



**Sunday, Nov. 11**

# Aloha and mahalo, delegates

During a speech that drew waves of applause at Saturday afternoon's Opening Session, AMA President Ronald M. Davis, MD, strongly urged physicians to stand at the forefront of efforts to solve the various problems affecting medicine today.

"No one in this country has more expertise in health care than we do," Dr. Davis said. "So in this dance, we need to take the lead."

Among those issues is a Medicare physician payment system that threatens to cut payments to doctors by 10 percent on Jan. 1, 2008. Describing the problem as "an imminent meltdown" and Congress' annual short-term fixes as a "pathetic yearly tourniquet approach," Dr. Davis encouraged delegates to vociferously voice their displeasure with the current system through stronger advocacy and by reconsidering their participation in Medicare.

"Most physicians are mad as hell and are in no mood to take it any



AMA President Ronald M. Davis, MD, wove a dance theme throughout his remarks.

Inset: The children's performing group of the School of Living Hula drew enthusiastic applause.



longer," he said. "Lest you have any doubt, there's as much anger on this stage as there is on the floor of this House and in physician offices across this country."

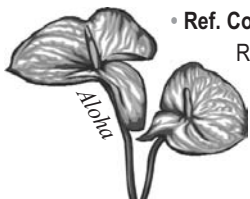
He also cited the AMA's "Voice for the Uninsured" campaign and reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program as ways to accomplish a similar goal—improving access

to care for all Americans.

The House opened with a distinctively native flair, starting with a delightful performance by local hula girls and a native chant by S. Kalani Brady, MD, winner of the Hawaii Medical Association's 2007 Physician of the Year Award.

## Sunday's highlights

- "Second Opening" Session, 8:30–9 a.m., Kalakaua Ballroom
- Ref. Committee F, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Kalakaua Ballroom
- Ref. Committee J, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Room 312
  - Ref. Committee K, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Room 311
  - Ref. Committee L, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Room 316 B and C
- Constitution and Bylaws, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Room 315
- Forum for Medical Affairs, 1–3 p.m., Room 313A



- Speaker to Speaker, 3:30–5 p.m., Room 308 B
- Physician Outreach Recruiting Reception, 5:30–7 p.m., Coral 1 and 2, Hilton Hawaiian Village

## Monday's highlights

- IMG Section Delegates Caucus, 8–9:30 a.m., Boardroom B
- Litigation Center Open Meeting, 8–9:30 a.m., Room 315
- Council on Legislation Open Forum, 8–9 a.m., Room 317B
- OMSS "Medical Staff Bylaws Standard MS.1.20," 8–9:30 a.m., Room 314

- CEJA Open Forum, 9:30–11 a.m., Room 310
- Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response "Pandemic Flu Exercise," 9:30–11 a.m., Room 312
- Private Sector Advocacy "Administrative Simplification," 9:30–11 a.m., Room 313B
- IMG Section "Communicating Effectively," 9:30–11 a.m., Boardroom A
- General Session, 2–5:30 p.m., Kalakaua Ballroom
- AMA Foundation "Uniting for the Future of Medicine" Reception, 6–7:30 p.m., Village Green, Hilton Hawaiian Village

# Loan repayment is hot topic

Resident and fellow members made phone calls to Congress on Friday to push for permanent reinstatement of the 20/220 pathway, a program that enabled residents to delay repayment of their educational loans during residency.

The 20/220 pathway was eliminated Oct. 1 as part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. Under that program, residents qualified for economic hardship deferment on their loans—delaying payment on subsidized loans for three years without accruing interest—if their debt burden was greater than 20 percent of their income, and if their income minus their debt burden was not greater than 220 percent of the federal poverty level.

After intense lobbying by the AMA, the U.S. Department of Education



Diane Shiba, MD, Seth Flagg, MD, and Michelle Davio, MD, were among those who called Congress to urge reinstatement of an economic hardship deferment program for residents.

recently announced a temporary solution to extend the program until fall 2008, while allowing current participants in the economic hardship

deferment to finish their remaining years of eligibility. And last week, a bill to restore the 20/220 pathway and make it permanent—S.2303—was introduced in the U.S. Senate.

Medical student and resident/fellow members of the AMA have been very active on this issue in recent weeks—including making phone calls to Congress, sending e-mail messages and speaking face-to-face with lawmakers. Student and resident activists have also been extremely effective in spreading the word among state and specialty societies, hospital staffs, colleagues at their institutions, and early career physicians.

The average resident physician carries a debt burden of more than \$130,000.

# Students make waves at Aloha Stadium

Nearly 40 volunteers from the AMA Medical Student Section traveled to Aloha Stadium in Honolulu Friday evening to share information about the 47 million Americans who are uninsured, the need to expand health care coverage and the AMA's proposal for a solution.

The students' visit was the third in a series of awareness events as part of the section's 2006–2008 National Service Project, "Covering the uninsured and protecting access to care." Clad in purple "Voice for the Uninsured" campaign T-shirts, the students greeted thousands of spectators at the first of two local high school football championship games, handing out materials and speaking to attendees one on one about the AMA's plan to cover the uninsured. Students also collected hundreds of signatures on a petition in support of the AMA plan.

The event mirrored several large-scale events that were part of the first stage of the AMA's "Voice for the Uninsured" campaign, which aims to influence voters to demand that the next U.S. president put health care system reform at the top of the national agenda.



Student members Mark Pascua and Joseph Nezgoda urge football fans to vote with the uninsured in mind.



**See the attached survey results.**

Please consider the results of the recent Member Connect<sup>®</sup> Survey at today's reference committee hearings.