

SSVMS | SIERRA SACRAMENTO VALLEY MEDICAL SOCIETY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Serving more than 6,500 Physicians and Medical Students in the Sacramento Region



*Bringing together
physicians from all modes
of practice to promote the
art and science of quality
medical care, and to
enhance the physical and
mental health of our entire
community.*

**5380 ELVAS AVE, STE. 101
SACRAMENTO, CA 95819**



SIERRA SACRAMENTO VALLEY
MEDICAL SOCIETY

2023 President's Message



“BEING SSVMS PRESIDENT LAST YEAR WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST EXPERIENCES OF MY CAREER AND IT WARMED MY HEART HOW MUCH WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER.”

**- J. BIANCA ROBERTS, MD
2023 SSVMS PRESIDENT**

This past year proved to be very productive for SSVMS and organized medicine as a whole. This Annual Report highlights a lot of the accomplishments from our dedicated members, our knowledgeable leadership, and our world-class staff, but it doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of what it all truly meant to all of us on the frontlines of medicine. Because of organized medicine, we were able to pull together to get the biggest Medi-Cal provider rate increase in history, we were able to introduce more than 130 high schoolers to careers in medicine, we were able to shine the light on physician mistreatment, and so much more.

In addition to the Medi-Cal provider rate increase, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, and reproductive rights victories, SSVMS and CMA pulled down many other significant advocacy wins. SSVMS and CMA fought new policies from both Cigna and UnitedHealthcare that

would have increased administrative and prior authorization burdens on physicians; defeated bills which would have required audited financial reports from medical groups to be made public, would have allowed retail chain pharmacists to furnish medications treating conditions identified through CLIA-waived tests performed by a pharmacist, would have allowed optometrists to perform delicate eye surgeries, and would have forced physicians to discuss nonpharmacological pain treatments; sponsored successful legislation to require health plans to fairly reimburse providers for the costs of COVID-19 testing during the State of Emergency; and helped physicians prepare for the new statewide Data Exchange Framework.

SSVMS and CMA continued to provide quality practice management resources, including the Center for Economic Services recouping monies owed to physicians through direct

payor interventions. Collectively, SSVMS and CMA have secured more than \$40 million since 2009.

SSVMS's charitable organization, the Community Service, Education and Research Fund (CSERF) continued to serve our community. The Sacramento Physicians' Initiative to Reach out, Innovate and Teach (SPIRIT) coordinated care for 389 patients in 2023 including 119 surgeries. That's more than half a million dollars of donated care. The Future of Medicine introduced students to careers in medicine, graduating 134 students from the program. The Joy of Medicine covered 292 counseling sessions for physicians and medical students this year.

In the following pages, you'll read about many of our accomplishments, but know that there's so much we were able to accomplish together that couldn't be captured here.

2023 SSVMS/CMA Advocacy Highlights

SSVMS and CMA secured a historic increase in Medi-Cal rates.

Starting on January 1, 2024, most primary care physicians (including obstetricians and non-specialty mental health) began to receive Medi-Cal rates of at least 87.5% of the Medicare fee schedule. In 2025, that will expand to include specialty care providers as well. These rates, secured in the 2023-24 state budget and the Managed Care Organization Tax (MCO), ensure that millions of Californians will have greater access to affordable, high-quality, life-saving health care. To protect this transformative rate increase, SSVMS, CMA, and the Coalition to Protect Access to Care, a broad and diverse group of healthcare

organizations, have filed a statewide ballot initiative with the California Attorney General's office: the Protect Access to Healthcare Act. This initiative will appear on the November 3 ballot and will make the Medi-Cal provider rate increase permanent, expand access to health care for Medi-Cal patients, reduce emergency department usage, shorten wait times, increase funding for mental health programs serving children and Medi-Cal patients. More than 15 million Californians and nearly 50% of California's children receive their health care through Medi-Cal, highlighting how critical this program is.



SSVMS/CMA SUCCESSES

- Successfully implemented Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program Expansion for California Physicians
- Fought to reform the Medicare physician payment system and stop dangerous payment cuts
- Secured federal regulations to reform prior authorization requirements



SPONSORED STATE LEGISLATION

AB 470 - Authorizes CME credit for physicians taking foreign language courses to increase cultural competency.

AB 571 - Prohibits a med-mal insurance company from refusing to issue a policy to a physician solely because the physician offers or performs abortions, contraception and gender-affirming services.

SB 487 - Strengthens protections for California's abortion providers who are providing reproductive health care services to out-of-state providers.

DEFEATED

AB 1751 - would have required physicians prescribing opioids to obtain signed consent they talked to patients about alternative treatments to pain including chiropractic.

AB 1570 - would have increased scope of practice for optometrists by allowing them to perform surgery on the eye.

SB 524 - would have allowed pharmacists at retail pharmacy chains to prescribe medicine without adequate training.

**YOUR VOICE IS THE KEY TO OUR
SUCCESS IN THE CAPITAL**

Committees in Action

The Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society has several committees that study and report on issues impacting physicians and access to care. Many of the activities of our committees result in recommendations to the SSVMS Board of Directors, County Health Departments, County Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, local agencies and legislators. Over the years, many serious or chronic problems affecting the practice of medicine and patients have been resolved as a result of the work of our chairs and committee members.

PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Public and Environmental Health Committee makes official policy recommendations to the SSVMS Board of Directors on issues ranging from the homelessness epidemic to climate change. In 2023, the Committee also discussed gun violence, physician abuse, parental alienation, Child Protective Services, and salt in diets. The Committee meets nine times throughout the year and drafts resolutions for CMA policy.

JOY OF MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Joy of Medicine Advisory Committee includes the Greater Sacramento Area's leaders in physician wellness and advises the Joy of Medicine Program. In 2023, the Committee focused on addressing abuse and violence against physicians, including drafting best practices to prevent abuse before it occurs, compiling stories of workplace violence and/or mistreatment for an article in SSV Medicine Magazine, and offering a de-escalation training CME at the Joy of Medicine Summit in September.

SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Scholarship and Awards Committee administers the Medical Student Scholarship Fund and recommends nominees for SSVMS's annual awards. In 2023, the Committee awarded eight scholarships to deserving medical students. Award recipients included Kent Jolly, MD (Golden Stethoscope) and Ronald Chambers, MD (Medical Honor Award). The Committee also restructured the annual awards, adding the Excellence in Advocacy Award for leadership in health care policy and Outstanding Medical Society Volunteer Award for members dedicating time and energy to SSVMS's mission.

EMERGENCY CARE COMMITTEE

The Emergency Care Committee studies issues related to emergency care services and facilities, trauma, patient transport and triage, disaster preparedness, and on-call issues within the Greater Sacramento Area. The Committee serves as liaison with government agencies responsible for emergency services, transport, and disaster planning and provides quality improvement oversight to SSVMS's SMART Medical Clearance Protocol.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The Editorial Committee meets every month to compile six editions of Sierra Sacramento Valley Medicine Magazine over the course of the year. The magazine highlights the work of local physicians, from policy discussions to personal experiences, photo galleries to poetry. In 2023, the magazine underwent a major restructure by going digital. Going forward, only one edition per year will be printed but all six will live online.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT JOINING AN SSVMS COMMITTEE, CONTACT US AT [INFO@SSVMS.ORG](mailto:info@ssvms.org).

Top left: Ron Chambers, MD and Ruth Haskins, MD; top middle: Caroline Giroux, MD and Chris Serdahl, MD; top right: Darrin Greer, Dineen Greer, MD, Drew Hudnut, MD, Sara Dougherty, MD, Ruenell Adams-Jacobs, MD, Joe Jacobs, Chuck McDonnell, MD, Kristie Bobolis, MD; middle left: Adam Dougherty, MD, Carol Burch, MD and April Dougherty; middle: aerialist, Rebel Aerial; middle right: Ken Jolly, MD with his wife Janet and son; bottom left: Medical Students; bottom middle: J. Bianca Roberts, MD, Jason Spears, DO, and Kuldip Sandu, MD.



SSVMS is seeking ongoing nominations of deserving physicians. Scan the QR code to nominate a physician or medical student for an SSVMS annual award.

2023 SSVMS Honors Medicine Dinner and Awards

2023 Highlights



130+

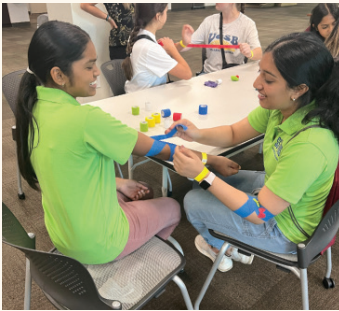
private practices
received practice
management

23

graduates of local
residency programs
stayed to practice locally

30+

advocacy meetings
with elected officials



134

Future of Medicine
graduates

225+

physician
volunteers

3,514

Naloxone kits
distributed

\$29,000

medical student
scholarships granted

292

Joy of Medicine
counseling sessions

\$568,000

in-kind donated care
through SPIRIT



389

SPIRIT patients
received care



SPIRIT volunteer David Pompa, MD and patient P. Reyes.

SSVMS's Charitable Fund



Scan to Donate to
SSVMS's Charitable
Programs

In 1969, SSVMS established the Community Service, Education, and Research Fund (CSERF), a nonprofit 501(c)3 charitable organization. CSERF provides programs and services focused on improving access to healthcare, improving health outcomes, mental health advocacy, health education, and workforce development. CSERF's programs and services are funded solely by grants and generous donations from SSVMS members and the community. SSVMS membership dues do not support these programs.



Dr. Aaron Skelton and SPIRIT patient E. Gomez

SPIRIT PROGRAM

Since 1995, the Sacramento Physicians' Initiative to Reach out, Innovate and Teach (SPIRIT) program of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society (SSVMS) has worked to increase access to specialty healthcare for underserved residents of our region. The SPIRIT program addresses the healthcare needs of our community's most vulnerable patients, thereby reducing the strain on hospital emergency services. In 2023, SPIRIT grew patient capacity with improvements to referral management software and laid the foundations for 2024 Medi-Cal expansions, which will result in an increase of SPIRIT-eligible patients.



2023 scholarship recipient, Christian Bryan De Guzman, MS II, UC Davis School of Medicine

MEDICAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Medical Student Scholarship Fund was established in 1967 to support local students pursuing careers in medicine. Over those 56 years, SSVMS awarded \$275,000 in scholarships. To qualify, the student must have graduated from a school in SSVMS's region (Sacramento, El Dorado, and Yolo Counties), and be enrolled in an accredited American medical school on a full-time basis. In 2023, eight students were awarded a combined total of \$29,000. As student loan burdens continue to grow, the Medical Student Scholarship Fund becomes increasingly important.



Nursing exhibit; one of dozens of exhibits at the Museum of Medical History

MUSEUM OF MEDICAL HISTORY

The Museum of Medical History showcases developments in medicine with a special focus on the Greater Sacramento Area from the mid-1800s to today. In 2023, the Museum hosted more than 1,000 visitors and recorded more than 250 hours from volunteers to curate the artifacts and serve as docents giving tours. The Lecture Series continued with sessions on "Medical History and Halloween" and "The Black Death." The Museum website was updated to include more information about exhibits, virtual tours, and the origins of the blood bank, as well as adding articles and publications. Visit www.MuseumOfMedicalHistory.org to schedule a tour!



Anu Shanmugham, MD, Heather Overman, MD, Joyce Chen, MD, Courtney LaCaze-Adams, MD, Angela Trapp, and Vanessa Walker, DO.

Joy of Medicine

The Joy of Medicine Program addresses physician burnout from two angles: providing individual physicians with resources and advocating to change systemic issues causing the burnout in the first place. This year, 72 physicians and medical students accessed no-cost Counseling Sessions offered through Joy of Medicine – free and anonymous sessions with licensed psychologists or life coaches. All physicians and medical students in Sacramento, El Dorado, Yolo, and Placer Counties are eligible for up to six lifetime sessions, regardless of membership status with SSVMS and CMA. The Program also continued to host monthly Peer Groups for physicians to discuss the challenges of practicing medicine in El Dorado Hills, Fair Oaks, and Newcastle.

In March, SSVMS published the whitepaper “Joy of Medicine: Physician Wellness and Workforce” which included the results from the Fall 2022 survey. The results of this survey and whitepaper drew a compelling picture of the dangers of physician abuse and mistreatment, indicating that approximately 31% of physicians had been mistreated by a patient or the patient’s family in the prior twelve months.

These data focused the program towards researching abuse and harassment policies across the country to determine effectiveness and best practice recommendations. The Program also published stories of physician abuse in *Sierra Sacramento Valley Medicine Magazine* and has been conducting policy work to explore methods of reducing mistreatment and harassment from any source.

In September, the Annual Joy of Medicine Summit took place in Sacramento, with eighty physicians joining either in person or online. In-person attendees were treated to a full breakfast and onsite massage therapists, while all attendees were eligible to receive up to three CMEs. The three educational sessions included Andrew Smith, PhD teaching “Preventing Violence and Establishing a Treatment Alliance with Difficult Patients,” Elizabeth Morrison, PhD teaching “From Healing Heroes to Distrusted Adversaries: Recovering and Healing After COVID”, and John Chuck, MD teaching “Self Advocacy to Create Joy and Meaning in Medicine.”

Future of Medicine



Students attend orientation at Kaiser Roseville Medical Center, Roseville.

FUTURE OF MEDICINE STUDENTS GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO BEHIND THE SCENES IN HOSPITALS AND CLINICS. THIS PROGRAM GRADUATES MORE THAN 100 STUDENTS EACH YEAR, SETTING THEM ON THE PATH FOR A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE.

The Future of Medicine Program introduces local high school students to health care careers, many of which they might not have realized were available to them. Many students from Title I schools participate in this program to illustrate the many pathways into the medical field.

The Program operated two major components: White Coat Week and the Summer Program. White Coat Week is hosted during Spring Break and allows students to job-shadow physicians throughout their daily activities over a week. The Summer Program is structured for both in-person and virtual activities. The students receive interactive demonstrations on how to perform CPR and how to administer naloxone, teaching students how to save lives in multiple real-world situations. Participants tour the Museum of Medical History, gain a better understanding of the evolution of medicine over time from our Museum Curator Dr. Bob LaPerriere, and the Vitalant Blood Lab, learning about the process of blood donations from donation to storage and delivery. Routinely, the most exciting day for students is the sheep heart dissection lab in which Dr. Andrew Hudnut helps students examine sheep hearts to understand the internal functioning of the heart – sheep were selected due to the similar nature between their hearts and human hearts.

Virtual activities include presentations about the importance of health equity and how the medical field organizes and advocates for patients. Students hear directly from physicians from a wide range of specialties, such as family medicine, emergency medicine,

dermatology, sports medicine, pediatrics, and more. Beyond the different specialties for physicians, students hear from other medical professionals such as nurses, pharmacists, therapists, dentists, and more. The Program highlights these other professions to demonstrate that many health care professionals are critically important to the delivery of health care in our region.

In 2023, the Future of Medicine Program hosted its third round of students; a graduating class which included a record 134 students. Their experience was captured in an article for SSV Medicine Magazine, particularly surrounding a former student who had used the program as part of the admissions essay for the University of California at Berkeley. That student is now on track to become a pathologist because of the Future of Medicine Program.



Dr. Andrea Willey and staff welcome Jayden Sagara to her practice, Sacramento



Students participate in a heart lab at SSVMS Offices, Sacramento



White Coat Week students meet UC Davis Medical Group Executive Director, Dr. Debbie Aizenberg



Kylee Blankenship and Dr. Ruth Haskins see a pregnant patient, Folsom



Students learn about blood banking at Vitalant Labs, Mather

“This program helped me be 100% sure that I want to pursue the medical field for my future career.”

-Alyssa Lacayo, Senior



Kalena Tran and Dr. Fleming prepare for clinic at UC Davis Medical Center, Sacramento

SMART Medical Clearance



INDIVIDUALIZED SCREENING FOR MORE EFFICIENT AND BETTER CARE



Often patients in mental health crisis who arrive at Emergency Departments need professional psychiatric care. To avoid delay in their care, the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society (SSVMS) brought together emergency medicine and psychiatry specialists to develop and implement a standardized medical clearance process using the SMART Medical Clearance algorithm, an acronym that drives real-time medical decision-making through a series of specific questions.

The SMART algorithm was designed using an evidence-based approach through review of peer-reviewed articles and studies, as well as consultation with experts

in the fields of psychiatry and emergency medicine, both locally and nationally. SMART Medical Clearance increases efficiency in Emergency Departments by avoiding unnecessary, costly treatments and decreasing wait times in emergency room departments for all patients.

In 2023, the SSVMS SMART Implementation team worked closely with healthcare organizations in Nova Scotia and Ontario, Canada, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine in the United Kingdom, as well as with the states of Tennessee and Wisconsin to implement SMART Medical Clearance.

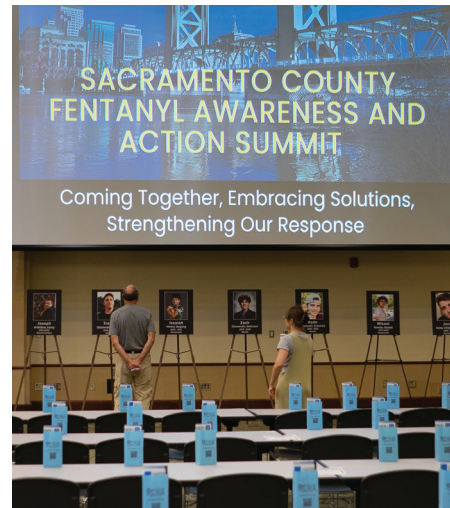
**AVOIDING UNNECESSARY AND COSTLY TREATMENTS AND DECREASING WAIT
TIMES IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS FOR ALL PATIENTS**

Opioid Coalition

THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY OPIOID COALITION (SCOC) IS A COLLABORATION OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, COUNTY AGENCIES, AND CONCERNED CITIZENS DETERMINED TO TURN THE TIDE OF OUR OPIOID EPIDEMIC.



L-R: SSVMS Program Coordinator, Lauren Werner and family members of those lost to overdose speak at the annual Opioid Awareness Summit, Sacramento



Gone Too Soon display at the Opioid Awareness summit

TOGETHER, WE SAVE LIVES.

SCOC is committed to saving lives by preventing overdoses by expanding treatment access; promoting safe disposal; encouraging early intervention, treatment and recovery; enhancing opioid surveillance; and expanding public education through outreach. The Coalition meets quarterly to discuss current and future projects by bringing together experts in their fields with community members who have experienced the dangers of opioids in their families.

Opioid Use Disorder affects everyone in Sacramento County. It will take all of us to make the difference.

In 2023, SCOC launched Hear to Heal, which is a monthly support group for those who have lost someone to opioids. Families and individuals can come together to share their experiences and how it's affected them. SCOC also hosted the annual Fentanyl Awareness Summit which featured more than thirty speakers on topics ranging from the physical effects of fentanyl on the body to harm reduction services, how to reach underrepresented communities, how to reduce stigma and shame,

and what law enforcement is seeing on the ground. Continuing projects included Narcan training and distribution, which included groups such as the Sacramento County Office of Education and local law enforcement agencies, and the Gone Too Soon Memorial Poster Project, which puts the names and faces of community members lost to opioids front and center of various events.



Physicians celebrating Doctors Day at an SSVMS pop-up at UC Davis Medical Center



SSVMS Board of Directors meeting at the Medical Society, Sacramento



Physicians celebrating Doctors Day at UC Davis Medical Center



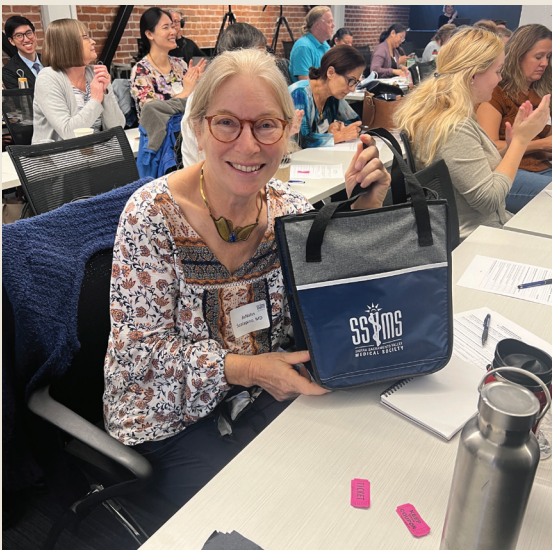
UC Davis Chief Wellness Officer, Sara Aghamohammadi, MD



Physicians and medical students during CMA Legislative Advocacy Day, Sacramento



SSVMS President, J. Bianca Roberts, MD and Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen advocating in Washington DC



JaNahn Scalapino, MD



7th Annual SSVMS Joy of Medicine Summit, Sacramento



Michael Schermer, MD, Vanessa Walker, DO, Rick Jones, MD, Lydia Wyrzes, MD, Jerilyn Marr, and Clifford Marr, MD at the SSVMS Holiday Social, Sacramento.



Steven Zimmerman and C. Robin Lanam, MD

SSVMS VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



To learn about becoming a volunteer,
contact us at info@ssvms.org

Future of Medicine student Sonia Shaheen and Barbara Arnold, MD during SSVMS's White Coat Week.

Thank You 2023 Committee Members & Volunteers

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