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Letter from the Chairman—Marc Sedwitz, M.D.



Does XiMED matter?

Perhaps a more appropriate question is “Is there relevancy for any organized physician group in today’s healthcare environment?” Cynicism, frustration and criticism are rampant in our physician culture. As professionals, not only are we disillusioned in our expectations, but feel abandoned by, and disconnected from, our leadership. We pay dues, along with annual increases, without accountability of the organization. The AMA, ACS, national and local medical societies, as well as XiMED, all have annual membership dues. Have we become so disconnected from the act of paying these dues that we don’t have reasonable expectations in return?

After almost two years as Chief of Staff, I have come to an optimistic conclusion. This is our time. “Change your thinking and you change the world.” No organization has succeeded without the creativity, expertise, enthusiasm and commitment from its leadership. Nor has any organization survived without its membership realizing the value of being connected. In addition to feeling connected, membership must be involved, must understand the issues, and more importantly, be committed to success.

The theme of physician unity and the leveraging power of physician groups has been a consistent theme since XiMED was started over 30 years ago. What is the leverage we speak of? Is it compelling payors into better contracts or the hospital into better stipends? In a previous life, I would have said yes without hesitation. Today, the notion of leverage needs to be replaced by concepts of collaboration, gain sharing and partnership. Leverage, by itself, is not a solution.

My goal for XiMED is to function as a collaborative force supporting every private medical group in the Scripps system. The recent participation of XiMED, along with other critical medical groups to develop “Scripps Care” should be seen as a surrogate for the type of collaboration that the health system and its physician groups need to do more of. Our recent engagement with Physician Partners to develop Physician Portals (VIP Select) to improve communication for both groups, demonstrates the value of gain sharing with other physician groups. XiMED’s development of a medical malpractice program, health insurance/PEO, and our Group Purchasing program dealing with medical equipment & supplies, highlights the cost reductions available through partnership.

Private practice has always been resilient and able to adapt to the challenges that come with change. Today, it is more important than ever to remain open to new ideas and be supportive of the organizations that you belong to. I invite every member to become more involved with our organization. I challenge every member to be an effective communicator for physicians in private practice. My promise to you is that I will work tirelessly to support your best interest and will strive to ensure the success of our organization.

Marc Sedwitz, M.D.

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CEO Perspective

While healthcare reform continues its pinball journey through our legal system, the political debate continues. Many Americans view the state of the economy and the need to improve the efficiency and quality of health care as closely linked. Our current health care system is fragmented and inefficient, resulting in a constant drag on the economy. Many experts feel that in order to reduce unproductive fragmentation, better alignment among hospitals and physicians needs to occur. As the CEO for the Mayo Clinic recently said “Physicians need hospitals; hospitals need physicians. And most of all, patients need their providers to work together.” There seems little doubt that efficiency will drive alignment.

So what will alignment look like? Clinical Integration (CI) is a way physicians can work together like never before that has demonstrated efficient outcomes. Under a CI model, physicians collaborate within their specialties to identify and adopt specific clinical measures and best practice guidelines. Technology is used to capture and analyze clinical data relative to these clinical measures to help physicians measure their performance. Physicians can receive feedback on how their performance has changed over time, how it compares to other providers in the CI program, and how it compares to national benchmarks. Some measures will focus strictly on process, other measures will focus on outcomes, and measurement of actual costs will be common to both.

The benefits of Clinical Integration are also well established. Working together, physicians can pool resources providing economies of scale and scope; collaborate to develop clinical protocols aimed at improving outcomes; have input in developing reporting mechanisms to ensure optimized Pay-for-Performance results; and assist in the adoption of technology through cost sharing programs. Clinical Integration programs that are operational have demonstrated reductions in the cost and burden of complying with health plan requirements such as pre-certification and utilization review, as well as providing access to data and experience in negotiating contracts.

XiMED, as an organization, is fully engaged in developing a Clinical Integration model. Our recent collaborative effort with Scripps Mercy Physician Partners is a demonstration of that commitment. The leadership of both organizations believes that Clinical Integration will provide physicians an effective means to deliver greater efficiency while also improving quality outcomes. XiMED continues to be driven by a single imperative; specifically, to ensure that the independent private practice model not only survives but thrives in the years to come.

Tom Sounhein

XiMED at a Glance

2011 Annual Meeting

XiMED Medical Group and Scripps/XiMED LP held the 2011 Annual Meeting April 27th in the Schaezel Center Great Hall. In addition to a wonderful catered dinner by Atlanta West Catering, Guest Speaker Marc Sedwitz, SMHLJ Chief of Staff, spoke to the group.

We also held our first raffle, with prizes including an Apple iPad, and three \$150 gift cards to Donovan's Steak and Chop House.

Prize winners were:

iPad: Craig Sclar, M.D.

Donovan's:

Ernest Pund, M.D.

Frank Zalman, M.D.

Michael Porter, M.D.

CONGRATULATIONS!

XiMED Foundation

As education is one of the primary purposes of the Foundation's mission, the first educational course sponsored by the Foundation was held in February/March of 2011. XiMED, working closely with the Rady School of Management, held a 3-day course designed to familiarize physicians with core economic concepts. UCLA Professor David Ravetch addressed concepts such as cost & profit analysis, investment decision making, overhead allocation, identifying important performance measures, and building operational dashboards. 30 physicians attended from multiple physician organizations, including XiMED, Scripps and Connect the Docs, with an overwhelmingly favorable response. This course, completely underwritten by the Foundation, was the first in our Medical Leadership Forum. XiMED is making an effort to make education in healthcare

XiMED IPA

XiMED's Independent Physician Association (IPA) is alive and well with over 128 physician members. The IPA functions as a clinically integrated model of care using clinical protocols selected for use by providers that reflect local practice patterns, experience and needs. The protocols are built on evidence-based guidelines and recommendations in published medical literature. Work has started on an array of processes and interventions designed to improve quality and efficiency. Such areas will include Credentialing, Peer Review, Disease Registries, Preventive Care, EMR, Medical Home Care and more. In addition, Peer Review process is being implemented with members from the IPA. If you are interested in finding out more about the IPA, please contact XiMED Administration.