

MAA President Letter

John A. Johnson, MD, MBA, FACP

Chief Medical Officer – Government Employees Health Association, Inc. (GEHA)



It is truly a privilege to be named the president of the Medical Association of Atlanta and serve you, my colleagues, and friends as we work to advance the practice of medicine, explore critical issues, and push for policies that contribute to the well-being of Atlanta's citizens. I want to thank Dr. Fonda Mitchell for her exceptional leadership over the past year. We are fortunate to have such inspiring individuals within our ranks.

Like many of you, I joined MAA to advocate for my patients and other physicians. Over the years, I have enjoyed incredible opportunities made possible by the MAA to collaborate with physician leaders, legislators and other stakeholders who kindly shared their wisdom and experiences with me.

The countless lessons that I have learned through this association aided me immensely in my private practice and service in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. Today, I draw on those lessons in my current role as the Chief Medical Officer of the Government Employees Health Association, Inc. (GEHA).

I am awed by the collective strength we bring to important issues when we speak from an informed perspective and with a unified voice as the MAA. As I step into this leadership role, I am guided by four strategic priorities: increasing membership and strengthening member engagement, enhancing the mentorship program, expanding partnerships with key stakeholders, and promoting health equity initiatives. Health equity is close to my heart, especially among our military veterans.

By the time you read this, Veterans Day will be upon us, a time when Americans, regardless of political affiliation or persuasion, reflect on the cost of freedom. Tragically, that balance sheet continues to grow, as many military veterans face a healthcare crisis today – one represented in the starkest terms by the number 22, the number of veterans known to die from suicide each day.

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The Medical Association of Atlanta (MAA) is a non-profit association founded in 1854 dedicated to the advancement of organized medicine in the Atlanta, GA area. MAA membership is made up of the most actively-involved participants in organized medicine who have united their individual voices and efforts into one cohesive body of progress, representing the new face of organized medicine in areas of legislation, community service, and individual patient care.



EVENTS

MAA Summer Gala

The MAA hosted its annual Summer Gala at The Georgia Aquarium on July 22, 2023. Physicians joined for an evening of fun and networking. Over 300 attendees watched as the next MAA Executive Committee began their year of leadership: Dr. John A. Johnson - President, Dr. Cody McClatchey - President-Elect, Dr. Carmen Kavali - Treasurer, Dr. Shamie Das - Secretary, Dr. Fonda Mitchell - Board Chair.



MAA Executive Director David Waldrep speaks to the crowd.



MAA Board Chair Dr. Fonda Mitchell initiates the oath of office.



MAA President Dr. John A. Johnson and his wife Donna Johnson.



Members of the MAA Board.

[All event photos can be found here.](#)

EVENTS

MAA House of Delegates Caucus Meeting

The MAA delegates for MAG HOD met at Emory on September 20, 2023 to prepare and discuss resolutions.



MAA Joint Meeting With Cobb County Medical Society

The MAA hosted a joint meeting with Cobb County Medical Society in September. Members and guests listened to First Lady of Georgia Marty Kemp and Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr speak about human trafficking in Georgia. Rescuing Hope provided important information for how to spot and assist potential victims of human trafficking.



Rescuing Hope can set up specialized training for any physicians interested in learning more about how to spot potential indicators of victims of trafficking: jennifererescuinghope.com.

DIAGNOSIS: TRAFFICKED

Indicators of Sexual Exploitation for Medical Professionals



The most significant barrier to helping victims of sex trafficking is also the most basic:
identifying them.

In a 2014 survey of survivors, 88% reported they received medical attention during the time they were being trafficked.

These interactions didn't end with the victim exiting a life of exploitation, not because those medical professionals didn't care, but because *they had no idea they were looking at a victim.*

TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN THE INDICATORS!

A victim of sex trafficking may:

- Appear scared, nervous, submissive
- Not make eye contact
- Provide short answers, or answers that sound rehearsed, to your questions
- Be accompanied by an older, controlling person who answers questions for them
- Provide a false ID, or the ID is controlled by another person
- Provide only a first name
- Lie about his/her age
- Not know what city/state they're in
- Display signs of physical abuse, such as bruises, burns, cuts, broken bones, scars, broken teeth or black eyes

- Be reluctant to explain injuries
- Not remember the date of their last physical examination
- Have evidence of multiple STDs
- Have evidence of sexual trauma
- Have tattoos or other forms of "branding" that could indicate ownership
- Be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Wear excessive makeup and/or be dressed inappropriately
- Appear malnourished
- Rarely smile
- Resist treatment and appear afraid that providing information will lead to an arrest

If multiple indicators are present, your patient may be a victim of sex trafficking.
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To request specialized training for your team, email training@rescuinghope.com.

For Help and to Report Suspicions, Call 911 or:
Georgia Coalition to Combat Human Trafficking
866-363-4842
National Human Trafficking Hotline
888-373-7888



www.rescuinghope.com

AWARDS



Dr. John A. Johnson received Profiles in Diversity Journal® Veteran Leadership™ Award.



Dr. Jayne Morgan receives the MAA President's Award from Dr. Fonda Mitchell.



Dr. Carmen Kavali receives the Aven Cup Award from Dr. Fonda Mitchell.

GEORGIA PHYSICIANS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The following is an interview with MAA Member Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD, FACP, FAMWA and Professor of Clinical Medicine at Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership describing her experience as a member of the Georgia Physicians Leadership Academy (GPLA). GPLA was established in 2007 to “develop physician leaders who will enhance the medical profession and the health care system and the quality of life in the state”. The six session program is a year-long. [Learn more about the GPLA program here.](#)



Why did you want to participate in the GPLA program?

Having returned to GA after a 12 year hiatus in IN, I learned about the GPLA program and realized it offered an opportunity to reestablish connections, and to help be develop leadership opportunities in the area. State medical organizations play a pivotal role in the practice of medicine in a community. I wanted to be a part of the action and learn from our more seasoned members how to make the most impact.

What was the biggest thing you learned from your experience?

Where to start? First, the interaction with the other participants was important and necessary. Learning about their practices from all over the state and in a variety of settings was eye opening. To then see them in action at the MAG Legislative Day was fabulous! For example, Dr. Angela Highbaugh-Battle spoke eloquently about the challenges that pediatric physicians face when Medicaid was not expanded. It was perfect! Concise, informative and carried impact.

Would you recommend to other MAA members? If so, why?

When one starts in GPLA, the focus that you start with is greatly expanded as you learn and grow. What was impressive is that the leaders of GPLA are dedicated to the progress of the participants. We had a session with physicians who have/are elected officials. They came from all over the state and were straightforward about the work they have done and why. To know they felt it was important to be there for us moved us all. At every session, alumni were invited back and it was interesting to see the impact GPLA had on their careers. It was not always immediate and not always in the direction they had originally foreseen, but it was always positive.

What are you doing to avoid gun violence in your centers?

MAA Sponsor Submission – Southeast Primary Care Partners



Southeast Primary Care Partners is a Platinum Sponsor.



Written by Jeff Stone, MD,
North Atlanta Primary Care

On May 5th of this Spring a lone assailant walked into a medical office facility and opened fire killing one and critically injuring 4 others before disappearing into the street. Allegedly seeking help for his mental illness and frustrated, he took it out on innocent victims that had little time to react. In the floor above, as the situation unfolded, Omar Rashid, MD (North Atlanta Primary Care, Midtown) and his staff quietly hid waiting for the clear signs and escaped a tragedy that might have been worse. Correctly hiding in the Active Shooter Training of “Run, Hide, Fight” sequence instruction, Dr. Rashid and his office avoided catastrophe. Unfortunately, this situation is not so rare anymore. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care workers are five times as likely to experience violence as employees in other industries. Moreover, the prevalence of workplace violence in healthcare settings has increased significantly with the pandemic and the consensus is that incidences of workplace violence in healthcare are vastly underreported as many healthcare workers view this as part of their job. Motivated by these statistics Southeast Primary Care Partners is working to reduce the risk and mitigate factors leading to violence.

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Community Engagement Specialist Introduction

MAA Sponsor Submission – Pfizer



Pfizer is a Platinum Sponsor.

Pfizer developed the Community Engagement Specialist role to support the community and its educational needs



Lauren E. Kelly
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Growing up in rural South Carolina, I know firsthand the importance of advocacy through community engagement. Since graduating from Meharry Medical College, I have dedicated my career to promoting health equity and mentoring younger generations.

- I am a Community Engagement Specialist, serving the Georgia, Alabama area. As part of Pfizer's Vaccine Equity team, our mission is to advocate for vaccine equity in underserved communities alongside community-based organizations like yours.
- In order to successfully advocate for vaccine equity, we believe it's critical that we first acknowledge the systemic barriers that have prevented so many from fair and equitable access for so long.
- I am dedicated to improving access to relevant educational resources about COVID-19 and pneumococcal vaccines.
- I am here to answer your questions and provide educational resources to support you and the community.

Let's connect!

We are here to listen, learn from you, and provide meaningful resources to connect with the community.



Resources

Provide educational materials and resources to positively impact vaccination and community health



Connection

Connect with and learn from community leaders to help address health equity challenges



Feedback

Share direct feedback with Pfizer to help shape development of future tools and resources

“My name is Lauren E. Kelly and I am the newly hired Community Engagement Specialist covering GA, AL. My role is a non-sales and will strictly focus on providing health education resources on COVID-19 and Pneumococcal vaccines. As we move into the next phase of COVID-19, our goal is to ensure that people in this community, along with those who care for and support them, continue to remain vigilant. We believe that making sure communities are still educated about COVID-19 is extremely important. Aside from yourself, who else within your organization would you recommend I speak to concerning efforts to provide education and address misinformation concerning COVID-19 or pneumococcal vaccinations? We recognize the power that our collective efforts can have as we work to achieve common goals aimed at helping to reduce health inequities. Please feel free to contact me to schedule an in-person or virtual meeting.”



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May 2023

Exposing Potential Risk Factors Within Your Practice

MAA Sponsor Submission - Piedmont Internal Medicine



Piedmont Internal Medicine is a Silver Sponsor.

Since the state Supreme Court overturned the 2005 legislation that set a cap of \$350,000 on non-economic damages in lawsuits in 2010, Georgia has been named "the #1 Judicial Hellhole® in 2022". The fallout has resulted in over 53 nuclear verdicts in personal injury and wrongful death cases to over \$3 billion dollars between 2010 and 2019.¹ With these types of settlement numbers, it makes sense to have malpractice litigation and tort reform to be at the top of the priority list in our industry. The issue is so contentious, that a new nonprofit coalition named "Competitive Georgia" was formed in August of this year to bring awareness to the public on harmful consequences of "lawsuit abuses".² Thanks to the lobbying efforts made by various healthcare related professional organizations, physician friendly state legislators, and Governor Kemp it looks like tort reform will be at the top of the 2024 Georgia State Assembly's agenda. [CLICK TO READ](#)



Written by Kelly Ladd, FACMPE,
CEO/Practice Administrator of
Piedmont Internal Medicine

Secure Act 2.0: Strengthening Retirement Security for Americans

MAA Sponsor Submission - Capstone Financial Advisors



Capstone Financial Advisors is a Silver Sponsor.

In a world where financial security in retirement is becoming increasingly uncertain, the government is taking steps to address the growing retirement crisis. The Secure Act 2.0, a significant piece of legislation, aims to build on the success of the original Secure Act of 2019 by further enhancing retirement savings options and security for Americans. In this article, we will delve into the key provisions and implications of Secure Act 2.0. [CLICK TO READ](#)



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SPONSOR: The MAA offers sponsors a comprehensive 3-tiered program providing company promotion, face-to-face contact, and recognition - with custom advertising and marketing plans and assistance upon request.

ADVERTISE: The MAA offers opportunities to advertise your business across various communications channels and social media platforms. We have weekly and quarterly newsletters, a 6x/year print magazine, ad hoc emails, a presence on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and TikTok, and relationships with other nonprofit associations to share your message with the largest audience possible.

BENEFIT HIGHLIGHT



Members receive four free and confidential sessions of high quality counseling and resources.



Members have an online directory tool to find physicians as well as convenient job search tools whether you are looking to hire or seeking a new opportunity.



Members have the opportunity to publish work in MAA online media as well as Atlanta Medicine, published 6 times annually.

SAVE THE DATE

MAA HOLIDAY SOIRÉE
PRESENTED BY BENTLEY ATLANTA

December 1st, 2023

10995 Westside Pkwy, Alpharetta, GA 30009



BENTLEY

BENTLEY ATLANTA

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As the largest component society of the Medical Association of Georgia, MAA is committed to its mission to develop leaders to ensure the health and safety of our citizens. We applaud the continued contributions of our members and welcome any Georgia physician seeking to grow as a leader to join us.

Roy Abrahamian
Aminat Adewumi
Craig Akoh
Michael Amin
Michael Araya
Anastacia Bankey
Mary Camacho
Charles Campbell
Adam Carlisle
Matthew Carroll
William Cooper
William Dinsfriend
Desiree D'Moore
Peyer Flueckiger
James Franklin Sr
Natalie Givens
Samuel Heery
Walid Hmissa
Charles Hunter
Isabella Iwanicki

Taylor James
Dana Kajan
Turkan Banu Karatas
Mena Kerolus
Sofia Khan
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Katherine Kunkel
Mendy Lebowitz
Julia Liu
Shreya Mahadevan
Roshin Matthew
Jonathon Monroe
Elizabeth Moss
David Murphy
Helen O'Leary
Shivani Palanivel
Kalindi Parikh
Neeya Patel

Sathish Perumal
Julio Ptilon
Fahmia Rahman
Shubhra Rajpurohit
Vibhiv Rangara
Anna Rappaport
Nicholas Robinson
Robert Rollings
Kevin Rymut
Anuj Saluja
Andrew Sloan
Greg Soifer
Hallie Stevens
Nicholas Trum
Megan WAsson
Sarah Wishloff
Zubin Yavar
Sarah Yoon
Amy Youm

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Your sponsorships have been a benefit to our association.
Our appreciation is immeasurable for your contributions to our mission.

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