

2019 House of Delegates

CMA Tackles 21st Century Health Care Dilemmas including A.I., Homelessness, Cannabis and Adverse Childhood Experiences

The California Medical Association (CMA) recently convened its 148th annual House of Delegates (HOD) meeting in Anaheim.

Over 500 California physicians debated and outlined a policy agenda on major issues that have been determined to be the most important issues affecting members, the association and the practice of medicine.

The association also installed its new officers, including new CMA President Peter N. Bretan, Jr., M.D., a urologist and transplant surgeon who gave up his Bay Area practice to serve patients at a safety net hospital in Watsonville.

The major issues the delegates focused on this year were:

- ✦ **Augmented Intelligence (A.I.):** The delegates explored pragmatic solutions that address medical decision-making, new liabilities and privacy concerns inherent with augmented and artificial intelligence in health care, with a focus on keeping physicians at the center of health care delivery.
- ✦ **Homelessness:** Physicians witness the homelessness crisis in emergency rooms, clinics and on the streets of our communities. The delegates declared that stable and affordable housing is an essential community priority and an important social determinant of health. They also discussed evidence-based solutions that address the health care and social needs of those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- ✦ **Cannabis:** The delegates weighed in on pressing issues, including health impacts associated with cannabis use, public health protections, federal legalization, data and surveillance efforts, high-quality research, marketing and advertising practices, cannabis equity programs and more.
- ✦ **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE):** Recognizing that ACEs have a strong and life-long correlation to numerous health, social and behavioral problems, the delegates learned more about data collection, research and incorporating ACE screening practices into routine care.

The final actions of the House of Delegates, including newly established policies, are now posted at cmadocs.org/hod.

Elections

Watsonville Urologist and Transplant Surgeon Installed as CMA President

Peter N. Bretan, Jr., M.D., a urologist and kidney transplant surgeon who gave up his Bay Area practice to serve patients at a safety net hospital in Watsonville., was elected as the 152nd president of the California Medical Association. Dr. Bretan is the first Filipino-American physician to serve as president.

“The most important goal, not just in this year of my presidency, but always, is to take back our profession by enabling physicians to lead the struggle to protect, expand and make universal access to health care for all of our patients in California,” said Dr. Bretan. “If we are successful in this state, it will lead the way for sustainable universal health care for all of America.”

Dr. Bretan is the founder and CEO of LifePlant International, a charitable organization that furnishes lifesaving transplants in developing countries, for which he was recognized by the American Medical Association with the Benjamin Rush Award for Citizenship and Community Service. Dr. Bretan has also provided care around the world on medical missions.

“I grew up as a child farm laborer, and I know what it is to be without adequate health care. My greatest motivation is in service to give back to society for my good fortune,” said Dr. Bretan.

After years of practice in Marin and Sonoma counties, Dr. Bretan now provides urologic and laparoscopic surgical care at a safety net hospital in Santa Cruz County. Most of his patients speak no English and have no medical insurance.

“My presidency will be dedicated to giving these patients, and the millions of hard-working Californians like them, a voice,” said Dr. Bretan. “We have an incredible opportunity to boldly change the way health care is delivered. We know that to best serve patients, health care must be physician-led.”

Dr. Bretan has served as a CMA trustee and delegate, and is a three-time county medical society president. He is the current president of the California Urological Association and serves as an adjunct clinical professor at Touro University, where he has taught classes in health care policy for the past 16 years.

Dr. Bretan earned his B.S. degree in physiology from UC Berkeley and his medical degree from UC San Francisco, where he completed residencies in general surgery and urology, as well as a fellowship in radiology. He also completed a fellowship at The Cleveland Clinic Foundation in transplantation and renovascular surgery. Dr. Bretan is a member of the San Francisco Marin Medical Society and the Mendocino-Lake County Medical Society.

Sacramento Pain Specialist Named CMA President-Elect

Sacramento pain specialist Lee T. Snook, Jr., M.D., was named president-elect of CMA. He will serve on the Executive Committee as president-elect for one year. Dr. Snook will be installed as president following next year’s House of Delegates.

A CMA member since 1985, Dr. Snook has served as speaker and vice speaker of the CMA House of Delegates. He has also served as chair of the CMA Worker's Compensation Technical Advisory Committee for the past eight years and as a member of CMA's Board of Trustees for the past 10 years. Dr. Snook is a member of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society.

Dr. Snook is an outspoken advocate for physician wellness and was an advocate for approaches to preventing physician burnout long before it became a popular thing to talk about. He has spent the past 25 years working to develop policies and programs that have achieved positive results for the health and wellness of all physicians and for the practice of medicine.

Dr. Snook is a medical director, president and founder of the Metropolitan Pain Management Consultants, Inc., in Sacramento. He is board-certified in anesthesiology, internal medicine, addiction medicine and pain medicine. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Dr. Snook is also a certified medical review officer and a qualified medical evaluator.

Dr. Snook graduated from the University of Nevada School of Medicine in Reno, NV. He did his internal medicine and anesthesiology residencies at the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics in Madison, WI.

He is an American Medical Association delegate for the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians and an alternate delegate for the California Society of Anesthesiologists. He is also a board member at California Public Protection and Physician Health, Inc.

Awards and Honors

San Bernardino Anesthesiologist Receives CMA Speaker's Award

San Bernardino anesthesiologist Thelma Z. Korpman, M.D., received the 2019 Gary Krieger Speaker's Recognition Award. The recipient of this award is hand-selected by the Speaker of the House for remarkable contributions to CMA and its House of Delegates.

"The recipient of this year's Krieger Award is a woman whose dedication and service has been nothing short of incredible and inspirational," said Speaker Lee T. Snook, Jr., M.D. "A true role model and prolific leader she has contributed to organized medicine since she started practicing anesthesia in 1977. As a member of her beloved San Bernardino County Medical Society (SBCMS), she has led the way, over and over again."

Dr. Korpman has been a member of CMA since 1978 and of SBCMS since 1977. She has been a member of the House of Delegates for 11 years. She has served as Chair of the District 2 Delegation to the CMA and is the current Chair of the HOD Rules Committee.

The full 2019-2020 CMA Executive Committee includes:

- + **President:** [Peter N. Bretan, Jr., M.D.](#), Watsonville
- + **President-Elect:** [Lee T. Snook, Jr., M.D.](#), Sacramento
- + **Chair of the Board:** [Robert E. Wailes, M.D.](#), Oceanside/Encinitas
- + **Vice-Chair of the Board:** [Shannon L. Udovic-Constant, M.D.](#), San Francisco
- + **Speaker of the House:** [Tanya W. Spirtos, M.D.](#), Redwood City
- + **Vice-Speaker of the House:** [Jack Chou, M.D.](#), Baldwin Park
- + **Immediate Past President:** [David H. Aizuss, M.D.](#), Los Angeles

Eureka Psychiatrist Honored with CMA's Prestigious Plessner Award

Eureka psychiatrist Robert Soper, M.D., received CMA's most prestigious award, the Frederick K.M. Plessner Memorial Award. The award honors a California physician who best exemplifies the ethics and practice of a rural country practitioner.

For the past 30 years, Dr. Soper has been practicing psychiatry in rural Humboldt and Del Norte counties, where there are very few psychiatrists. He would regularly drive 90 minutes over curvy winding roads to provide psychiatric services in Del Norte county, where there were no other practicing psychiatrists.

"As a physician who needs to refer some difficult psychiatric patients, there wasn't a single, solitary time, that he told me I cannot see a patient," said Caroline Connor, M.D. "He was open, he always called me back if he didn't answer immediately, and he always accepted everyone. For family physicians on the firing line, that was unbelievably comforting."

Dr. Soper has an impeccable reputation for providing first-rate, and sometimes life changing, care for many of Humboldt and Del Norte counties' most mentally ill clients. He will see patients regardless of their insurance, including Medi-Cal and Medicare.

"I keep reminding myself that I am very lucky to do this," said Dr. Soper. "People keep inviting me into their very personal lives. And when you watch people get better, it's very gratifying."

For 15 years, Dr. Soper has also served as chair of his local physician well-being committee, which aids physicians who may have health problems that could impair their ability to practice medicine.

"His commitment to keep his practice open shows a true dedication to serving the more complex psychiatric patients in the community who would otherwise have to travel out of the area for treatment," said Corinne Frugoni, M.D., a family physician in Arcata who has worked with Dr. Soper on the local physician well-being committee.

Dr. Soper has been a member of CMA and Humboldt-Del Norte County Medical Society since 1991.

San Diego Physician Receives CMA's Physician Health and Well-Being Award

San Diego family medicine physician David Bazzo, M.D., was awarded the 2019 Gary S. Nye Award for Physician Health and Well-Being. This annual award honors a CMA member who has made significant contributions toward improving physician health and wellness.

Dr. Bazzo is honored with this award for his commitment to the Physician Assessment and Clinical Education (PACE) program at UC San Diego. Since 1996, the PACE program has promoted a culture of ongoing quality improvement and professional development in the medical field. The mission of the PACE program is to better the quality of health care throughout the nation by offering assessment and remediation services to medical professionals. This nationally recognized program is a model for how practicing physicians can get assessment, education and assistance.

For the last 20 years, Dr. Bazzo has helped physicians who enter the PACE program. Through his involvement with organized medicine, he has worked to study risk factors and develop interventions to benefit physicians and help them overcome burnout and remediation. As it currently exists, the PACE program intervenes at the end of a physician's disciplinary process, but Dr. Bazzo understands that interventions earlier in the process might help prevent remediation and burnout in the first place and is actively developing ways to promote early intervention practices.

In addition to his commitment to physician wellness, Dr. Bazzo is well decorated and recognized for his commitment to the San Diego community. Dr. Bazzo is the immediate past-president and a current member of the San Diego County Medical Society; he was president of the San Diego Academy of Family Physicians in 2005 and currently serves as president-elect of the California Academy of Family Physicians. He serves as Head Team Physician for the San Diego Seals (professional indoor lacrosse) and is team physician or consulting physician for numerous other sports teams in the San Diego area including professional level teams like the San Diego Chargers and the San Diego Sockers (professional indoor soccer) and other Olympic, collegiate, and high school level teams. His peers voted him one of San Diego's "Top Doctors" for the last 14 years in family medicine and/or sports medicine.

Dr. Bazzo has been a member of the California Medical Association since 1990. He has served on CMA's Council for Ethical, Legal and Judicial Affairs and serves in CMA's House of Delegates representing District 1.

CMA Recognizes Two Recipients with Compassionate Service Award

This year, CMA named two recipients deserving of the Compassionate Service Award, created in 2015 to honor CMA member physicians who best illustrate the association's commitment to community and charity care.

The first recipient is family medicine physician Melissa Bishop, M.D. Dr. Bishop is a family medicine physician who has worked with medically underserved patients since completing her residency in 1997. For 17 years, she worked with Piedmont Health Services (PHS), a group of federally qualified health centers in central North Carolina. While

at PHS, she cared for a rural, low-income population, many of whom were recent immigrants from Latin America. In addition to patient care, she wrote a weekly "Ask the Doctor" column for the Spanish language newspaper, served on the board of the North Carolina Community Health Center Association and conducted numerous quality improvement initiatives.

In 2015, she relocated to Escondido and joined Neighborhood Healthcare (NHC), another federally qualified health center providing care for low-income, medically and socially complex patients in San Diego and Riverside counties. NHC is frequently spotlighted as an organization that has achieved excellent quality outcomes despite the challenges of caring for patients with limited resources.

Dr. Bishop currently serves as NHC's Medical Director of Quality and she has worked tirelessly to make it easier to take good care of patients by spearheading numerous quality improvement projects including provider education, system redesign and team-based care.

Dr. Bishop has provided care to asylum seekers at the various shelters in San Diego and Tijuana since the arrival of the migrant caravan last fall. Since November 2018 she has screened over 500 people in migrant shelters. In addition, she has volunteered as a medical provider with the Refugee Health Alliance at several migrant shelters located in Tijuana.

The award's second recipient was Project K.I.N.D. (Kids in Need of Doctors). Project K.I.N.D. has been addressing the acute health care needs of low-income, immigrant, single-parent and Spanish-speaking families in Riverside County for the last 25 years.

Riverside County Medical Association started Project K.I.N.D. to address the acute health care needs of elementary, middle and high school age children who would otherwise "fall through the cracks" of the health care system. Today, Project K.I.N.D. works with school districts throughout Riverside County to screen low income students for health needs. These children are then referred to Project K.I.N.D. to treat acute health care needs through a network of over 140 volunteer physicians, dentists and optometrists. All Project K.I.N.D. services offered by the treating providers are at no cost to the families.

Project K.I.N.D. is 100% grant funded and currently serves the Alvord, Beaumont, Corona-Norco, Moreno Valley and Riverside school districts. These five districts represent 167 schools and 158,000+ students.

Accepting the award was Project K.I.N.D. Medical Director Harold Jackson, M.D.

Reliving House of Delegates 2019

Couldn't get enough of HOD? Check out our [Flickr](#) page for photos of HOD 2019 and relive all the glory and memories! [Flickr.com/californiamedicalassociation](https://www.flickr.com/photos/californiamedicalassociation/)

Sidebar: CALPAC Receives Strong Support

The CMA Political Action Committee (CALPAC) raised over \$170,000 during CMA's annual House of Delegates meeting. Donations to CALPAC are used to support candidates for office who share medicine's priorities.

Join CALPAC Today!

Please join your colleagues in supporting CALPAC and help strengthen our political voice. Please visit **calpac.org/donate** to contribute to CALPAC. Different levels of support are available along with monthly options that make supporting the House of Medicine easier than ever.

To mail a check, please make payable to CALPAC and send to: CALPAC, 1201 K Street, Ste 800, Sacramento, CA 95814.

For more information about CALPAC, visit calpac.org.

Sidebar: Staying Involved

Already have ideas for next year's House of Delegates or want to continue the fight to support CMA? Even though HOD might be over, there are plenty of ways to stay involved and dedicated to CMA.

[Grassroots Action Center](#)

CMA boasts some of the best advocates and lawyers in the capital - but YOU are the most powerful advocate.

As someone who serves on the front lines of health care delivery, elected officials and policymakers need to hear your voice to make informed policy, legislation and regulations. Visit **cmadocs.org/grassroots** to see how you can get involved.

[Submit a Resolution](#)

CMA is proud of its resolutions process because it preserves the value of each member's perspectives and experiences, and empowers physicians to shape the ever-changing health care landscape and ensure that CMA is speaking with its members' voices in its advocacy.

From internal governance to ambitious statewide advocacy, every policy is crafted, reviewed and approved by the dedicated team of physician leaders that make up CMA's organizational structure. Visit **cmadocs.org/resolutions** to submit a resolution.

[Nominate Yourself or a Colleague](#)

Members of CMA councils and subcommittees play crucial roles in shaping health care policy. You can find out more about available opportunities and awards at [**cmadocs.org/nominations**](https://cmadocs.org/nominations).