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Association

**MGMA**

Colorado  
A State Affiliate

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*The Official Newsletter of Colorado MGMA*

## Past President's Column By Ellen Boyd Past President

Holidays are behind us and it is now time to plan the new year. With that in mind, please welcome and note the new officers of CMGMA. They welcome all your ideas and help to make this a great year. Call or email them. Their contact information is listed in this newsletter

The committees and board will be meeting in January to plan for the next two years. It is sometimes hard to plan a program two years in advance, when the unknown looms before us. We strive to educate, inform and keep abreast of any upcoming trends, legislation and operational changes. If you have something you wish to know more about or want to share, please let us know. We'll incorporate your ideas and even make some changes to upcoming programs to make known the information you want.

We on the board and the committees of CMGMA can always use your expertise. Please volunteer for a committee, an upcoming event, or just get involved. We get better and better each year due to you. The officers always come back from the national officers meeting with the confirmed knowledge that we are one of the premier states with all that we do and provide to our membership. You make it better by your attendance and involvement.

We at CMGMA wish to thank all of you, the membership, for your continued involvement and participation. Please return your membership dues for 2006 soon, if you've not done so already. Thanks for a great 2005, and we look forward to 2006.

## President's Column By Susan Young President

As I bid a farewell to 2005 and I look forward to a new year filled with adventures and challenges, I would like to take the opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your dedication and support to a truly wonderful organization.

CMGMA had a very successful year both professionally and financially. Each of our Committees has allowed CMGMA to continue to grow and change with both our profession and a very complex healthcare system. In collaboration with our goals, the Board and I are appointing a Finance Committee. As CMGMA continues to maintain a sizable treasury, the Board and I feel it is important for the organization to have individuals with expertise in this area to advise the organization on how to manage and invest the funds. Jeff Milburn is an individual who has this expertise and he has graciously agreed to chair the new committee.

As many of you know, the Board and Membership voted to donate \$10,000 the MSMA Foundation to help the Katrina Hurricane Victims. This tremendous act of generosity is something we should all be very proud of. I recently received a very warm and sincere thank you from William Roberts, the Secretary and Treasurer for the MSMA Foundation, which is a special non-profit foundation of the Mississippi State Medical Association. In closing, I would like to share a portion of the letter with you and thank you all again for helping CMGMA be an organization with a true heart and soul.

"On behalf of the Foundation's Board of Directors, I want to thank you for your very generous gift to help physicians on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in rebuilding their medical practices that were affected by Hurricane Katrina. The recovery process will be long, arduous and expensive, but your contribution to support the hundreds of physicians and their families coping with that struggle will be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much for your consideration and compassion".

**Don't forget to renew your CMGMA Membership today. And remember...the deadline for you to be included in the 2006 membership directory is January 31.**

## 2006 Conference Schedule at a Glance

**Spring Conference  
April 21, 2006**  
Doubletree Hotel  
Colorado Springs, CO

**Fall Conference  
September 29, 2006**  
Sheraton Denver West  
Lakewood, CO

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

For 50 years, ACMPE has served as the standard-setting and certification body of the MGMA. Board certification and fellowship through ACPME are nationally respected professional designations for medical practice management.

In recognition of 50 years of certification, ACMPE is promoting advancement to Fellowship. During this special anniversary year, ACMPE's goal is to recognize 50 Fellows in the 2006 ACMPE Fellows class at the MGMA 2006 Annual Conference in Las Vegas. To achieve this goal we need your help.

In support of ACMPE's goal, Colorado MGMA is offering a one time special cash bonus of \$200 to all Colorado MGMA members who receive Fellowship in Las Vegas. You must attend the Fellowship ceremony in Las Vegas and be a 2006 member of our Colorado MGMA to receive the check for \$200. You may spend the money however you choose.

If you are a certified member, CMPE, or close to that designation, there is ample time to advance to fellow prior to October 2006. Outline submission is May 6, 2006 and final manuscript(s) submission is August 25, 2006. This is a great opportunity to advance to Fellow and receive \$200.

My last newsletter article to you was written in anticipation of the October MGMA national conference in Nashville. I was fortunate to attend the recognition ceremony of 36 new Fellows for the class of 2005. Unfortunately, Colorado was not represented in the class of 2005.

ACMPE numbers have increased and as of November 1, 2005, are listed as follows: (Numbers include 310 students and 50 unformed services members).

3,173 Nominees; 1,570 Certified Members; and 464 Fellows

The following board certification exams are scheduled at the MGMA office in Englewood CO:

- February 18, 2006: Registration deadline is February 3, 2006
- May 20, 2006: Registration deadline is April 28, 2006
- August 5, 2006: Registration deadline is July 14, 2006

Professional paper tutorials are offered at the following conferences:

- March 5, 2006: MGMA Financial Management conference in San Diego
- May 7, 2006: MGMA Academic Practice Assembly in Chicago

For more information:

- Call the ACMPE Certification Help Desk at 877-275-6462, ext 869
- Go to [www.mgma.com/acmpe](http://www.mgma.com/acmpe)

If I can assist you in any way please contact me at [j.kjack@nwneuro.net](mailto:j.kjack@nwneuro.net), or 303-597-4444.

**Legislative Update**

By Gina Johnson

**Medicare Physician Payment Cut**

From the MGMA Washington Office

The final determination of the Medicare physician payment for 2006 is now in the hands of a conference committee. The conference report will put a freeze to the 4.4% cut. This report passed the House as well as the Senate; however in the Senate a procedural vote removed several sections of the bill before final passage. Therefore the report was returned to the House for approval. Unfortunately the House was not able to consider the report before they adjourned on December 22nd. Therefore it will not be considered by the House until after the members return to Washington on January 31, 2006.

Because Congress will not be back in session until late January, the original 2006 fee schedule will go into effect, containing the 4.4% cut, as planned. If the conference report is passed by the House and signed by the President, services performed and submitted for payment as of January 1, 2006 up until the freeze takes place will be paid on the original 2006 reimbursement rate. The freeze will then be retro-active to January 1, 2006.

**Physicians Send Strong Message at DOI Hearing on United Health Group Acquisition OF PacifiCare From the Colorado Medical Society**

Colorado Insurance commissioner David Rivera conducted a hearing on November 21, 2005 concerning United Health Group's acquisition of PacifiCare. The Commissioner received over 130 written statements and heard 6 hours of testimony from over 38 physicians and physician advocates stating their concerns and opposition to the proposed acquisition. Only three public witnesses voiced support of the acquisition.

Physicians and office administrators packed the room to testify in opposition or to ask for conditions to be placed on the proposed acquisition of PacifiCare by United Health. The Commissioner heard from physicians and their representatives about "take it or leave it" contracts, the inability to negotiate fair contracts, unfair business practices currently taking place by both United and PacifiCare, and concerns about patient care and access.

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## Committee Reports

### Third Party Payer Committee Update

By R. Todd Welter

What makes some practice flourish while others fail? Those that fail seem to do so in the most painful sputter that it hurts to watch.

While there is a lot of possible reasons, Practice Profitability is a result of (1) Patient volume, (2) Overhead, (3) Services (Coding and the associated RVU amount), (4) Reimbursement per code and (5) Payer mix!

A practice has a limited ability to change number 1 and 2 (believe it or not you can only see so many patients and the lights must come on). It is items 3, 4 and 5 where I believe a practice has the most ability to control its destiny. I continue to be amazed at how billing and coding mistakes cause un-intentioned problems for reimbursement. I not only believe it, I can prove it, that effective/efficient and professional contracting can add value to almost any practice. Good contracting combined with active management of a practice's payer mix can multiply that value.

The key is to NOT "boil the ocean." The quest for profitability should be done in stages, with a plan. The efficient use of overhead dollars, proper and complete coding, managing your managed care relationships and monitoring and actively managing your payer mix will make your practice more profitable! I guarantee it!!

### Salary Survey Report

By Jan Krause

A new valuable, benchmarking resource for physicians, administrators and managers will be created for Colorado medical practices in 2006!

The Colorado Medical Group Management Association (CMGMA), the Colorado Medical Society (CMS), and the Denver Medical Society (DMS) are collaborating to conduct the first physician and staff salary survey for Colorado. The survey will be conducted by Krause & Company, PC, a Denver CPA firm that has conducted the CMGMA staff salary survey over the past four years.

We will need your help to bring you this key benefit of membership. This survey is designed specifically for Colorado medical and dental practices and your participation will be the key to its success. Our goal is to garner data from all areas of Colorado for the report.

Watch for your questionnaire in mid-February!

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## Sharpen The Saw

By J. Ronald Devries  
Member At Large

As member-at-"medium", it is my duty to facilitate communication between the membership of this organization and the Board of Directors. I make a pledge to do my best in this capacity for each of you as an individual and for all of us as medical professionals.

Now, let me explain my would-be type-o above. Some of you who know me have seen a dramatic change in my appearance as I have lost 60 pounds this year. I jokingly tell people that I am 75% of the man I used to be, but it is true. I have been a member of Weight Watchers® since January 2005 and took 6 ½ months to reach my goal weight which I have maintained since.

My weight had been creeping up on me for years since I graduated from college in 1992. It was jumpstarted by a rapid gain of 50 pounds that first year out of school. I yo-yo'd for years around 210 pounds, losing this year, gaining it back the next with a few more, until finally I reached the 250 pound mark. Actually, I weighed more than 250 pounds, I just could not bring myself to move that bottom block on the scale up one more notch. In addition to the excess weight (or really caused by it) I was experiencing a rise in my blood pressure, an increase in frequency of incidents of gout and headaches, and had lived with/struggled with high cholesterol for years. My physician threatened me with no less than three pills a day for the rest of my life if things did not change.

That was it. There was no way I would be labeled with the diagnosis of Hypertension. I did not want to pay for the medication regimen that might likely never end. I was tired of the pain associated with gout (which is excruciating). I was tired of being tired all the time. So, I made the decision to get to Weight Watchers®. I went on the web, found the meeting date and location in Estes Park, and got myself there on time and ready to go. But, they were closed because the leader was unable to make it. Undeterred, I returned the next week and began my journey.

It was hard, no doubt about it. But, I knew I simply had to do it if I was going to save my money and my life. The following are the concrete results of the life changing year I have completed:

Measure	1/6/2005	8/22/2005
Weight	252#	190#
Appropriate Range	150-180	

Blood Pressure	146/98	112/76
Appropriate Range	<130/85	

	12/1/2004	10/15/2005
Cholesterol	305	172
Appropriate Range	<200	
HDL	28	35
Appropriate Range	>50	
LDL	218.8	108.8
Appropriate Range	<100	
Tryglycerides	291	141
Appropriate Range	<150	
Chol/HDL Ratio (Coronary Risk Ratio)	10.9	4.9
Appropriate Range	<4.0	

I often talked at my WW group about the cognitive dissonance I experienced when I looked in the mirror at 250+ pounds. In my mind, I was still the svelt 165 pound, 22 year old college grad, but the reality in the mirror did not reflect that mental picture at all.

Now I feel like myself again. I have much more energy, I sleep better, I eat better, and most importantly I am living better. I accomplish so much more than before. I have a renewed confidence that is evident in everything I do.

So, as your member-at-medium, here is my challenge to you. What is it in your life, work, or practice that you would really like to change? What form of "dis-ease" are you suffering with? Figure out what kinds of changes you need to make your life better, easier, or happier. It can be something personal, like losing some weight or increasing your fitness level. It can be creating a better culture in your workplace by making changes in the way you do things or the people you are doing them with. Whatever it is, make a plan, Sharpen your Saw, and get to work. You can do anything.

### Legislative Update

*Continued from page 2*

Mr. Rivera is legally required to approve or disapprove the recommendation. He also has the option to follow the lead of insurance commissioners in California and Georgia by approving the merger with conditions. The Commissioner has 30 days to make a decision regarding the proposed acquisition.

### Incentives To Find Underpayments

During the November 18, 2005 special Open Door Forum on the recovery audit

contract (RAC) demonstration project, CMS official Jerry Walker said CMS is exploring ways to give recovery auditors financial incentives for identifying underpayments. The auditors receive a fee based on the

percentage of overpayments they recover, but there is currently no financial incentive for finding underpayments. The RAC initiative is a three-year long demonstration project that began earlier this year in California, Florida and New York for physicians as well as hospitals.

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## Position of Trust

### Our Culture and Our Responsibility in Our "Position of Trust"

By Mike Bergerson  
President Elect

A common thread in a medical group's strength and long-term success is that a healthy culture starts at the top. This is true for any medical group regardless of how long it has been in operation. What is this nebulous theory of culture? I would propose organizational culture to be defined as the melding of multiple individual personalities and agendas, interacting on a constant basis, combined with the medical group's accepted and approved behaviors and defined boundaries.

A healthy culture will make or break a group. All groups will have varied levels of internal and external stress and pressure at different times. (Trust me. We just installed an EMR.) We've all known the practice that is constantly on the verge of a divorce because of dysfunction and drama. The reasons for the dysfunction and drama are varied but the reasons yield the same result. Despite the group's financial performance, and the ultimate needs of the patients, divisions develop and many of these practices do not survive. They have lost their focus. They have weak cultures. They implode. They are their own worst enemy.

Because of our professional positions, physicians and administrators are automatically placed in a "position of trust" in our organizations. Our leadership and management style and our emotional state are closely watched and emulated by our staff. Practice administrators are critical to a strong and healthy medical group culture. It's difficult to always remain positive and professional, but we must do it. Because of our position of trust, our positive or negative reactions and comments are amplified in the group. Our failure to set clear expectations, to set approved behaviors, and to set clear boundaries is approval for some to go down the wrong path. Practice administrators and our physician leaders must walk the walk.

As we enter 2006 many of us are completing our strategic planning sessions. Take this opportunity to evaluate the health of your practice's culture with your physicians. What does the leadership of your group value in your current culture? What does your group want to improve in your current culture? What expectations, approved behaviors, and boundaries does the group want to establish or

reinforce? Will the physician leaders walk the walk? And, if you have not discussed it, define your "core purpose" as the foundation for your medical practice's culture.

External issues are going to continue to impact our medical groups like a daily meteor shower. Constant change and the stress it causes are here to stay. Don't be your own worst enemy. Focus on strengthening your group's culture and strengthening your group's core purpose. It will repel the meteor impacts and protect the group from slowly disintegrating. It is our "position of trust" as professional medical group administrators to lead our groups in partnership with our physicians. In difficult situations we all should tap into the experienced network of Colorado MGMA members for help and advice. I certainly do. The long-term strength of each of our medical groups and the health of our practice cultures truly depends on it.

### New Member Highlight

By Dennis Flint  
Membership Committee



Shari Frye: Shari joins CMGMA as the Clinical and Nursing Director, Colorado Mountain Medical, Vail West location. Like our last issue's new member spotlight, Shari worked her way up through the ranks with Colorado Mountain Medical having been with the group since 1991. That's some longevity! Although she admits to "not being an IT person," she has become involved with the group's order entry and EMR processes and finds that challenge very rewarding. After talking with another CMGMA member, she was convinced to join CMGMA for the networking and thinks our Association is "a great place to learn new things." She has two daughters and an architect husband and has lived in Vail since 1989. Please welcome Shari to our CMGMA family.