



## **A look back: MMA moving forward 2011 Presidential Address**

***By Jo Linder, MD***

On the first morning of my Presidency, in this very room I moderated the first gubernatorial debate. We knew one of those five candidates would be Governor. The 2010 election was quite significant and drastically changed the political landscape in our State. These changes presented a number of challenges as well as several opportunities. The strength and resilience of the Maine Medical Association with our incredible staff, our dedicated volunteer leaders, and so many members helped guide me. Our organization was able to meet the challenges head on and step forward when opportunity knocked.

It's been a true privilege to serve as your President this year. It's truly been a team effort and I need to thank so many of you in this room as well as several who were not able to join us this weekend. Much of the year's accomplishments are described in the reports provided in your packets. Please be sure to read the report from Dr. Lisa Ryan, Chair of the Committee on Legislation to get a glimpse of our legislative advocacy work, including tracking over 350 bills during this long session. Led by our legal team, I felt strongly supported by several MMA members who participated in weekly conference calls, testified at the statehouse, wrote OpEds, sent emails and picked up the phone to call their local legislator.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law in the Spring of 2010. MMA supported several provisions in the bill based upon guiding principles for health system reform initially adopted in 2003. We spent a lot of time this past year responding to changes that affected our members' ability to provide access to patients as well as to influence implementation of future provisions in the law. There are several more opportunities on the horizon for MMA to help make improvements in a health system that is not only affordable, but also accessible & sustainable.

As you can see from the other reports, MMA has done much more including our work in quality and patient safety, the medical professionals' health program, member benefits, and continuing education.

Each year the MMA President has an initiative or theme, and mine was education. I didn't really do anything new. I just wanted to highlight the work that MMA already does in the educational arena, because we do so much! The Committee on CME & Accreditation, led by Dr. George Davis and MMA staff member Gail Begin, provides countless hours of volunteer time ensuring the availability of quality continuing medical

education for physicians by accrediting 24 CME providers around the State. But that's not all the education MMA does! Supported almost entirely by grants and contracts, MMA provided education to physicians and their support team members through our Academic Detailing Program, Chronic Pain consultations, Peer Review, understanding and implementing expanding coverage and other ACA provisions, First Fridays, the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Practice Education Seminar, a new Prep for Practice Seminar for residents, and several educational programs for our Senior Section including a panel on Medical Education 101 years Post-Flexner (the latter 2 put together by Dr. Buell Miller). Not to mention our role in guiding the Maine Medical Education Foundation loan programs supporting medical students from Maine. I want to thank all of you who made personal contributions this year in response to my challenge to build Maine Medical Education Trust resources. Including the generous donations and bids at tonight's silent auction the new medical student scholarship fund now contains almost \$38,000!

MMA provides and supports great educational programs and we should celebrate it!

Speaking of celebrations and milestones, we've had a few of those this year, too. Starting with the **30<sup>th</sup> annual** Edmund G. Hardy Road Race at dawn of my first morning in this position. [Forty participants at this year's annual session ran, jogged, and/or walked in the 31<sup>st</sup> annual non-competitive race sponsored by Medical Mutual]. Other celebrations included MMA's **20<sup>th</sup> annual** Practice Education Seminar (formerly known as the Physician Survival Seminar) at the Augusta Civic Center in May. Last month, we celebrated the legacy of Frank O. Stred with the Stred family by rededicating our MMA headquarters: the Frank O. Stred building. I hope you will stop in, say thank you to our capable and dedicated staff, and see the portrait of Frank on the second floor of the building. As Dr. John Towne recalled, "Frank had a vision of Association Drive, and we are there at the top of the hill."

This past year was a tremendous opportunity for me to stand on the shoulders of giants in this organization, many of whom are here today. Over the past several years, MMA leaders worked diligently to transform our solid, respected state medical society into the "PREMIER HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATION RECOGNIZED BY ALL PHYSICIANS AND THE PUBLIC AS THE LEADER AND THE VOICE OF THE PHYSICIAN COMMUNITY." That's the big audacious goal we envisioned for this organization several years ago under then President Kevin Flanigan. And now, MMA is poised for the future with the foundation of a new governance structure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Led by President Nancy Cummings and Chairman Ken Christian, the MMA Board of Directors is ready to serve our mission - **supporting Maine physicians, advancing the quality of medicine in Maine, and promoting the health of all Maine citizens.**

It has been an honor to play a small part as a leader of our MMA. Thank you for the privilege and for joining me along the way. I look forward to continuing the journey with you in support of our members, our patients, and the communities we live in.