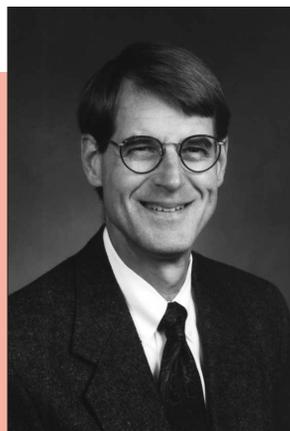


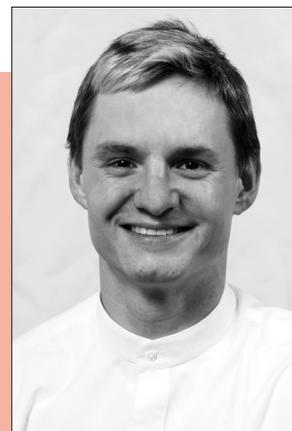
The Need for Strong Local Medical Societies: Now More Than Ever!

Is it Time for Consolidation? Voice Your Opinion

As your elected leaders, we realize that we are insiders into the work that is being done every day by the East Metro Medical Society (EMMS) and the West Metro Medical Society (WMMS) and the importance of that work to the practice of medicine. We also understand how critical it is to have multiple opportunities for physicians to participate in organized medicine in order to benefit their own practices and to enhance and supplement the work of the MMA and the AMA. Your local county medical societies provide you opportunities to participate by serving as leaders on boards, committees or task forces or by providing a forum for meaningful debates and discussions. We also offer opportunities to get involved in local public and community health efforts. EMMS and WMMS staff and physicians spearheaded metro area efforts to enact secondhand smoke ordinances in some of the largest counties in the metro area that eventually led to the state-wide Freedom to Breathe Act. We are now leading a metro area effort to make known the end of life wishes of patients by working to standardize advance care planning approaches. We have already made significant progress and have engaged the large health systems and health plans in this effort. We are also spearheading a multi-year project that would require Minneapolis restaurants to list caloric counts on their menus. These types of projects are tangible examples of what we do at EMMS and WMMS.



Richard D. Schmidt, M.D.,
WMMS Chairman



Ronnell Hansen, M.D.,
EMMS President

For more than 15 years, the EMMS and the WMMS have developed a collaborative relationship in a number of areas including infrastructure operations (staffing, office space, phone, payroll, computer system and bookkeeping), the *MetroDoctors* journal, our Web site (www.MetroDoctors.com), legislative lobbying and monitoring contracts, staffing and management of the Minnesota Provider Coalition, as well as the Minnesota Ambulatory Health Care Consortium and Joint Public Policy Council. The EMMS/WMMS synergy has benefited physician members directly, through economies of scale and shared resources, effectively allowing both organizations to engage in new projects and expand advocacy efforts without significant dues increases.

Despite these past efficiencies, the recent downturn in the economy has increased pressure on the resources of both medical societies, requiring a greater than anticipated use of investment reserves to continue focusing on the local medical society efforts. The success of our current collaborative efforts, along with the economic downturn, has prompted us to look seriously at consolidating organizations.

Over the last two decades, the combined membership of EMMS and WMMS has gone up and down. Recently membership numbers have been fairly stable. Rather than going to our members for additional dues to deal with inflation-driven cost increases or dipping further

into our reserves, the leadership of the two Societies have given serious consideration to consolidating into one metropolitan medical society. With all that we already do together, all that remains to be done is to merge our Boards, consolidate our staffs, and streamline and update our governance. We already have annual joint EMMS/WMMS board meetings and joint executive committee meetings. We jointly work on public health programs—including the recent initiative related to a metro-wide community approach to advance care planning. We have collaborated on our smoke-free projects that have spanned the metro area. We jointly caucus at the MMA Annual Meeting and often co-sponsor resolutions. The impact on our financial wellbeing will help the society get back to living on its dues revenue with the goal of maintaining our current educational, advocacy and public health initiatives without having to increase dues.

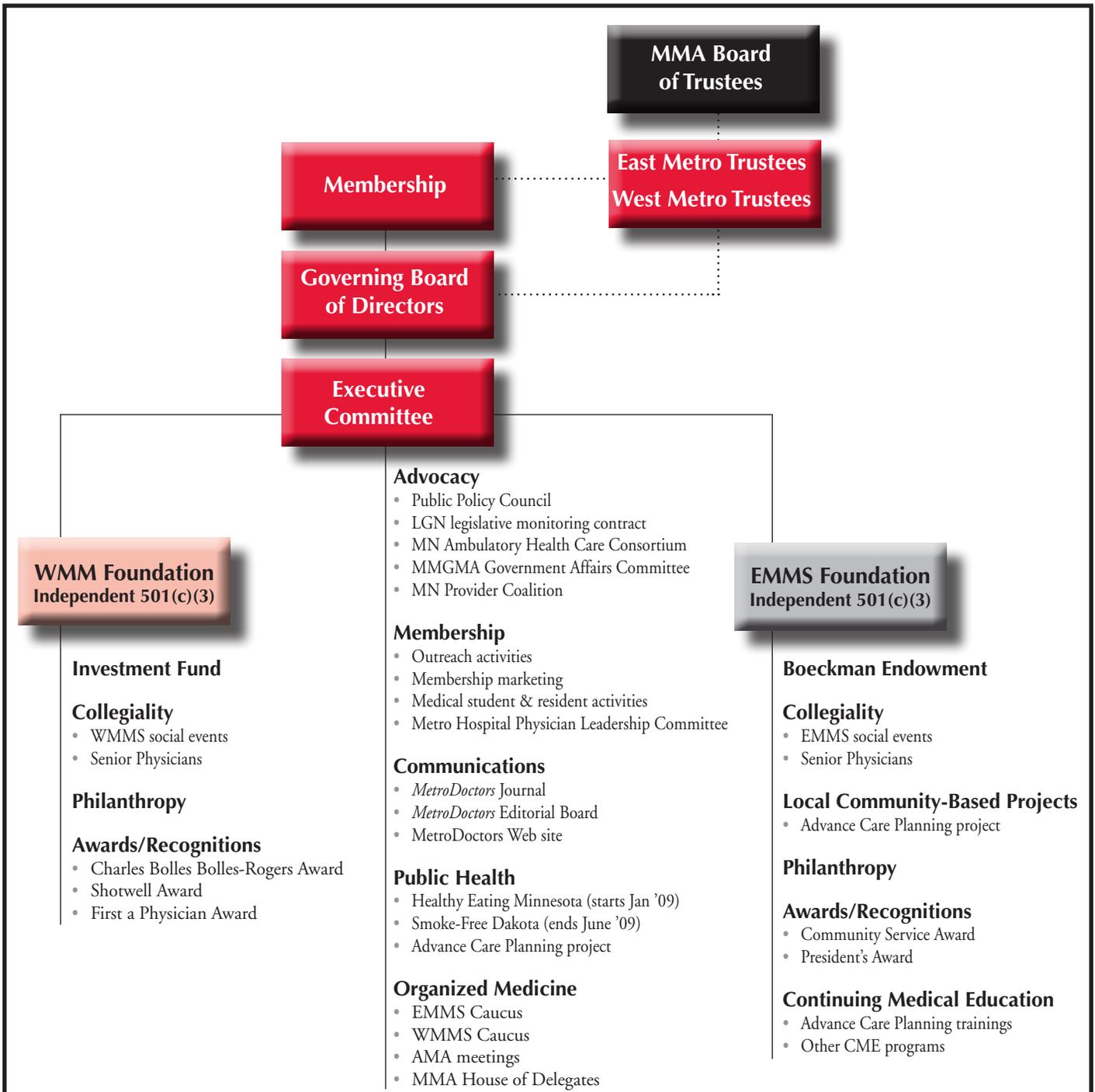
Over the course of the last nine months, we have discussed the financial realities of both societies openly with our respective boards and executive committee members. We have weighed options and have made some tough choices by way of staff reductions. It's likely that the CEO of WMMS will be retiring in the not too distant future, which

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presents a fortunate opportunity for both societies to reduce personnel costs by consolidating the executive leadership. We have also had staff take a thorough look at our expenses and cut back in areas that we felt were reasonable.

The benefits of consolidating are numerous and are not just economic. We believe that in many ways the needs of physicians in the metro area may actually be improved by giving greater voice to physician issues, enhancing leadership and member recruitment, better coordination of public health issues, and expanded advocacy efforts.

We realize, however, that despite all of the benefits there will be drawbacks and concerns. We recognize that representation on the consolidated governing board must be an important consideration as we strive to preserve the voice of physicians from the respective regions and organizations. Safeguarding the reserve funds of both organizations is also of great importance, and efforts should be made to keep those funds separate. This could be accomplished by maintaining the existing foundations of each organization (see proposed organizational chart below). MMA Trustees are assigned by district and not tied to a local medical society, so our Trustee representation on the MMA board will remain the same. Another area of concern relates to ensuring that



that there are ample opportunities for physicians to be involved in what would evolve into a larger component medical society.

We believe these issues are extremely important, but we don't believe that they are insurmountable and should not stand in the way of further exploring a consolidated structure. We also realize that other issues or concerns are likely to arise that we have not considered. If you have ideas or want to voice your opinions, we'd like to hear from you. At the end of this article, please look for ways for you to voice your opinion and concerns.

There are some differences between the organizations. One relates to our respective reserve accounts. The East Metro Medical Society was given a large endowment that has helped to support the society throughout the years. The West Metro Medical Society has also built a reserve account with earnings that have been used in a similar fashion. Upon implementation of the proposed consolidation, the remaining endowment and reserve accounts will stay with their respective 501(c)(3) foundations to continue the medically oriented philanthropic activities for which they were originally intended (as noted in the chart).

Next Steps

We want to hear from you about the proposed consolidation. We welcome the opportunity to talk with you in person via the methods listed below.

The governing boards of both organizations will make decisions related to a proposed consolidation this summer. If approved, the consolidation could be effective January 2010.

Ways to Voice Your Opinion:

- **E-mail us:** wmms@metrodoctors.com; emms@metrodoctors.com. We want to hear your comments.
- **Call us:** Sue Schettle, CEO of EMMS at (612) 362-3799; Jack Davis, CEO of WMMS at (612) 623-2899.
- **Attend an open meeting.**
EMMS: May 21, 2009 at St. Joseph's Hospital; Carondelet Room; 6 p.m.-7 p.m.
WMMS: To be announced.
- **Visit our new forum at: forum.metrodoctors.com.** Elected leaders of EMMS and WMMS will be online to answer your questions or concerns.

Signed by:

East Metro Medical Society Elected Leaders

Ronnell Hansen, M.D., President

Thomas Siefferman, M.D., President-elect

Tony Orecchia, M.D., Secretary/Treasurer

Peter Wilton, M.D., Immediate Past President

West Metro Medical Society Elected Leaders

Richard D. Schmidt, M.D., Chairman

Edward P. Ehlinger, M.D., President

Peter J. Dehnel, M.D., President-elect

Anne M. Murray, M.D., Immediate Past Chair

Eric G. Christianson, M.D., Treasurer

Melody Mendiola, M.D., Secretary ♦