

The Leg.Up

Local, state and national news of interest to the physician community

November 16, 2016

Will President Trump Repeal Obamacare on Day One?

Will President-elect Donald Trump keep his campaign pledge to "repeal and replace" Obamacare? Click [here](#) for a balanced overview of various scenarios from Kaiser Health News.

Kaiser's Julie Rovner "notes that finding a replacement that Republicans can agree on will not be quick, especially if they try to find ways to maintain coverage for the 20 million people who gained insurance under the law."



Remember when?

Repealing the entire law would require 60 votes in the Senate, "unless they get rid of the filibuster, which seems unlikely," she says. "They can repeal parts of it using a budget process, but even that will take some time, because, in order to get to that bill, they have to do a budget resolution first."

The tricky part for Trump and his new GOP-majority Congress: How can they repeal parts of the law while not taking health insurance coverage away from 20 million people?

Click [here](#) for an exclusive Wall Street Journal interview in which

Trump says he favors keeping the Affordable Care Act's prohibition against insurers denying coverage for patients' pre-existing conditions and the provision that allows parents to provide coverage for children on their plans up to age 26.

Trump's comments "added to a sense of whiplash about the law and its future" as more than 100,000 Americans rushed to buy healthcare under the ACA on the day after last Tuesday's election, [reports](#) The New York Times.

Trump's [health care platform](#) drops all mention of reining in high drug prices, which he'd espoused for months, and adds new language about modernizing Medicare, "a potential nod to congressional efforts to give people vouchers toward buying private health insurance," the Times reports.

Click [here](#) for a Wall Street Journal article asking, "Are Republicans, now in full control of the government, gearing up for a fight over Medicare as well as the Affordable Care Act? Remarks by Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan that the two are entwined raised the prospect that the popular seniors' health program may be on the table."

Click [here](#) for some fact-checking on Ryan's claims linking Medicare and Obamacare.

Trump's election has made the health care industry - which has invested heavily to operate under the ACA - "disoriented about what to do next, and scrambling for ways to avoid a financial shock. A repeal of the act would mean the loss of millions of customers for insurance companies and uninsured people turning to hospital emergency rooms for care," [says](#) the Times.

Various scenarios for repeal - whether through budget provisions or court rulings - have some observers wondering if the insurance industry could be facing what some call a "death spiral" - where healthy consumers would refuse to pay higher premiums should Congress and the new president eliminate subsidies for less healthy Americans.

Click [here](#) for more about how the health care industry was unprepared for Trump's victory, with executives at insurance companies and hospital systems scrambling to navigate uncertain waters.

Drug-makers, on the other hand, may be breathing a collective sigh of relief after getting grilled in Congress all year about soaring drug prices, [reports](#) The Washington Post.

"A single sentence in President-elect Donald Trump's health care platform sends a strong hint to the drug and medical device industry that they may have an easier time getting their products on the market under his administration," the Post reports.

That sentence from Trump's platform is: "Reform the Food and Drug Administration, to put greater focus on the need of patients for new and innovative medical products." Click [here](#) to read Trump's entire healthcare plan.

And click [here](#) to read about the GOP's internal rift over whether there should be a slow, orderly revision of the law or whether Trump should sign a repeal bill on his Inauguration Day in January.

And read [here](#) to see how some people aren't all that worried about losing what they consider too pricey healthcare coverage in federal exchanges. Kaiser Health News reports that the most worried consumers are on the AARP side of the ledger, while their juniors "may welcome a change."

Welcome New Trustees and RAM Trust Scholarship Winner!

Please welcome our new slate of RAM officers announced by **Immediate Past President Dr. Peter A. Zedler** at last night's General Membership meeting:

Returning Trustees: **Dr. Joseph W. Boatwright III**, a family physician in Richmond, and **Dr. Kinloch Nelson** of Virginia Urology.

New Trustees: **Dr. Michael J. Menen**, Chief Medical Officer at CJW Hospitals, HCA Virginia; **Dr. Joan E. Rountree** of Dermatology Associates of Virginia; and **Dr. Margaret Sigman** of Advance Allergy and Asthma of Virginia.

The Academy also thanked departing Trustees **John F. Butterworth IV, MD; Clifford L. Deal III, MD; Aaron S. Rosenberg, DO, MBA;** and student representative **Michael F. Armstrong.**

RAM President Dr. Harry D.

Bear provided a great summary of the Academy's activities in the past year to attract new members and continuing the vital work of RAM and its



Dr. Butterworth (I) receives thanks and gift from Dr. Bear.

many affiliates and business units. He also announced the first winner of the **RAM Trust Scholarship: Jessica Lee.**

Jessica is a second-year medical student at the VCU School of Medicine where she continues to excel academically and takes part in many leadership and community service endeavors. She has received the VCU School of Medicine Robert C. Bryan Prize in Pathology and was recently inducted into the VCU School of Medicine Pathology Honor Society.



RAM Trust Scholarship Winner Jessica Li with Dr. Jerry Strauss, Dean of the VCU School of Medicine, and RAM President Dr. Harry Bear.

Watch for an article in the Winter 2017 edition of *Ramifications* to learn more about this gifted and committed medical student from Martinsville.

The "Disease of Addiction" IS Treatable

Chief Deputy State Health Commissioner Dr. S. Hughes Melton delivered a forceful, fact-packed message about the "disease of addiction" last night at the Academy's General Membership meeting with promises of more educational help to come.



Conceding that treating addiction is "frustrating for a lot of different reasons," Melton stressed the importance of addressing the issue because "10 percent of the population has the disease."

So whether or not physicians commonly encounter the problem in their regular practice of medicine, he said, "It's such a common problem, physicians in our community are expected to know about the disease."

Covering a wide range of issues, treatments and reporting requirements, he noted that since 2013 drug overdoses have become the leading cause of accidental deaths in Virginia. Today, three Virginians die daily from drug overdoses, a rate that keeps spiking because of deadly fentanyl and heroin.

Physicians aren't immune, either. "Our risk of addiction is higher than the average population. It's affecting our own colleagues."

Despite such alarming trends, Melton said hope can be found in recent advances in neurological science and evidence-based treatments that have success rates of 40-50 percent.

It's important to remember that "while it starts as a series of bad decisions, once you have had the disease, it's not a choice. The brain has rewired itself."

As more is learned about such neurological changes, "The challenge for us as physicians is that so much of that body of knowledge is pretty new."

If you have questions, Dr. Melton can be reached at Hughes.Melton@vdh.virginia.gov.

Melton said he plans to offer a series of one-day workshops on addiction treatment for doctors and their practice personnel early next year starting in February. Look for more information in The Leg.Up.

"Patients with addictions need treatment and treatment works," he concluded.

Honoring Choices On the Move!

Honoring Choices ® Virginia

is pleased to announce ten new sites to our growing network that now totals more than 37 participating partners. Each site is committed to offering quality advance care planning conversations to their patients using the Respecting Choices model.



Some of our great new Facilitators!

We look forward to continued growth of this regional collaborative initiated by RAM with the support and trained personnel of VCU Health, Bon Secours Richmond and HCA Virginia.

Interested? Please contact Robin Cummings, director of Honoring Choices Virginia, at rcummings@ramdocs.org or 804-

Please check out our new partner sites:

Bon Secours Richmond Health System

- Care-A-Van & St. Joseph's Outreach Clinic
- Aylett Medical Center
- Cardiovascular Associates of Virginia, Forest office



HCA Virginia

- Progressive Neurovascular Care Unit, Henrico Doctors' Hospitals Forest Campus
- Interventional Cardiac Unit, Henrico Doctors' Hospitals Forest Campus
- Radiation Oncology, Johnston-Willis Hospital
- Heart Failure, Chippenham Hospital

VCU Health

- Dalton Radiation Oncology
- Neurology, Orthopaedic, and Wellness Center-Neurology
- Cardiology Navigator Program

Brooks Brothers' Special Discounts Thursday to All RAM and RAMA Members!

Brooks Brothers at Stony Point is offering a special 25 percent discount tomorrow (**Thursday, Nov. 17**) for corporate clients, which includes **all members of the Richmond Academy of Medicine** and the **Richmond Academy of Medicine Alliance**!

There also will be a 20 percent discount on any special order clothing. For more information, call store manager Jim Moore at 804-272-8424 or email Jim at jmoore@brooksbrothers.com.

The store is located at 9200 Stony Point Parkway, Richmond, Va. 23235.

Del. McClellan Announces Run for McEachin's State Senate Seat

Del. Jennifer L. McClellan, D-Richmond, said this week that she is running for the now vacant Senate seat of **Congressman-elect**

Donald McEachin, [reports](#) the Times-Dispatch.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe hasn't set a date for the election to fill McEachin's state Senate seat, representing parts of the city of Richmond and Henrico and Hanover counties, and all of Charles City County.

Del. Lamont Bagby, D-Henrico, is a potential rival for the Dems' nomination, the TD reports, along with Michael Dickenson, a frequent candidate in recent local elections.

McClellan, 43, has been a member of the House since 2006. She serves an attorney for Verizon Communications. Bagby, 39, has served on Henrico's school board and last year was elected to the House to fill Joe Morrissey's seat.

McClellan said the nomination is likely to be determined in an open primary for all Democrats in the 9th state Senate District. No word yet on GOP opposition.



High Cost of Care-Giving

If your patients seem stressed out by the cost of caring for an ailing parent, a new AARP survey shows that 3 out of 4 caregivers absorb out-of-pocket costs averaging nearly \$7,000 a year.

"Those costs consumed the equivalent of a fifth of caregivers' incomes on average - and the burdens were even greater for those with lower incomes," Kaiser Health News [reports](#).



Patients with dementia take the heaviest financial toll, with annual expenses nearing \$11,000.

Larry Sabato's Mea Culpa on Election Predictions & Interactive Map

Click [here](#) for the post-election "Mea Culpa" of our friend **Dr. Larry Sabato** of UVa. who was RAM's featured speaker in September. You

might recall he thought the nation was prepared to elect the first female president.

Here's how it begins: "Well, what can we say - we blew it.

"We thought the signs pointed to Hillary Clinton winning the White House. We thought that even if she lost Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio, her Midwestern 'firewall' of states that not only had voted for Barack Obama twice, but hadn't voted for a Republican since the 1980s, would hold for her. It didn't - Trump blew a hole in what we dubbed 'Fortress Obama.'



Sabato with clothes pin for nose placement

"Remarkably, this all happened while Clinton was winning Virginia by a larger margin than Obama did in 2012 and almost certainly winning the national popular vote."

Click [here](#) for an interesting map from the Virginia Public Access Project that shows sharp divisions in the Virginia body politic.

Click [here](#) for an interactive map from the New York Times that provides a brief synopsis of how Trump won, including quick captions such as this: "Mr. Trump ultimately surpassed 270 electoral votes by flipping several states that President Obama won in 2008 and 2012, including Iowa, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin."

The latest tally shows Trump with 290 electoral votes vs. Clinton's 232.

Click [here](#) to see a recent count showing Clinton leading by about 1 million votes for a narrow 1 percent lead in the popular vote: 48 percent to 47 percent for President-Elect Trump.

VCU Health Ready to Open New Stony Point Facility

VCU Health is putting the finishing touches on its \$14 million, 60,000-square-foot medical office building in Stony Point, [reports](#) the Times-Dispatch.

The building at 9019 Stony Point Drive is part of **MCV Physicians'**



"strategy to increase access to the community," said Julie Liston, interim vice president for ambulatory services.

MCV Physicians' Department of Dermatology will have space on the second and third floors, and the health system's ear nose and throat services (including audiology and speech therapy) will move to the building. Click [here](#) to learn more.

A Young MBA Tells a Doctor When to Round First

There are some great hospital administrators, but Dr. Suneel Dhand recently [blogged](#) about one who was a control freak.



As billing or other bottom line issues take precedence over the physician's own professional judgment, he [writes](#) in

KevinMD.com, "Is there any way that physicians can wrestle back a bit of control over their own profession to avoid situations like this that are becoming the norm?

"Because if we can't, and the practice of medicine is no longer led by doctors, it's not only the doctors who lose. Patients will too."

In the Company of Heroes

We salute the Academy's many veterans, many of whom still serve abroad in reserve units. We wish them - along with their supportive spouses, parents, and children - all the best on our recent Veterans Day.

If you'd like to read about members' experiences serving as combat surgeons in *Ramifications*, click [here](#) to read about **Dr. Clifford Deal**, [here](#) for **Dr. Glenn Kerr** and [here](#) for **Dr. David Bettinger**.



*Dr. Glenn Kerr of
OrthoVirginia*

Maximize Your Electronic Health Record and Improve Work-Life Balance

[The Doctors Company](#), which offers exclusive malpractice insurance benefits to RAM members, offers new advice on how optimizing EHRs can help physicians focus on caring for patients and maintaining a good work-life balance. Click [here](#).



Advice Docs Should Follow, but Often Don't

Here's an online antidote for the gut-

wrenching, anxiety-producing, and generally tense events of the past few months. The election? Of course not! We're talking about a typical day in the life of an American doctor:

"As we drown in the overwhelm of modern day health care duties, most physicians I know, including myself, fail to follow their own advice," [writes](#) Dr. Emily Gibson, in KevinMD.com.

Here are a few of the lessons offered by this family physician from rural Washington state:



"Don't skip meals because you are too busy to chew. Ever. Especially if there is family involved.

"Take a day off from caring for others to care for yourself. Even a hug from yourself counts as a hug.

"Connect regularly with people and activities that have absolutely nothing to do with medicine and health care.

"Start your work day on time. End your work day a little before you think you ought to.

"Smile at people who are not expecting it, especially your co-workers. Smile at people who you think don't warrant it. If you can't get your lips to smile, smile with your eyes.

"Practice gratitude daily. Doctoring is the best work there is anywhere and be blessed by it even on the days you prefer to forget."

Attend an Upcoming Legislator Meet & Greet

Please join us on **Wednesday, November 30th** or **Wednesday, December 7th** for one of our annual legislator meet and greets. Get to know your elected officials! Come out and enjoy light refreshments and a discussion of physicians' concerns. We want to see you there!

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30
7:00 - 8:00 a.m.

Henrico Doctors' Hospital



Nov. 30
7:00 a.m.

Henrico
Doctors'
Hospital

Forest Conference Room
1602 Skipwith Road
Richmond, Virginia 23229

Come hear from Senators Rosalyn Dance and Siobhan Dunnivant and Delegates Buddy Fowler, John O'Bannon and Roxann Robinson.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 7

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Virginia Urology - Stony Point

9105 Stony Point Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23235

Meet with Senators Siobhan Dunnivant and Glen Sturtevant and Delegates Betsy Carr, Riley Ingram, Manoli Loupassi, Jimmie Massie, John O'Bannon and Chris Peace.



[Click here](#) to sign up for the 11/30/16 Meet & Greet at Henrico Doctors' Hospital from 7 - 8 a.m. [Click here](#) to sign up for the 12/7/16 Meet & Greet at Virginia Urology (Stony Point) from 6 - 7 p.m. Or email Lara Knowles at lknowles@ramdocs.org to register!

Behavioral Health Agency Abandons Pilot for Service Delivery

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services is abandoning "a pilot program that would have significantly expanded access to services for people seeking mental health help at eight of the state's 40 public treatment centers, known as community services boards, or CSBs," the Times-Dispatch [reports](#).

After determining the expansion was too costly and ambitious, state officials are planning to make changes at all 40 community services boards, "saving money by spreading the reforms over the next decade. The CSBs often function as the front line for Virginians in need of mental health treatment, especially for those in crisis."

Is Vaping Alarm Counterproductive?

Even as the e-cigarette industry has flat sales, The New York Times [reports](#) that "a growing number of scientists and policy makers say the relentless portrayal of e-cigarettes as a public health menace, however well intentioned, is a profound disservice to the 40 million American smokers who could benefit from the devices."



With smoking still killing more than 480,000 Americans a year, one scientist involved in the issue says, "We may well have missed, or are missing, the greatest opportunity in a century. The unintended consequence is more lives are going to be lost."

Click [here](#) for a new study that found that nearly 29 percent of all cancer deaths in the U.S. are attributable to cigarette smoking, including acute myeloid leukemia, mouth cancers, and those of the esophagus, stomach and colon.

Author Roald Dahl: "A Frustrated Doctor's" Contributions to Medicine

You may know British author **Roald Dahl** for his wealth of children's books and stories, from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" to "The BFG." Click [here](#) to read about something you might not have known about him.

Dahl's lifelong involvement in medicine helped revolutionize stroke therapy in the 1960s (his first wife, **actress Patricia Neal**, suffered a stroke); improve brain shunts (his infant son needed one after being struck by a taxi); and he became a passionate advocate for childhood immunization (his eldest daughter died of a rare type of brain inflammation caused by measles).



Roald Dahl and Patricia Neal with baby

Dahl also used his medical research to inform his stories, as in "The BFG," with his proclivity for neologisms. His friendly giant's funny way of talking was drawn from his wife's struggles to regain her speech.



If you need a lift, or just like animals in their natural habitat doing some really funny things, then [visit this Comedy Wildlife](#) photo contest from NPR's "Here and Now." Click [here](#) for their report.

You'll see some amazing sights of various creatures in the wild - and it's all for a good cause: to educate people around the world about conservation.

Touch Base!

We draw from a wide range of print, online and medical journals to bring you information we hope is relevant to your practice of medicine.

But as a former reporter, I recognize that mistakes do happen. So please contact me if you have any concerns, complaints, or ideas/articles you'd like to share by clicking [here](#) or calling **622-8136**.

Click [here](#) if you'd like to see some of my books. THANK YOU for being part of the Academy and its continuing conversation about the best practice of medicine.



And please check out some [back issues](#)!

Chip Jones
RAM Communications & Marketing Director

