooks, and published many articles in healthcare management journals.

Jeff is a member of the national MGMA Board of Directors and Chairman of the MGMA Finance and Audit Committee in addition to being a sought after presenter. He has presented financial management topics at the national MGMA Financial Management Conference and has extensive experience and expertise in group practice management.

The program for the conference will focus on fundamental operational topics. These include best practices in telephone management, scheduling, no-shows, billing, collections, benchmarking, and reporting. These subjects will provide valuable education for emerging managers, middle managers and seasoned managers. You will receive a wealth of knowledge and a host of take-aways. We have not forgotten the social networking either. There will be an opening reception on

CMGMA Listserv

All CMGMA members are encouraged to join the CMGMA Listserv. Many of you have already joined and are participating in discussion — our hope is that eventually all CMGMA members will join and this can become a valuable tool to our membership.

What is a listserv?

A listserv is an electronic message board. One member can write an email to the listserv email address and it is distributed to all other members of the listserv.

Why Should I Join?

Members can write questions to the group to get opinions on how to handle situations, request resources, post job opportunities, or share new information. The CMGMA Office uses the listserv to distribute breaking legislative news, conference registration reminders, and other important updates.

How do I Join?

In order to participate on the listserv, you must join the Yahoo group. To do this, simply write an email message to cmgma-subscribe@yahoo.com. The CMGMA Office will approve your request and then you are ready to go. You will receive an email with the address to use for posting messages after you join.

If you have further questions about how the listserv works, please feel free to contact the CMGMA Office at cmgma@conferenceoffice.com

See you online!

Thursday, April 7th from 6-8 p.m. It will be a time for all members (active, associate, student, corporate affiliate) to visit and make new acquaintances.

The Doubletree Hotel World Arena is conveniently located at the southwest corner of I-25 and Circle Drive. It is close to many attractions of the area and has breathtaking mountain views. We encourage you to plan to attend this conference located in a superb setting, gain knowledge you can take and immediately apply to your group, and meet new and old friends and colleagues. Plan to stay a day or two and glean the full value of your educational and professional development.

Don't forget to renew your CMGMA Membership today. And remember...the deadline for you to be included in the 2005 membership directory is January 31.

Committee Reports

Third Party Payer Report By R. Todd Welter

The consensus of the Managed Care Sub-Committee is that the managed care needs of the metro communities are being met by the good works of the Colorado Medical Society. The Managed Care Sub-Committee, therefore, supports those efforts and will assist in any way needed.

The focus of the committee has been to supply assistance and seek out the needs of the smaller markets, Eastern Colorado, Mountain communities and the Western Slope.

I was privileged to go to all three in November. I was in Eads Colorado (Eastern plains) on the 10th, Steamboat on the 11th (Northern mountains) and Montrose (Western slope) on the 15th and 16th.

While you might think these places couldn't be more different, I was and am amazed by their similarities. All are struggling with the additional regulatory burdens of HIPAA, inadequate government sponsored plan reimbursement and, at least the perception of, conscious reimbursement tricks by the commercial payors.

Rapidly increasing co-payments and deductibles are making even insured patients less attractive to physician practices. Patients sign up for a \$2,000.00 deductible plan with the thought that "I won't be sick and I can save some money on the monthly premium..." only to find that they are effectively un-insured for the doctor bills that year. Who is blamed — The doctor's office!

The common thread that ties doctors offices together from the open spaces of the Eastern plains to the seemingly well healed mountain resort communities to the vast vistas of the Western slope is the desire to heal patients first and worry about payment later.

As a well traveled and full time health care business consultant, honored with the Chairmanship of this committee, I humbly suggest that a rising tide lifts all boats. All healthcare professionals need to be paid and they should be paid well for their time, talent, devotion and education. If we all raise the bar a bit and hold patients responsible for

their healthcare insurance decisions (trading high deductibles and co-payments for lower premiums or take home wages) and educate them to understand that they in-turn should hold their insurance company responsible for playing fair we all will be better off. But like many things, we need to do it together!

New Member Report By Dennis Flint

Greetings from the new CMGMA Welcome Wagon. My name is Dennis Flint and I am pleased to accept the position of Membership Director. I currently work for High Country Health Care in Frisco. I grew up in Colorado graduating from Summit County H.S. in (ahem) 1973 and from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1977. In my past lives I've been a fighter pilot, airline pilot, practice management consultant, Director of Education for QuadraMed Corp. and have authored 7 books on different aspects of practice management. While fairly new to CMGMA, I've addressed numerous state MGMA chapters around the country and particularly love the energy within our group. It has been my great honor to work with Jim Knight, Susan Young and the rest of the Executive Committee. A finer, more committed board you will not find.

My goal is to spread the word and augment whatever needs you all have pertaining to increasing quality membership within our fine group. Current projects include accessing "lapsed" members, direct mail pieces extolling the outstanding benefits of membership and potentially partnering with the recently disbanded Wyoming MGMA chapter. While I am available to communicate with any potential members you may steer our way, I can only do this with your help so I encourage all of you to send me your potential members. I'll do the rest. We grow stronger by growing our membership. I look forward to meeting you all at our various get-togethers and extend my open invitation to drop by and say hi if you're up in Summit County. See you on the slopes!