



RAM

RICHMOND ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

Patient's Advocate • Physician's Ally • Community's Partner

The Leg.Up

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

January 10, 2018

New RAM President Monahan Lauds Richmond Docs' "Culture of Collaboration"

It was great to celebrate the nearly 200-year history of the Richmond Academy of Medicine at last night's General Membership meeting at the University of Richmond's Jepson Alumni Center.

*Following the installation of our gifted 2018 Board of Trustees and remarks from leaders from medicine, government, healthcare and from the program's sponsors - **Bon Secours Richmond Health System, HCA Virginia and VCU Medical Center** -- new **RAM President Mark B. Monahan** shared his insights into the Academy on the eve of its bicentennial.*

Here are some excerpts, but for the full text, just click [here](#).

"I am excited and enthusiastic about the privilege to serve as your President for the

next two years and to be an integral part of this fantastic organization as it nears its bicentennial in 2020.

The Richmond Academy of Medicine is not only the strongest local medical society in the state, but one of the strongest in the nation.



Dr. Monahan shakes hands with board member Dr. Joan Rountree as Dr. Tovia Smith looks on with Alex McClanahan, one of two VCU Medical School student representatives.

"In thinking about this address, I've spent some time reviewing some of the recent inaugural addresses and noticed a recurring theme among our talented leaders: Whether it was our **Immediate Past President Harry Bear**, or his predecessor **Peter Zedler**, each president in recent years has discussed the unprecedented challenges and uncertainties facing our profession. This got me to thinking. Charles Darwin said, 'It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.'

"So now, in January, 2018, I am happy to report to you that I sincerely believe that our ability to adapt, change and be innovative is one of the underlying, innate traits of the Richmond medical community. To use modern parlance, it's in our professional DNA!



Dr. Walter Lawrence escorts his former student, Dr. Monahan, to the podium.

We are fortunate to be in a city where quality medical care has always been important...

"Yes, we are only *two* years away from celebrating our bicentennial, and tonight I'd like to give you a taste of the rich menu that we're

now putting together for this once-in-a-lifetime moment for all of us!

"Nearly a decade ago, some of the Dartmouth Atlas Data was reported and a familiar name to many of you - **Dr. Atul Gawande** - whose father is a urologist, wrote about 10 communities that deliver high quality, low cost medicine. Richmond was on that list.

"Dr. Gawande postulated why the 10 communities did well and found several common attributes that I believe many of you will think of as nothing more than the normal way we do things here in Central Virginia. First he found that there is a 'culture of collaboration' that exists in these successful medical communities and that despite natural competition these communities strive to keep the patient's needs first."

From the moment he arrived in Richmond in 1999 to work with former **RAM President C.M. Kinloch Nelson** at Virginia Urology, Monahan saw there was something special about practicing medicine in Virginia's capital.

"The mission of the practice was to provide excellent urologic care to ALL the people of central Virginia. The business model was that if you provided excellent care *for everyone*, (put the patient first) the practice would be financially successful."

And so it continues today, he said, both at Virginia Urology and for the many other great practices and members of the Academy.

"This same culture of collaboration has also allowed local physicians, health systems and area free clinics to create our own specialty health care program, Access Now. This vital agency now serves thousands of low income, uninsured every year with free high quality care."



Dr. Percy Wootton, who served as RAM's President in 1976 before leading the AMA, leads the march of past RAM Presidents. Behind him is Dr. Duncan S. Owen, Jr. (l) and Dr. Wyatt S. Beazley III (r).

Atul Gwande noted "another attribute of successful medical communities," including fostering physician engagement and physician leadership, Monahan said. "In medical school I saw that in

the staff at the Medical College of Virginia, now the VCU School of Medicine."

Click [here](#) to read more of the speech, and Dr. Monahan's comments on the ways members and health systems have worked together to improve the quality and cost of the region's healthcare.

Looking forward "toward our 200th anniversary, the RAM Board of Directors will very soon make final approval of a new strategic plan.

The top three priorities are:

1. To focus on attracting and retaining our early career members by striving to make the Academy more valuable to them, more supportive of their work, and by providing additional leadership opportunities for them.
2. To position the Academy as the Greater Richmond area's medical public policy voice within the state legislature.
3. To evaluate and change as necessary our structure and practices so as to unite the House of Medicine in all its diversity, including our health system partners, employed and independent physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. This will include how best to welcome members from outlying areas who do not currently have a local society as well as making sure our governing bodies are reflective of the changing face of medicine.

"For nearly 200 years, the Richmond Academy of Medicine has been the home away from home for doctors and dreamers, healers and leaders, and thousands of gifted men and women who care passionately about advancing the cause of modern medicine," Dr. Monahan concluded.

"Now, as we approach the start of our *third* century together, it's exciting to think about what our talented and committed members will think of next!

"As shown by our past, I am certain that we will continue to be one of the most visionary medical communities in the nation, focusing on a

culture of collaboration and a launch pad for continued physician leadership. But whatever direction medicine takes in the 21st century, I'm also sure that your Academy will be grounded in the core truths and lasting wisdom that has made a significant difference in my life - both personally and professionally.



First (RAM) Family: Dr. Monahan with sons Michael (left), Matthew, and wife Lora Monahan.

"By the time we celebrate our tricentennial in 2120, I'm quite certain that we'll still be guided by our common mission to serve as the patient's advocate, the physician's ally and the community's partner.

"And as your new president, it is an honor and a privilege to work with each of you, guided by our common values & vision!"

Can Closely Divided Va. House Stand?

Even as the state House of Delegates went into session today "with a shaky, razor-thin Republican majority," its new 51-49 split "will not allow Republicans to run the House it did with a 2-1 advantage," reports the Times-Dispatch.

This report predicts "possible negotiations over power-sharing by a 10-member, two-party committee quietly named by GOP and Democratic leaders in case of a 50:50 split."

That committee of six Republicans and four Democrats "has not met to discuss power-sharing arrangements that may have been mooted by the luck-of-the draw re-election of **Del. David E. Yancey, R-Newport News**, days after a three-judge panel awarded him an additional vote to tie the Democratic challenger

Shelly A. Simonds in the 94th House District."

Simonds [tweeted today](#) that she's conceding the race "because i do not see any legal pathways forward and I want representation for the 94th district today."

She also announced plans to challenge Yancey again for the seat in 2019 (see more below).

Click [here](#) for more on what **House Minority Leader David J. Toscano** of Charlottesville called "an earthquake on Nov. 7," which brought a 230,000-vote advantage by Dems in House races across Virginia.



Democrat Simonds (l) with Republican Yancey

But even as Toscano and other Democrats lobbied for a dramatic reorganization of the House's committees, **House Appropriations Chairman S. Chris Jones**, R-Suffolk, reminded Democrats that in 1997 - when he was first elected - "The Democrats were not concerned about power-sharing and proportional seating when they were in control for over a century."

At that point, the GOP had won 46 seats in the 100-member House, and later got a few more for a nearly even Dem/GOP split. Click [here](#) for more of the past and present of the legislature's roiling politics.

Click [here](#) for a useful map on the state of Virginia's political divide.

Click [here](#) for more from The Washington Post on the Dems' continuing efforts to change the November election results, and [here](#) for more about Simonds' plans to challenge again Yancey in two years.

The High Price of Good Care: Why the U.S. Still Spends More Than Peers

Click [here](#) for some new research on the price of our nation's healthcare system.

"The United States spends almost twice as much on healthcare, as a percentage of its economy, as other advanced industrialized countries - totaling \$3.3 trillion, or 17.9 percent of gross domestic product in 2016," reports The New York Times' business page.

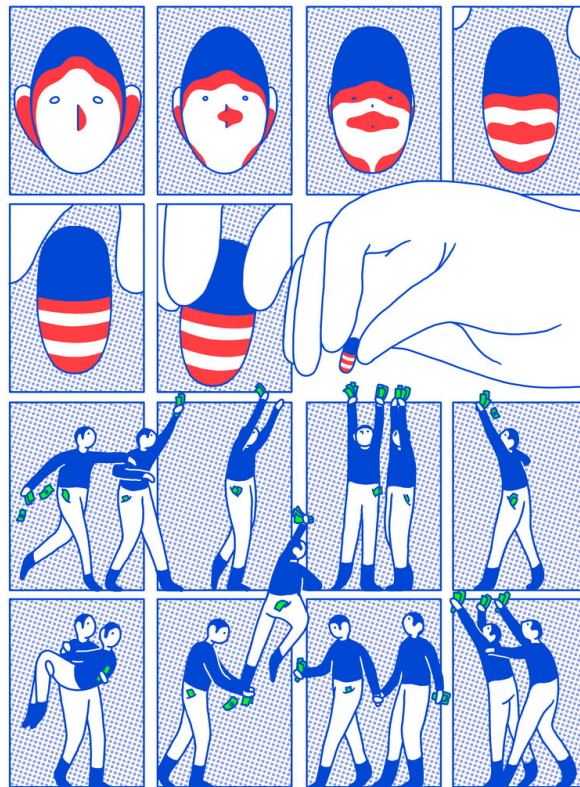
Noting that only a few decades ago U.S. healthcare spending was much closer to that of peer nations, the Times asks, "What happened?"

Recent studies show Americans actually are getting healthier because of the high quality of care in the U.S. and despite a slight drop in the amount of overall spending.

Still, we have this disproportionately high level of healthcare spending which studies tie to the higher price of health care visits and hospital stays.

"In other words, most of the explanation for American health spending growth - and why it has pulled away from health spending in other countries - is that more is done for patients during hospital stays and doctor visits, they're charged more per service, or both."

Click [here](#) to read more of this informative Times business column ("The Upshot" by Austin Frakt and Aaron E. Carroll) and their discussion of the high price of good care.



More Teens Delaying Sex

The number of high-school-age teens who are having sex dropped markedly over a decade, according to a new CDC report which called the falling rate of sexual activity among 9th-and 10th-graders "especially encouraging," [reports](#) The Washington Post.



Click [here](#) for the CDC report.

With most of the decline from 2005 to 2015 happening in the last two years of the survey, one outside researcher questioned the value of the CDC's findings. But other health officials hailed the results of giving students "medically accurate" information about sex and contraception.

The Post notes that last July "the Trump administration cut funding by more than \$200 million for groups across the United States that work to prevent teenage pregnancy."

In a separate study of adolescent behavior, Reuters [reports](#) that "teens exposed to traumatic or terror events may have a higher risk for weekly or daily migraines, according to a study of adolescents who survived a terror attack in Norway."

The findings reportedly "further the idea that violence and psychological trauma could lead to physical symptoms."

Presidential Physical Set

President Trump is due for a physical this Friday, [reports](#) Bloomberg News. While "Trump, like all Americans, has the right under federal law to keep health information from public disclosure," the White House has promised to issue a public report on the exam at Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.



Bloomberg notes the questions raised about Mr. Trump's mental fitness in the wake of the new book, "Fire and Fury," which "asserts that almost all of his top staff and advisers believe he is mentally unfit."

"Trump hit back against the claims on Saturday, declaring himself 'a very stable genius.'" Yesterday, he opened up a normally-closed door meeting with lawmakers because he was "intent on demonstrating he could handle the presidency," [reports](#) The New York Times.

The Bloomberg [report](#) notes that presidential medical reports are typically brief, with cholesterol levels, weight and blood pressure. "It's not known if Trump will receive a mental health screening," Bloomberg reports, adding that presidents Obama and Bush had medical reports that "showed normal neurological function."

Cancer Drugs Give Hope, But Side Effects Perplex

This Washington Post [explores](#) how "immunotherapy can cause reactions that mimic other disorders, leading to misdiagnoses."

The checkpoint inhibitors "offer a tantalizing chance for survival for patients with advanced melanoma and hard-to-treat cancers of the bladder, kidney and lung. But the treatments, designed to unleash the immune system to attack malignancies, also can spur an assault on healthy organs, causing varied and bizarre side effects ranging from minor rashes and fevers to diabetes and deadly heart problems."

Cancer experts are [calling](#) for more updating of physicians to help them recognize such "symptoms that can mimic those of the flu, infections or even food poisoning." Immunotherapy, one expert at Johns Hopkins noted, "has a completely different side-effect profile than chemotherapy, that has caught some physicians off guard."

In a separate [article](#), the Post reports that "the nation's overall cancer death rate declined 1.7 percent in 2015, the latest indication of steady, long-term progress against the disease, according to a new report by the American Cancer Society."

Still, the report shows that cancer -- the nation's no. 2 killer behind heart disease -- "remains a formidable, sometimes implacable, foe. An estimated 609,000 people are expected to die of the ailment this year, while 1.74 million people will be diagnosed with it."

Click [here](#) for a USA Today report on how "Senate Democrats on Tuesday confronted President Trump's choice for Health and Human Services secretary," **Alex Azar**, grilling him about his time as chief executive of Eli Lilly and Co.



HHS nominee
Azar.

While conceding that Lilly's prices for a host of drugs had more than doubled under his tenure, Azar blamed the entire healthcare system, saying every incentive is toward higher prices, USA Today reports.

"No one company is going to fix that system," Azar said. "That's why I want to be here working with you."

Despite Democrats' skepticism, Azar is expected to be approved as HHS secretary to replace **Dr. Tom Price** who resigned earlier this year after his travel expenses became an embarrassment for the White House.

The Trump administration has proposed sweeping new rules that could ease the way for small businesses to band together into health insurance plans for as many as 11 million Americans, [reports](#) The New York Times.

They would be exempt from consumer protections mandated by the Affordable Care Act, including "essential health benefits" such as mental health care and maternity/newborn care.

The Wall Street Journal [reports](#) that "Republicans are scaling back their ambitions to overhaul safety-net programs and dismantle the Affordable Care Act." The report comes after last week's retreat at Camp David with GOP leaders such as **House Speaker Paul Ryan** and **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell**.

The pivot comes as McConnell "has warned in recent days that he has little interest in pursuing a partisan overhaul" in the Senate where Republicans hold a narrow 51-49 majority. After the Camp David retreat, "Mr. Trump appeared more aligned with Mr. McConnell" than with Ryan, who had proposed various Medicaid reforms such as tying benefits to work programs.



After Camp David: Ryan (far right) and McConnell (2nd from left) agree to disagree.

In another twist of political fate, members of Congress have been able to find a rare degree of bipartisan support to get behind increased funding for the National Institutes of Health, [reports](#) The New York Times.

For the third straight year, lawmakers plan to increase NIH's budget by \$2 billion, in the process rejecting cuts proposed by President Trump.

"The push for additional funding reflects a fascination among legislators with advances in fields like molecular biology, genetics and regenerative medicine, even as they wage bitter battles over just how large a role the government should play in financing health care and providing coverage," [reports](#) the Times.

While the bipartisan spirit has its supporters, some critics noted that while members of Congress "have friends relatives, and constituents who suffer from cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases... lawmakers may have less interaction with people who are uninsured and unable to afford doctors visits and prescription drugs."

CHIP Gets Brief Respite in Va.

Virginia has enough money to extend insurance benefits through the end of February for more than 68,000 children and 1,100 pregnant women, the Times-Dispatch [reports](#). However, "They ultimately would lose coverage unless Congress reauthorizes the program when the federal budget extension expires at the end of next week."

State officials said they'd receive an additional \$28 million in stopgap federal funding to keep Virginia's CHIP program going.

Meanwhile, The Hill.com [reports](#) that the Congressional Budget Office "drastically lowered its estimate of the cost to renew" the CHIP program, saying it would cost \$800 million over the next decade, far lower than original estimate of \$8.2 billion.

After months of debate over renewing funding for the program that provides insurance to nearly 9 million low-income children, the lower cost estimate -- tied to the elimination of the ACA's individual mandate for buying insurance -- "is likely to make it easier for lawmakers to strike a deal," according to this report.

OrthoVirginia Names Chief Admin. Officers

Click [here](#) for today's announcement by **OrthoVirginia** appointing **Lynne Robinson** as Chief Administrative Officer based in Richmond and **Justin Zakia** in Northern Virginia.

Robinson comes from PartnerMD in Richmond, where she served in several leadership roles, including COO. She's a CPA with a degree in business administration from Radford.

OrthoVirginia is a long-time RAM member that's grown to become Virginia's largest provider of multi-disciplinary musculoskeletal care and therapy. **CEO Dale Ingram** said Robinson and Zakia "bring leadership skills and experience in organization growth that are essential to our practice as we continue to make quality and



Lynne Robinson

efficiency of patient care our top priority."

Oprah 2020?

After her rousing speech about women and equality Sunday night at the Golden Globes Awards, "**Oprah Winfrey**, the billionaire media entrepreneur and former television talk-show host launched a thousand fantasies for Democrats," [reports](#) The New York Times.



Some Democratic activists are dreaming "of a historic campaign to put a black woman in the White House. Of a celebrity candidate, known for her big-hearted optimism, taking on a reality-show president defined by his thirst for combat. Of a presidency, some joked, where everybody would get a car."

The post-speech buzz was exacerbated by Oprah's longtime partner, Stedman Goldman, who told a reporter that she would "absolutely do it" - with the caveat that such matters are "up to the people."

So far no official signal from the 63-year-old star, who, the Times notes, has disavowed any interest in running for office in the past. But during the past year of **President Trump's** administration, she has said she wants to play a part in bringing the country together.

The White House, for its part, issued a statement saying, "We welcome the challenge, whether it be Oprah Winfrey or anyone else."

Click [here](#) for her speech. But, asks Democratic strategist **David Axelrod**, "Would she want to submit herself to the unforgiving, relentless and sometimes absurd process of running for president?"

And, he added, "Will there be hunger in 2020 for someone with some experience in government in government, after Trump?"

Bon Secours Advances Westhampton/Libbie Plan

Bon Secours Richmond Health System is moving forward with redevelopment

plans for the Westhampton School property in Richmond's West End near St. Mary's Hospital, [reports](#) the Times-Dispatch.



The health system asked the city to rezone the site of the aging school facilities from a residential to a mixed-use business district. This change, which requires City Council approval, would pave the way for Bon Secours to build a 55,000-square-foot medical office building beside the school site. The new office building would front Libbie Avenue.

Click [here](#) to read more about the project, which dates back to 2012 when Bon Secours agreed to lease the school property from the city for 60 years. After neighbors complained about demolishing the school, the TD reports, "Bon Secours officials have said they will prioritize any proposal that includes the most historic part of the school, meaning the portion built in 1917."

WellcomeMD Welcomed

Linda Nash, who founded **PartnerMD** in 2003, "is back in the concierge medical practice business," [reports](#) the Times-Dispatch.



Linda Nash with Dr. Neal Carl, medical director at new Henrico practice

She's started [WellnessMD](#) in western Henrico, with plans for more locations in Virginia, Illinois, and Florida.

Nash sold PartnerMD to Markel Corp. in 2011 and left the concierge care firm three years ago.

She calls her latest venture "the next generation of concierge care." Plans include offering "advanced genetic testing and laboratory tests" that allow patients "access to health planning and coaching, and nutrition and fitness training."

Click [here](#) to read more about this higher-cost concierge model with panels limited to 300 patients per doctor.

HDL Founder Sues Lawyers Over Payment Advice

Tonya Mallory, co-founder of and former CEO of **Health Diagnostic Laboratory**, "is suing the law firm LeClair Ryan for malpractice, accusing the firm of giving bad legal advice that contributed to the Richmond-based blood-testing company's downfall," [reports](#) the Times-Dispatch.



Mallory during better days at HDL.

The lawsuit recently filed in Richmond Circuit Court seeks at least \$150 million in damages from LeClair Ryan, a national law firm based in Richmond. The firm issued a statement that it was "disappointed" its former client filed the suit, adding, "We flatly reject any notion that our firm is responsible to Ms. Mallory for her actions."

Mallory co-founded HDL in 2008 as a small clinical laboratory to test blood samples for early signs of heart disease and diabetes. But after quickly expanding in downtown Richmond - with hundreds of employees and a new office and lab - HDL went into bankruptcy in the wake of a government probe (and subsequent \$47 million settlement) over its fee payments to physicians in return for blood samples.

Click [here](#) to read more about the legal dispute. Mallory has since co-founded a corporate wellness firm - [Creo Wellness LLC](#).

Members of the General Assembly need to hear from YOU

Come speak with your Senator and Delegate and let them know how legislation they're considering will affect the practice of medicine. Spots are available to join your colleagues and make your voice heard at one of RAM's White Coat Days:



- Wednesday, January 24th
- Monday, February 5th
- Thursday, February 15th
- Monday, February 19th

Join your colleagues for breakfast and a legislative briefing before meeting with local legislators and sharing your valuable input and perspective with them. Please commit to joining your fellow RAM members from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on one of these days! RAM staff will arrange meetings for small groups of physicians with elected officials and will provide you with background information.

[CLICK HERE](#) to sign up or call Lara at **804-622-8137** or email her at lknowles@ramdocs.org

Meet Roberta Tinch, COO of Johnston-Willis Hospital

Click [here](#) to learn more about **Roberta Tinch**, Chief Operating Officer of **HCA Virginia's Johnston-Willis Hospital**.

As part of the Times-Dispatch's "Getting to Know" series, you'll learn that she holds a Master of Health Administration degree from VCU, but that in high school her favorite subject was music while her least favorite was science.



The Patients Were Saved. That's Why the Families Are Suing

Click [here](#) to read about what can happen when medical personnel aren't aware of the expressed wishes of dying patients.

"What happened to Beatrice Weisman before dawn on Aug. 29, 2013, was not supposed to happen: The medical staff at Maryland General Hospital found her in cardiac arrest, resuscitated her and kept her

alive," begins The New York Times article.

"The matriarch of a close-knit family on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Ms. Weisman, then 83, had suffered a serious stroke in June and had spent weeks in two hospitals."

With the support of four children, she and her husband had drafted advanced directives, and she was supposed to be "allowed to die."



Read [more](#) about what happened when Ms. Weisman "was discovered turning blue in her bed," and staff members began to perform CPR, "which caused broken ribs and collapsed lungs. They defibrillated her with electric shocks, injected epinephrine and succeeded in reviving her."

As a result, her husband was "distracted," and the family has sued Maryland General, alleging assault, negligence, the "intentional infliction of emotional distress" and other claims.

The case highlights a quandary for caregivers when they fail to save a patient's life. "Now, some face legal action for failing to let a patient die."

In a strange twist, Ms. Weisman is still alive at age 86, but suffers from dementia and -- her son says -- asks daily "why she's still here?" Her husband has passed away.

CDC Plans Nuclear Attack Seminar

In a mushroom-shaped flashback for Baby Boomers, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced plans to present a workshop this April entitled "Public Health Response to Nuclear Detonation" for doctors, government officials and first responders, [reports](#) The New York Times.



A 1950s civil defense exhibit shows

The CDC said it has been *New York City aflame.* planning for this seminar for some time and a spokesman denied there was any link to President Trump's recent tweets directed at North Korean President Kim Jong-un about the size and power of his "nuclear button."

The workshop "is part of CDC's longstanding and routine work, similar to the work it does to prepare for other possible health emergencies," said spokesman Bert Kelly. The event will be televised.

The last such CDC workshop took place in 2010, but it didn't get as much attention. Dr. Edwin Lyman, senior scientist with the Union of Concerned Scientists, a research and advocacy group, criticized Trump for inflaming tensions with North Korea.

"Nothing would offset the devastation," Lyman said, "but the question is, if North Korea sends one or two missiles to the U.S., are there things that the public should know, that could possibly reduce their risk?"

One key message from the CDC is likely to be "stay where you are, don't try to leave your building, or leave your town," the Times reports.

The state of Hawaii recently began a public awareness campaign with the same message and tested warning sirens last used during the Cold War.



MAY 5 - 6, 2018

RICHMOND, VA

are *you* ready?

To Err is Human...

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, editor and author, 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.

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Chip Jones
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