What Does PA’s New Medical Marijuana Law Mean to You and Your Patients?

Despite opposition from the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED), Senate Bill 3—a bill legalizing medical marijuana in Pennsylvania was signed into law by Gov. Wolf on April 17.

PAMED prepared several fact sheets to answer physician and patient questions, available at www.pamedsoc.org/MedMarijuana. They include:

- General Information Regarding Medical Marijuana
- Highlights of SB 3—Medical Marijuana Legalization
- Physician Information for Medical Marijuana
- Upcoming Process for Medical Marijuana

“PAMED is encouraged that the recently-passed legislation concerning marijuana for medical use contains provisions that recognize the benefit and need for additional clinical research,” said PAMED President Scott Shapiro, MD, in a statement. “In light of the passage of this legislation, it is our hope that marijuana’s status as a federal Schedule I controlled substance is reviewed with the goal of facilitating the conduct of clinical research and development of cannabinoid-based medicines, and alternate delivery methods.”

“While PAMED continues to have serious concerns about the efficacy of medical cannabis across a wide spectrum of disease states, it is our sincere hope that patients, especially children and their caring parents, experience positive clinical outcomes,” he said.

On April 20, PAMED brought together researchers who are investigating marijuana’s use for epilepsy and PTSD. If you weren’t able to listen to the call-in, an archive is available at www.pamedsoc.org/MedMarijuana.
In early January, I started at PAMED as the senior vice president of policy and programs. That’s great, you say, but what does that mean to me as a PAMED member?

Whether you work for a hospital or health system or are in private practice, whether you are just entering practice, in the middle of your career, or thinking about retirement, PAMED is your indispensable resource.

My top focus for 2016 is to communicate with PAMED members. I want to hear what needs you have that aren’t being fully met. What programs, education, and/or services can PAMED provide that will help you be more fulfilled in your practice and navigate challenges more easily? If you have any ideas, please let me know. You can email me anytime at mraniowski@pamedsoc.org.

As former director of health planning and then deputy secretary for health planning at the Pennsylvania Department of Health, I have spent more than 10 years working on issues that impact physicians, such as rural health, loan repayment, telemedicine, regulations, and emerging diseases. These experiences have helped me understand the complex and multiple issues facing physicians today.

Look for new program development in the areas of physician employment by hospitals, health systems, and large physician groups, as well as medical students, residents, academic affiliated physicians, including residency program directors, and early career physicians.

To better understand the needs of these segments of our membership, PAMED welcomed Stacia Pearce and Eric Walsh to PAMED’s Physician Leadership, Engagement, and Outreach Team in early 2016.

As Associate Director of Hospital and Health System Physician Engagement, Stacia is working with employed physicians and early career physicians. She is also working with international medical school graduates. She can be reached at spearse@pamedsoc.org. As Associate Director of Academic Affairs and Member Engagement, Eric is working with residents, fellows, and medical students. He can be reached at ewalsh@pamedsoc.org.

PAMED also welcomed Michael Siget, JD, MPA, as Legislative and Regulatory Counsel. Part of Mike’s role is to monitor and review legislation and regulations that may impact Pennsylvania physicians. He can be reached at msiget@pamedsoc.org.

Thank you for your membership! Together, we can address important issues to advance patient care and physician practice. This will be will be an exciting year with new and relevant education and programs.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of Physician Advocate, and that it helps communicate the advocacy work PAMED is doing every day on behalf of you and your patients.

Marty Raniowski, MA

Mike Siget, JD, MPA

Stacia Pearce, M.Ed Eric Walsh, MA

Take Action: Oppose Independent Licensure of CRNPs

It’s quite possible that SB 717—legislation that would eliminate the requirement for CRNPs to collaborate with physicians and allow them to practice independently—could be considered by the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee in the coming months.

Go to www.pamedsoc.org/VoterVoice and send a message to your Senator urging that they oppose this bill. Your voice matters. In just the last month alone, 387 physicians sent messages to their legislators through PAMED’s Voter Voice tool, and we thank you for your support.

PAMED continues to strongly oppose this bill, and supports physician-led, team-based care. With the complexity of our health care system ever increasing, patients need both physicians and nurse practitioners coordinating their care and sharing information for the benefit of the patient.

The collaborative agreement ensures that patients have direct access to a physician when their care requires a more highly trained professional. Eliminating this network of support would not only be contrary to team-based medicine, but has the potential to jeopardize patient care.

Learn more at www.pamedsoc.org/TeamBasedCare.
PAMED’s Telehealth Initiatives in Pennsylvania

On March 10, Sen. Elder Vogel announced his plans to introduce legislation that would begin to address telemedicine barriers at the state level. The proposed legislation would:

- Define telemedicine and telehealth
- Establish what constitutes the physician-patient relationship
- Offer guidelines outlining who can provide telemedicine services
- Provide clarity around insurance company reimbursement for these services

PAMED is also focused on addressing barriers to telemedicine in Pennsylvania and bringing clarity to its expanded use. The PAMED Board of Trustees approved draft legislation from PAMED’s Telehealth Task Force, which forms the basis of Sen. Vogel’s bill.

The bill, says Sen. Vogel, would ensure that coverage of telemedicine services won’t be denied just because the service is provided through telemedicine. It also will require insurers to reimburse the treating or consulting health care practitioner for the diagnosis, consultation, or treatment of the insured patient, similar to their reimbursement for the provision of the same service through in-person consultation or contact.

Stay tuned to the Daily Dose—PAMED’s daily, all-member email—for updates. If you’re asking, “What’s the Daily Dose,?” please see the back of this newsletter for what you could be missing.

PAMED Continues to Advocate on Physicians’ Behalf on Highmark Reimbursement Cuts

PAMED continues to advocate on behalf of Pennsylvania physicians to seek a resolution to the reimbursement cuts implemented by Highmark on April 1 to physicians who see patients under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

In addition to urging that these cuts immediately be restored, we’ve also discussed with Highmark the issues the ACA has caused for both physicians in practice and insurers, and a variety of initiatives that we could potentially work on together to help physician practices and Highmark succeed in a value-based health care environment. We’ve told Highmark that such a partnership would need to be based on a level of trust that was significantly damaged by its recent ACA fee reduction.

In order to begin the process of building mutual trust, we proposed the need to either immediately reverse the cuts or pursue a new clear and specific initiative that will help physicians recoup the cuts and potentially increase practice revenue within the time that physicians are already spending when seeing patients enrolled in Highmark’s individual ACA Exchange products.

PAMED President Scott Shapiro, MD, has been continuing to keep members up to date on our ongoing conversations with Highmark. We will continue to keep members up to date via the Daily Dose—our all-member, daily email—and on our website at www.pamedsoc.org/HighmarkCuts.

Stay tuned to the Daily Dose—PAMED’s daily, all-member email—for updates. If you’re asking, “What’s the Daily Dose,?” please see the back of this newsletter for what you could be missing.
PA Physicians Explore Solutions to Balance/Surprise Billing Problem

The inaugural meeting of PAMED’s new Payer Advocacy Task Force was held via conference call in late March. The first agenda item the Task Force is tackling relates to balance billing of patients by out-of-network (OON) practitioners.

The meeting was led by chairwoman and past president Karen Rizzo, MD, and physicians from a variety of specialties and geographic areas participated in the call. After receiving direction from the PAMED Board of Trustees, the Task Force is focused on root causes of physician balance billing to include the adequacy of health plan networks.

The Task Force reviewed a model network adequacy bill that was developed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and further refined by the American Medical Association (AMA). These refinements include deletions and additions to the original bill language. The Task Force reviewed the AMA changes to the bill and also made suggestions based on a very robust discussion among Task Force members.

PAMED staff will now look at specific terminology used in the AMA marked-up model bill such as definitions to determine if existing Pennsylvania statute or regulation definitions are preferable to the terms defined in the model bill. This will be the topic of the next Task Force meeting.

OON balance billing has been garnering a great deal of attention in Pennsylvania. PAMED testified at a hearing on balance billing last fall. Then, in January 2016, the Pennsylvania Insurance Department drafted proposed legislation to address the issue.

Following the release of the Insurance Department’s draft legislation, a common sentiment of the PAMED Board was that this issue is much more complex than just OON balance billing. Other underlying problems include inadequate networks, unfair contracting, and patient misunderstanding about the insurance products they have purchased. PAMED President Scott Shapiro, MD, addressed these concerns in a Feb. 29 letter to the Insurance Department. A meeting between PAMED leadership and the Insurance Commissioner is being scheduled to further discuss this complex issue.

PAMED’s new Payer Advocacy Task Force and representatives from affected specialties have been tasked with examining issues connected with balance billing, with the goal of providing a reasonable solution for both Pennsylvania consumers and physicians alike.

PAMED believes it is important to get engaged and address these complexities, and welcomes member feedback on this issue. Share your comments by emailing Dennis Olmstead, PAMED’s senior advisor of health economics and policy, at dolmstead@pamedsoc.org.

Stay tuned to the Daily Dose—PAMED’s daily, all-member email—for updates. If you’re asking, “What’s the Daily Dose,?” please see the back of this newsletter for what you could be missing.

PAMED’s New Website and Mobile App Keeps News and Tools at Your Fingertips

PAMED’s new customizable website at www.pamedsoc.org provides members with advocacy updates, as well as health care-related news and tools relevant to Pennsylvania physicians. It also has 40+ credits of FREE on-demand CME that members can take on their own time to help you address the state’s opioid abuse epidemic (www.pamedsoc.org/opioidscme), meet the state’s child abuse training requirement for licensure (www.pamedsoc.org/childabusecme), succeed in the transition from volume to value (www.pamedsoc.org/valuebasedcare), and much more.

Take PAMED in your pocket with our new mobile app (from the iTunes or the Google Play Store, search “Pennsylvania Medical Society”). Stay updated on the latest advocacy issues that impact your practice, participate in grassroots initiatives by contacting your lawmaker directly through the app, and look up colleagues in PAMED’s member directory.
PAMED—Your Partner on Your Path to License Renewal

Find Innovative Solutions • Meet Patient Safety Requirements • Sharpen Your Skills

Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) members can access 50+ free and discounted CME credits at www.pamedsoc.org/cme2016

Step 1: It’s a licensure renewal year, and the deadline to meet this cycle’s CME requirements will be here before you know it. Take advantage of PAMED’s activities, all designed to meet patient safety and risk management requirements. New activities added frequently!

Access online, on-demand CME courses you can use to:
• Address PA’s opioid abuse crisis
• Get skills to succeed in value-based care
• Become a better physician advocate
• Improve patient satisfaction scores and much more!

Step 2: Complete training on child abuse recognition and reporting, required for physicians as a condition of licensure in Pennsylvania. This online CME program is just for physicians.

• FREE for all PA physicians
• Offers options for both two hours (license renewal) and three hours (new license)

Step 3: Learn leadership skills through education you can customize to meet your needs.

• Year-Round Leadership Academy—Join physicians from across the state for comprehensive leadership training on topics like strategic planning, negotiation, and building collaborative teams
• Online, on-demand courses—Learn more about issues such as ethical challenges, financial management, and quality improvement
• Onsite leadership training—Provide the physicians in your practice or health system with customized, cost-effective training at your location

Step 4: Organize your CME activity online at www.pamedsoc.org/tracker. Easily record all Category 1 and Category 2 activities in one location.

www.pamedsoc.org • 855-PAMED4U (855-726-3348)
Tools You Can Use:
Make the Most Out of Your Medical Staff Bylaws

A well-functioning medical staff is essential to delivering quality care in a licensed health care facility. How can physicians foster a functional and effective medical staff? One important step is to ensure that they’re getting the most out of their medical staff bylaws.

PAMED now offers a Medical Staff Bylaws Toolkit to help Pennsylvania physicians and medical staff. This resource includes:

- **Model Medical Staff Bylaws**—Offers guidance for medical staffs as they write and redraft bylaws.
- **Do’s and Don’ts for Adopting/Updating Medical Staff Bylaws**—Helps physicians foster a functional and effective medical staff, and get the most out of their bylaws.
- **Guidelines for an Effective Medical Staff**—Assists organized medical staff members in identifying their rights and responsibilities in the delivery and assurance of quality medical care.

PAMED members can access the toolkit at a discounted price. Learn more about this new resource and purchase the toolkit at [www.pamedsoc.org/MedStaffBylaws](http://www.pamedsoc.org/MedStaffBylaws).

Addressing the State’s Growing Opioid Abuse Crisis

On Tuesday, May 17, PAMED physician leaders are holding Opioid Awareness Day at the state Capitol in Harrisburg. PAMED leaders will meet with legislators and their staff to talk about what PAMED has done so far to address the growing opioid abuse epidemic—including working with the state and other stakeholders to develop voluntary prescribing guidelines and continuing medical education for physicians—and more importantly, what it plans to do going forward to continue to educate physicians and empower patients. After these meetings, PAMED will be holding a media event in the Capitol’s Media Room to deliver the same message.

PAMED leaders will then return to PAMED Headquarters for an Opioid Awareness Symposium on physician leadership and the opioid abuse crisis.

The goal of the day is to show how Pennsylvania physicians are taking steps to address opioid misuse and abuse and highlight the ways that the physician community is working with partners and patients to prevent opioid abuse while also effectively treating pain and meeting the needs of patients and their families.

Get tools to help address this growing crisis, including prescribing guidelines and CME for physicians, at [www.pamedsoc.org/OpioidResources](http://www.pamedsoc.org/OpioidResources).

PAMED: Your Voice, Partner, and Advocate

PAMED continues to advocate on behalf of you and your patients on a number of physician issues, such as:

- **Physician-led, team-based care**—PAMED strongly opposes SB 717 and HB 765, which would allow CRNPs to practice independently, without a collaborative agreement and physician oversight. [www.pamedsoc.org/TeamBasedCare](http://www.pamedsoc.org/TeamBasedCare)
- **Physician credentialing**—PAMED strongly supports HB 1663, which aims to streamline the physician credentialing process and make it timelier and more uniform across all insurers in Pennsylvania. [www.pamedsoc.org/credentialing](http://www.pamedsoc.org/credentialing)
- **Prior authorization**—PAMED strongly supports HB 1657, which would increase transparency and standardization of the prior authorization process in Pennsylvania. [www.pamedsoc.org/priorauth](http://www.pamedsoc.org/priorauth)
- **Maintenance of Certification (MOC)**—PAMED continues to lead state and national conversations about how to improve the MOC process and make it work better for all physicians. [www.pamedsoc.org/MOC](http://www.pamedsoc.org/MOC)

Stay tuned to the *Daily Dose*—PAMED’s daily, all-member email—for updates. If you’re asking, “What’s the *Daily Dose*?,” please see the back of this newsletter for what you could be missing.
Tools You Can Use: Enhance Your Leadership Skills

2016-2017 Year-Round Leadership Academy (YRA)
Don’t miss this opportunity to enhance your leadership skills and network with colleagues. A limited number of scholarships are available for early career, hospital-based, and office-based physicians. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is June 1, 2016.

This 10-month program will run from Sept. 1, 2016—June 30, 2017, and includes eight online courses and three day-long live sessions. Participants in the Fall 2016 learning group will be able to earn 60.5 CME credits and credits toward the Certified Physician Executive (CPE) certification if they complete the full complement of courses.

Topics include communication; transforming conflict; restoring productivity; meta-leadership—removing barriers and building bridges; effective physician leadership; finance; quality; negotiation; strategic thinking, planning, and decision making; and building and leading effective teams.

Learn more and register at www.pamedsoc.org/YRA.

CMO Leadership Program
The need for advanced, specialized leadership expertise among health system chief medical officers, medical directors, VPs for medical affairs, and chiefs of staff is greater than ever, but discussing challenges and solutions with fellow CMOs can be a rare opportunity.

That’s why PAMED, in collaboration with CMO participants from its 2014 series, is pleased to bring back its 15-month CMO Leadership Program.

The CMO Leadership Program will run June 3, 2016—Aug. 4, 2017. Topics will include crucial conversations and accountability, physician career cycle challenges, the challenges associated with the dual roles of administrator and clinician, navigating relationships with both employed and independent physicians, alternative payment models and best practices in health care team interactions, being the team leader when you’re not the subject matter expert, and improving patient experiences and engagement.

Learn more and register at www.pamedsoc.org/CMOLeadership.

“Physicians are called upon to be leaders—to patients, to their practice, to their community—every day. But, so few days in our medical training were dedicated on just how to be the best leader possible. PAMED’s Year-Round Leadership Academy provides formal education on topics such as communication, negotiation, finance, and quality. The topics covered are pertinent to our everyday practice, and the knowledge and skills I am acquiring give me more confidence in working with others to turn my goals into reality.”

—John Vasudevan, MD
2015-2016 Early Career Physician Scholarship Recipient for PAMED’s YRA

“Physician leadership is essential to advancing care for our patients and institutions. Our medical staffs are looking for leadership to make sense of the chaotic change we are all experiencing. With the rapid changes in health care and the regulatory environment, it only makes sense to network with fellow physician leaders. We need to share our ideas, wins, and losses. PAMED’s CMO Leadership Program is designed to better prepare us and our colleagues for the changes ahead and provide the spark for continuous learning.”

—Lee Duke II, MD
Past Participant in PAMED’s CMO Leadership Program

Member discounts are available for both the YRA and CMO leadership programs, and a limited number of scholarships are also available for the YRA for PAMED members.

Learn more about PAMED’s suite of leadership resources at www.pamedsoc.org/LeadershipAcademy.
Don’t Miss Important Information That Could Affect You – Read PAMED’s Daily Dose Every Day

If you’re saying “What’s the Daily Dose?” chances are you’re missing some important information that could affect you, your practice, and your patients.

The Daily Dose—PAMED’s daily all-member email—contains the key points you need to know about what is happening in Pennsylvania medicine at any given time. And, our new mobile app gives you the same updates on-the-go (from the iTunes or the Google Play Store, search “Pennsylvania Medical Society”).

If you’re not reading the Daily Dose, you may not know that:

• Pennsylvania physicians must now have state-approved child abuse training as a condition of licensure, and PAMED offers an online, on-demand CME course that meets this requirement. www.pamedsoc.org/childabusecme

• PAMED was on the frontlines of the historic Mcare settlement that is returning $200 million to physicians and other health care providers, including $139 million in refunds for prior assessment overpayments and $61 million via a reduction to the 2015 Mcare assessment, and also prevents future assessment overcharges. www.McareRefund.org

• PAMED is advocating on behalf of you and your patients on issues like physician-led, team-based care, physician credentialing, prior authorization, and Maintenance of Certification. www.pamedsoc.org/advocacy

If you haven’t seen the Daily Dose, keep an eye out for it today! And, if you find you’re not receiving it, please email us at stat@pamedsoc.org so we can resolve the issue and make sure you are getting the latest news and tools at your fingertips.

If you ever have any questions, PAMED’s Knowledge Center is only a phone call away at 855-PAMED4U (855-726-3348).