

Report #19, MEDPAC Report

TO: Minnesota Medical Association House of Delegates
Convening September 17, 2008

The current officers of the MEDPAC Board of Directors are T. Michael Tedford, M.D., (chair) and Peter J. Boosalis, M.D. (secretary/treasurer). In addition to the two officers, the current members of the MEDPAC Board of Directors are Peter C. Amadio, M.D.; Joel W. Arney, M.D.; Blanton Bessinger, M.D.; Kenneth W. Crabb, M.D.; Laura Drill-Mellum, M.D.; Cindy Firkins-Smith, M.D.; Gary D. Hanovich, M.D.; Pramod Kelkar, M.D.; Peter A. Larsen, M.D.; Patricia J. Lindholm, M.D.; Robert McKlveen, M.D.; Jason Meyers (MSS); Will Nicholson, M.D.; Fred Nobrega, M.D.; Joel Oberstar, M.D.; James Rohde, M.D.; Paul Sanford, M.D.; Janette H. Strathy, M.D.; Charles G. Terzian, M.D.; Brian Thomas (MSS); Scott A. Uttley, M.D.; and John M. Van Etta, M.D.

MEDPAC is the political arm of the Minnesota Medical Association. It is a voluntary political action committee supported by physician members and their spouses. MEDPAC is one of the largest health care political action committees in the state, and the political power it provides helps promote the MMA's legislative agenda. Based on voting records and interviews with candidates, MEDPAC contributes to those candidates for state office who are most supportive of MMA's legislative issues.

The MEDPAC Board has met four times since the September 2007 Annual MEDPAC Board Meeting, which is held each year in conjunction with the MMA House of Delegates meeting. At the 2007 MEDPAC Annual Meeting the bylaws of MEDPAC were amended to change the composition of the MEDPAC Board of Directors. The new composition is intended to maintain a geographic representation of the Board, with at least two directors from each of the eight congressional districts. It is also designed to encourage medical student and resident representation. Of the 12 at-large seats on the Board, up to two will be filled by medical students recommended by the MMA Medical Student Section and up to two will include residents or fellows recommended by the MMA Resident and Fellow Section.

The total MEDPAC membership in 2007 was 379, down from 403 members in 2006.

Total contributions made to MEDPAC during our membership year (from the 2006s MMA Annual Meeting to the 2007 Annual Meeting) were \$68,080, a drop from \$83,650 in 2006, but a slight increase from \$64,625.35 in 2005. Approximately a third of this money was transmitted to AMPAC for its membership dues. For more detailed information on MEDPAC's 2007 financial activity, please see the *2007 MEDPAC Annual Report*.

These membership and dollar amounts are very disappointing. The MEDPAC Board approved a budget for 2008 based on 600 members and raising \$91,250. The 2007 numbers were significantly below those goals. As we enter the fourth quarter of our 2008 MEDPAC membership year, we continue to run behind our budget numbers. As of August 15, 2008, we had 268 MEDPAC members and have raised \$58,190.

The MEDPAC Board has devoted a number of its meetings to discussions on how to increase our membership numbers and the amount of money we have for political action. At the January

meeting, Board members reviewed a newly developed Board Member Handbook that lays out the responsibilities, expectations, and tools for a successful board member.

At the March meeting, the Board again discussed ways to engage MMA members in MEDPAC, focusing on MMA leaders. Solicitations were sent to all MMA committee members encouraging them to support the political efforts of organized medicine by joining MEDPAC. It was also proposed, and later approved by the MMA Board, for MEDPAC to make a presentation to all MMA committees on the importance of joining MEDPAC.

At the June meeting, the two major candidates for the 3rd Congressional District were invited to interview with the MEDPAC Board. Republican candidate Erik Paulsen and DFL candidate Ashwin Madia both attended the meeting and were screened by the Board. Following a discussion of the issues that are important to organized medicine, the MEDPAC Board recommended that AMPAC support Paulsen. At that same meeting, the MEDPAC Board recommended that AMPAC support Dr. Brian Davis (R-Rochester), in the primary election for the 1st Congressional District. Dr. Davis is an MMA and AMA member. A final recommendation for the general election will be discussed at our meeting on September 19. The other Congressional recommendations include support for the incumbents in House Districts 4 (Betty McCollum-D), 5 (Keith Ellison-D), 7 (Collin Peterson-D), and 8 (Jim Oberstar-D), and support for U.S. Senator Norm Coleman (R).

Also at the June meeting, the MEDPAC Board discussed AMPAC's recent decision to increase their basic dues from \$50 to \$100. Since MEDPAC acts as a collecting agent for AMPAC, this decision has a direct affect on MEDPAC. The AMPAC increase becomes effective for the 2009 dues year, which starts for us at the 2008 MMA House of Delegates. The MEDPAC Board discussed the pros and cons of MEDPAC continuing as a collecting agent for AMPAC. The arguments in favor of continuing the relationship all related to a desire to maintain a unified solicitation effort and avoid competing for members. The arguments against continuing the relationship include the increased administrative costs to MEDPAC because of federal requirements to transmit AMPAC's portion of each contribution more frequently and the need to increase MEDPAC dues to cover the AMPAC increase. After a thorough discussion, the MEDPAC Board voted to discontinue the collecting agent agreement. Starting September 18, 2008, all MEDPAC dues will remain with MEDPAC, and AMPAC will begin soliciting AMPAC contributions separately.

The next meeting of the MEDPAC Board of Directors is scheduled for August 28. At that meeting, the Board will begin reviewing the 14 open seats in the House of Representatives and the two open seats in the Senate (special elections) and make endorsement decisions. The Board will complete that work at its Annual Meeting on September 18. In all, 134 state House seats and two state Senate seats are up for election this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to impress upon each of you the importance of all physicians and their spouses becoming contributing members of MEDPAC. It is a fact that political support to candidates is important and essential to building relationships with legislators and promoting the MMA's legislative agenda. It is important that each of you contribute to MEDPAC.

It is especially critical that the leaders of the MMA be members of MEDPAC. As a Delegate or Alternate to the MMA's House of Delegates, as members of the MMA Board of Trustees, or as an MMA officer, you are a leader in our organization. As such, you have a responsibility to join MEDPAC and support our political activities. In order to be successful at the legislature, we need to be successful politically.

You can join MEDPAC by sending a personal contribution to MEDPAC, P.O. Box 18655, Minneapolis, MN 55418. Contribution levels are \$150, \$250, \$500, or \$1,000. Physician spouses can join for \$100, and medical students and residents can join for \$25. You can make a contribution to MEDPAC by submitting your personal check or by using your Visa, Mastercard, or Discover card. Contributions will be accepted at the House of Delegates meeting as well.

I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to MEDPAC, and especially the MEDPAC Board of Directors for their willingness to serve this past year. I also want to thank the MEDPAC staff, Andrea Munsey, Sara Noznesky, and Dave Renner for their support and outstanding political work throughout the year.

T. Michael Tedford, M.D.
Chair, MEDPAC Board of Directors