

OSMA Makes “Hill Visits” to Congress

The 2011 AMA National Advocacy Conference (NAC) was held February 8-10, 2011 in Washington, DC. The AMA NAC provides leaders of the medical community from around the country the opportunity to gather and receive the latest information on various political and advocacy issues of interest to physicians and their patients.

Representing the Oklahoma State Medical Association was President K.A. Mehta, MD. Also in attendance from Oklahoma was Mary Anne McCaffree, MD, AMA Board of Trustees member; Robert Block, MD, President-elect of the American Academy of Pediatrics; and Robert Cooke, MD, 2011 President of Oklahoma County Medical Society. OSMA Executive Director Ken King, Associate Executive Director Kathy Musson, and Director of State Legislative Affairs Wes Glinsmann also attended the conference.

As in previous years, Oklahoma attendees, along with OSMA Federal Lobbyist John Montgomery, made “House Calls” to the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation and had an opportunity to personally visit with all of Oklahoma’s U.S. Senators and Representatives.

The primary message to Congress was to reiterate OSMA’s opposition to further short-term patches that have made Medicare physician payment cuts more severe and reform even more costly; and to ask Congress to permanently replace the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula with a new update formula based on medical practice cost increases. In addition, the OSMA delegation discussed our concerns about various provisions in the recently enacted health care reform legislation called the “Affordable Care Act”.

The physician contingency also asked the Oklahoma delegation to support the “Healthcare Truth and Transparency Act of 2011” recently introduced by Oklahoma Representative John Sullivan. This legislation will ensure that patients have accurate information regarding the education, training, and qualifications of individuals providing their health care services.

OSMA physicians discussed the need for national medical liability reform. While Oklahoma had significant success in reforming Oklahoma’s lawsuit abuses over the past two years, we also remain committed to reforming our medical liability system at the national level to make it more fair and just for patients, physicians, and other health care providers. OSMA urged our delegation to support the “Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare Act” (HEALTH) legislation as recently introduced by Representatives Phil Gingrey and Lamar Smith.

Additional information on OSMA Federal Legislative Agenda is available by contacting Kathy Musson, OSMA Associate Executive Director at (800) 522-9452 or by e-mail to Musson@okmed.org.