



GAMA

GREATER ALBUQUERQUE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION | FOUNDED 1893

GAMA Reports

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Message from the Executive Director

Fall is definitely in the air with the aroma of chili roasting along with the scenic beauty of balloons and autumn colors. It also announces that we are in the last quarter of the year already, and GAMA is already busy planning for 2020.

The 54th session of the New Mexico legislature commences Tuesday, January 21 and ends Thursday, February 20. GAMA leadership is monitoring any proposed legislation that may affect the healthcare community and our membership. Since this is a short 30-day session focused on the budget, we may not see the large number of healthcare bills we do in a 60-day session but will keep you apprised.

GAMA's annual meeting has been moved to April with the intent that milder weather and more daylight can increase attendance. We are planning already and have some exciting new ideas for our annual membership meeting. Mark you calendars for Wednesday, April 22, 2020!



UNRAVELING NEW MEXICO'S COGNITIVE DECLINE

Today, 5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, including an estimated 200,000 under the age of 65. In our own state, **41,000 New Mexicans** live with Alzheimer's and are cared for by 107,000 unpaid caregivers, many of whom are members of their own families.

What is dementia?

How can we recognize it?

What should we do about it?

How can we avoid it? These are very important questions, with complex answers. We will explore this critical challenge to our health by defining dementia and its symptoms, understanding methods of diagnosis, exploring the relationship with aging and health, determining causes and treatments, and finally, describing action we can take to prevent dementia.

In the presentation, we learn about the Alzheimer's disease research process: observations, patterns, theories, experiments and prediction. We briefly discuss molecular, cellular, animal and human studies. We talk about typical research study participation, and barriers to Alzheimer's research. Finally, we discuss questions to ask when evaluating news reports about Alzheimer's disease discoveries, closing with local and national resources for further education.

Presented by



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Dr. Janice Knoefel
Neurology Specialist



Anderson Riddle, BS, CRC
Study Coordinator,
Albuquerque Neuroscience, Inc.



Tim Sheehan, Executive Director
Alzheimer's Association
of New Mexico

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BY DR. BARBARA L. MCANENY /
FORMER PRESIDENT, AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,
ALBUQUERQUE

Far too often, a trip to the emergency room can result in high, unexpected costs in the form of surprise medical bills. While it is good that Congress is looking to fix this issue, their actions could have adverse consequences for patients and health



care providers if they don't take the right approach. Bad choices on Capitol Hill today could mean the end of independent doctors like me in the near future – as well as the closure of facilities such as Gallup's New Mexico Cancer Center, one of only two cancer centers on the Navajo reservation.

The American Medical Association (AMA) believes that patients must be shielded from surprise billing, and that Congress must enact legislation allowing providers and physicians to resolve out-of-network payment disputes amongst themselves. As

legislators work to solve this problem, it is critically important they pass the right solution. There is virtual consensus that patients should be held harmless for any costs they incur above those of their normal, in-network cost-sharing amounts. The question is, how do we most effectively do that without undermining patient access or physicians' ability to provide quality care? The answer is through a process called Independent Dispute Resolution (IDR), which has been introduced in legislation known as the STOP Surprise Medical Bills Act. IDR establishes a framework for physicians and providers to negotiate fair payment terms through an open, transparent process facilitated by an independent mediator who determines out-of-network payments based on multiple factors. Unlike another proposed solution in Congress known as benchmarking, IDR would ensure physicians are compensated a fair amount based on the true market value of their services. This strengthens a physician's ability to provide comprehensive care for the patients and communities they serve. Unlike benchmarking, IDR will improve network adequacy, one of the underlying issues leading to surprise billing. The trend among insurers to shrink their provider networks hurts patients, especially when their physician – who was in-network when the plan was selected – is forced out of network.

The flawed benchmarking approach – essentially a form of government rate-setting in which the federal government determines physician payments based on insurers' own data – removes any incentive insurance companies have to negotiate fair contract terms with physicians. This only exacerbates the problem of network adequacy. Meanwhile, the IDR process incentivizes insurers to negotiate in good faith – both on out-of-network payments and in contract negotiations to bring more physicians into their networks.

Ultimately, insurers' provider networks must include the right balance of hospital-based physicians, on-call specialists and subspecialists. Of the various solutions that have been introduced in Congress, only the IDR approach would help ensure network adequacy and increase transparency among insurers.

Patients should not be held accountable for out-of-network costs, especially when they have no option or opportunity to select their provider, as in the case of unplanned, emergency care. Similarly, physicians often do not know the network status of the patients they are treating but are bound by legal and ethical standards to provide care regardless. To truly address this issue, insurance companies must come to the table and accept their responsibility in the growing problem of surprise medical billing.

The AMA believes there is a fair compromise to be reached when it comes to protecting patients from surprise billing while maintaining – or increasing – access to quality care. That solution can be found in legislation that includes the IDR process.

Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich are strong champions for the people of New Mexico. I urge them to help pass IDR-focused legislation that holds patients harmless for out-of-network costs while providing an equitable solution for all parties involved.





Lovelace Women's Hospital
is the **FIRST** hospital in
New Mexico to have earned the
Surgical Review Corporation's
Center of Excellence in
Robotic Surgery



The Center of Excellence in Robotic Surgery (COERS) program was developed to recognize surgeons and facilities worldwide performing robotic procedures and achieving defined standards for patient safety and care quality. The COERS program is endorsed by the Clinical Robotic Surgery Association (CRSA) to support its mission of advancing robotic surgical techniques.

The surgeons who are part of our Center of Excellence in Robotic Surgery as Master Surgeons are the first in New Mexico to achieve this designation and we are proud to recognize their achievements.

Karen Finkelstein, MD - Gynecology-Oncology, voted ABQ The Magazine's Top Doc for Robotic Surgery

Mario Leyba, MD - General Surgery

Luis Padilla-Paz, MD - Gynecology-Oncology

Joel Webb, MD - Gynecology-Oncology

Lovelace
Women's Hospital

La Tierra Sagrada
SOCIETY

GAMA was pleased to host their 2019 La Terra Sagrada Society scholarship winner Rachel Fleddermann on Thursday, September 26th at the Society's annual awards dinner. Rachel is a second year medical student who wants to become an OB/GYN. In her own words, "I knew I wanted to become a doctor in high school, but a gender and women' studies class in my freshman year of college sparked my passion for women's health. The opportunity to work with OB/GYNs during my first year of medical school and my rural health immersion experience reinforced this passion." Congratulations to Rachel!



From left to right: Sam MacBride, MD, GAMA Treasurer; Kirby Gabrys, MD, GAMA President Elect; Roger Cronk, MD, GAMA Trustee; Rachel; Mrs. Fleddermann; Harvey White, MD, GAMA Foundation Director; Mr. Fleddermann; Mihaela Bujoi. GAMA Immediate Past President and GAMA Foundation President.

GAMA Classified Ads

Medical Office Space for Lease

Remodeled medical office on historic "Pill Hill" (near Highland Pharmacy at Encino/Las Lomas intersection) close to all downtown hospitals. Perfect for private practitioners or group practice wanting a downtown location. Flexible space options available depending on tenant's needs. Attractive lease terms includes utilities. For more information contact Peter at 505-242-4599, ext. 06.

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GAMA PAC

Join your colleagues in donating to GAMA PAC to support candidates interested in the future of healthcare in New Mexico.

With the 2019 session behind us, it has become more apparent than ever that the medical community must come together and support candidates who understand our concerns and the issues. Every dollar counts so please send your check or make a payment online today!



IT'S EASY!

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