



## 2008 Annual Meeting Highlights for the AMA House of Delegates

**Wednesday, June 18**

# “Now is the time”

In an inaugural address that brought the Crystal Ballroom's standing room only crowd to its feet, AMA President Nancy H. Nielsen, MD, PhD, called on the nation's physicians to lead an effort to change America's health care system for the better.

Surrounded by family and friends, the internist from Buffalo, N.Y., urged doctors to take the initiative and work with other stakeholders in health care to address the many issues affecting physicians and patients. She pointed to the engineering used in building bridges to highlight the unique opportunity facing organized medicine.

“Why not start weaving wires into cables—join with patients, employers and maybe even insurers—to build a bridge to a better future, where the real enemies are not each other, but disease, despair and untimely death?” she said. “Each strand in that bundled cable has to be strong, and each strand has to be accountable. Accountable not only for its own strength and its own integrity, but to the paramount responsibility—the health of our patients.”

She said one of the most pressing issues is the fact that 47 million Americans lack health insurance, a situation Dr. Nielsen described as “unconscionable.” She called for more collaboration between physicians and insurers, and less government interference, to ensure that everyone can purchase affordable health insurance and “not be pawns of an employer's choices.” And she said the nation's physicians can provide leadership by applying the same commitment, courage, determination and dedication they use when treating their patients.



AMA President Nancy H. Nielsen, MD, PhD, was inaugurated Tuesday night.

“Let's step forward, lead and design that bridge,” Dr. Nielsen said. “We can build it strong and beautiful, and with devotion. We know the problems better than anyone. And we must be the civil engineers who design the solutions.”

Dr. Nielsen closed her remarks with a simple message for insurers, federal lawmakers and the two presidential candidates, U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ari., and U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.: Help physicians build a bridge to a better health care system—today.

“Now is the time,” she said. “Not soon. Not someday. The time is now.”

## A healing hand

In a touching speech Tuesday night, AMA Immediate Past President Ronald M. Davis, MD, acknowledged his colleagues and friends for their inspiration throughout his presidency. But he honored one colleague in particular with whom he shares a special bond—AMA President Nancy H. Nielsen, MD, PhD. “I'm one of the few in this room who has felt the touch of her healing hand,” he said.

Dr. Davis recalled a trip to a World Medical Association meeting, where she acted as not only his colleague but also as his physician consultant. “[A]ll of us at the AMA are most fortunate to have her as our next leader. We are in very capable hands.”

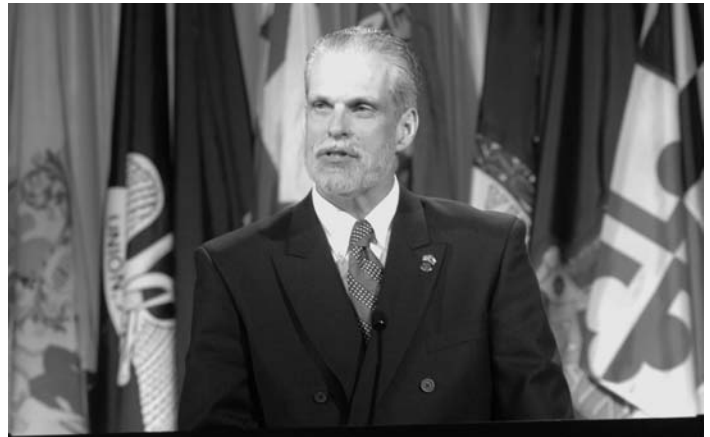


# The votes are in

On Tuesday, the House of Delegates elected Mary Anne McCaffree, MD, a neonatal-perinatal medicine specialist from Oklahoma City to the AMA Board of Trustees and re-elected William A. Hazel Jr., MD, an orthopaedic surgeon from Northern Virginia.

Dr. McCaffree's election to the Board of Trustees opened an additional spot on the AMA Council on Science and Public Health. In addition to Louis Kraus, MD, a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Highland Park, Ill., and Albert J. Osbahr, MD, an occupational medicine physician in Hickory, N.C., delegates also elected Mario Motta, MD, a cardiovascular disease specialist in Gloucester, Mass., to the council.

Also on Tuesday, the House elected Fort Worth, Texas, pediatric allergist and immunologist Susan Rudd Bailey, MD, to the AMA Council on Medical Education. Kansas City, Kan., internist Joe T. McDonald, MD, was elected to the resident/fellow physician position on this council. In addition, Robert E. Hertzka, MD, an anesthesiologist from Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., and William E. Kobler, MD, a family physician from Rockford, Ill., were elected to the AMA Council on Medical Service.



J. James Rohack, MD, a Texas cardiologist, was named president-elect of the AMA Saturday.

By acclamation on Saturday, Bryan, Texas, cardiologist J. James Rohack, MD, was elected president-elect; Denver psychiatrist Jeremy A. Lazarus, MD, was elected speaker; and Altoona, Pa., hand surgeon Andrew W. Gurman, MD, was elected vice speaker.

## Next steps in med ed

With a predicted physician shortage and a rising senior population set to converge in the coming years, ensuring that tomorrow's doctors are well-versed in geriatric care is a major challenge facing medical schools across the country.

Rosanne Leipzig, MD, vice chair of the geriatrics and medicine departments at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, made that point during an educational session Saturday by the AMA Section on Medical Schools. New competencies in geriatric medicine developed by the Association of American Medical Colleges can help achieve that goal, she said.

"Almost every graduate of every medical school will be providing care to older adults, especially during their internships," Dr. Leipzig said. "We've got to make sure the people taking care of these patients have the best information."

The program also featured innovations in faculty development. Michael Grossman, MD, associate dean of graduate medical education at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, shared his school's experience using "faculty learning communities," groups of eight to 14 faculty members with different competencies who work together to build upon their teaching approaches.

Later, Susan Nedza, MD, of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services spoke about how performance measures developed by the AMA-convened Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement can be used in medical education.

## An in-depth look at blast injuries

Physicians heard an overview of the unique knowledge and skills required to effectively respond to a mass casualty explosive or bombing event during "Bombings: Injury patterns and care," an educational session presented Monday by the AMA Center for Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response.

John Armstrong, MD, a surgeon in Gainesville, Fla., covered a number of topics, including the uniqueness of blast injury, the most common types of blast injuries and the appropriate treatment (pre-hospital and initial hospital) for these injuries. Based on an all-hazards disaster response training program developed with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the session also featured an extended question-and-answer session.

[www.bt.cdc.gov/masscasualties/injuryfactsheets.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/masscasualties/injuryfactsheets.asp)

Visit [www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org) to view the opening speech by Ronald M. Davis, MD.