



**Sunday, June 24**

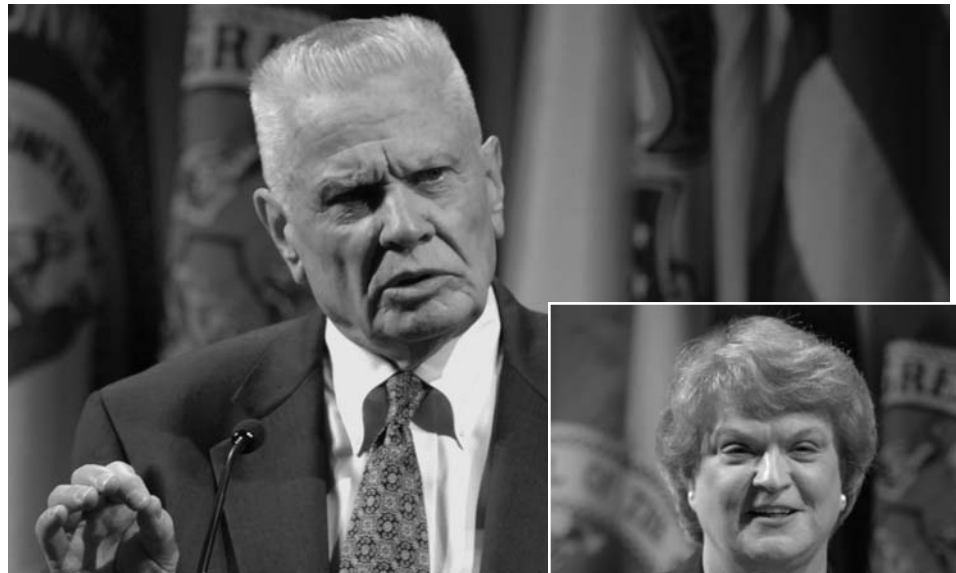
# Grasping the power of unity

At Saturday's Opening Session, AMA President William G. Plested III, MD, asked delegates to join hands, reminding them that they are part of a community that draws strength from its unity.

He then challenged delegates to work toward creating a brighter reality and future, one in which physicians steer reform in America's health care system, continue to lead quality improvement efforts and receive equitable reimbursement for their care.

"What is being asked of us is daunting," Dr. Plested said. "However, I have absolute faith in our ability to do what needs to be done. I know you will succeed simply because you are physicians. Your patients trust you—I trust you."

Also at the Opening Session, AMA executive vice president/CEO Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, detailed the AMA's advocacy efforts to prevent steep cuts in Medicare physician payments and unveiled "Faces of Health Care," a television ad asking patients to call their members of Congress. Dr. Maves also gave the audience a sneak peek at a few advertising concepts to be used in the AMA's "Voice



AMA President William G. Plested III, MD, makes a point during Saturday's Opening Session. Nancy H. Nielsen, MD, PhD, was elected AMA president-elect.



for the Uninsured" campaign, a three-year endeavor that will launch this fall.

Earlier, Roderick Dixon and Alfreda Burke performed stirring renditions of the "Star Spangled Banner" and "What's in Front of Me," a theme featured in several AMA TV and radio ads that emphasizes the power of a unified voice.

The House by acclamation elected Nancy H. Nielsen, MD, PhD, president-elect of the AMA. Dr. Nielsen is an internist from Buffalo, N.Y., who has served as speaker for the past four years. Delegates also elected Jeremy A. Lazarus, MD, a psychiatrist in Denver, to speaker.

## Monday's highlights

- **Tobacco Control Task Force Breakfast Meeting**, 7–8:30 a.m., Grand Tradition Room
- **AMA Alliance Belle Chenault Award Breakfast**, 7:30–8:30 a.m., Drake Hotel, 140 East Walton Place
- **WPC Liaisons Breakfast**, 7:30–8:45 a.m., PDR1
- **Medicare Advantage and physicians: Now what?** (CME credit), 7:30–9 a.m., Continental A
- **Litigation Center Open Meeting**, 8–9 a.m., Continental B
- **Protecting physicians' health and morale** (CME credit), 8–9:30 a.m., Williford C
- **CEJA Open Forum** (CME credit), 8–9:30 a.m., Continental C
- **CMS Physician Quality Reporting Initiative: How to participate** (CME credit), 8–9:30 a.m., Boulevard A-C
- **Forum on National Health Care Policy Agenda**, 9–11 a.m., International Ballroom
- **WPC Physician leadership: Reconciling professional standards with political demands** (CME credit), 9:30–11 a.m., Waldorf
- **Health information technology: Is it help or hype?**, 9:30–11 a.m., Grand Ballroom
- **HOD Session**, 2–5:30 p.m., International Ballroom

# Fostering harmony in hospitals

That a physician and a hospital executive could sit together and give a presentation speaks volumes about how healthy the relationship is between the organized medical staff and administration officials at White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles.

This rapport was evident Friday at “Physician-hospital relationships: Where allies, not adversaries, prevail,” an educational session sponsored by the AMA Organized Medical Staff Section. Brian Johnston, MD, the medical center’s chief of staff, and Beth Zachary, its president and chief executive officer, discussed the keys to their success in achieving an effective working relationship that physicians and administrators at many hospitals struggle to develop.

“There is value in relationships that do work and that are mutually beneficial and satisfactory,” Dr. Johnston said.

The two agreed that the building blocks to their success at White, an inner-city, 350-bed facility that provides a wide

range of patient services, are simple enough: sharing common goals, respecting one another and the roles the medical staff and hospital administration play, and having a clear understanding of expectations. Dr. Johnston noted physicians’ desire for timely, accurate and relevant information—including clinical outcomes—as a high point of the relationship.

“If you can see where you are, you can see where you’re going—and you can become an institution that learns,” Dr. Johnston said.

They also pointed out potential barriers that can create divisiveness, including economics and outside peer review. All in all, though, the marriage between the medical staff and administration at White has helped provide better and more efficient care while improving patient and physician satisfaction, Dr. Johnston said.

“And we grow fewer gray hairs in the process,” he added.

## Dr. Elders provides inspiration

“Not to know is bad. Not to want to know is worse. Not to hope is unthinkable. Not to care is unforgivable.”

Former U.S. Surgeon General M. Joycelyn Elders, MD, recited those words from an old Ebo saying on Friday evening at the AMA Minority Affairs Consortium leaders program and reception. Dr. Elders addressed the crisis in health care and the need for a new system in the United States. She specifically mapped out the role minority physicians can play to achieve this goal.

“We have all the right tools—the best doctors, the best nurses and the best hospitals in the world—but we don’t have a system to carry it,” said Dr. Elders. “We as minority physicians need to get out there and get involved.”

Before Dr. Elders’ remarks, those gathered honored 11 recipients of the AMA Foundation Minority Scholars Awards for medical students. Dr. Elders extended her congratulations to each one. “You have done a lot, but it’s not enough,” she told them. “We have a huge, unfinished agenda and there’s always more you can do.”

Also at the program, Denver County Medical Society President Johnny E. Johnson Jr., MD, detailed the ways in which minority physicians can work together within organized medicine to tear down barriers. California Latino Medical Association Chair Jose A. Arevalo, MD, spoke about the Network of Ethnic Physician Organizations and how



M. Joycelyn Elders, MD, called on minority physicians to advocate for health care system reform.

that group provides a voice on issues important to minority doctors and their patients.

### Survey results are attached.

Please consider the results of the recent Member Connect<sup>®</sup> Survey about several resolutions as you deliberate during today’s reference committee hearings.