

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN PHYSICIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY

"Not for ourselves do we labor"

Nov./Dec.
2010

VMS ADOPTS NEW RESOLUTIONS, SETS HEALTH CARE PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2011

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• **VMS Adopts New Resolutions, Health Care Priorities for 2011**

The Vermont Medical Society adopted policy resolutions that address a number of issues critical to the delivery of health care, including tort reform and the negative impact unfunded mandates have on the practice of medicine. VMS members approved the resolutions during the organization's 197th annual meeting held Nov. 6, at the Equinox Club in Manchester, Vt.

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• **From the President's Desk**

"Vermont's physicians are committed to providing the best care possible to their patients and feel that the issues addressed by these resolutions can often be barriers to quality care," said Paula Duncan, M.D., VMS' newly elected president. "Our members believe that highlighting these issues and working toward solutions will lead to healthier and happier Vermonters."

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• **VMS Elects New Officers**
• **Physician Assisted Suicide Likely a 2011 Priority of the Legislature**

The resolutions will form the basis of the organization's 2011 public policy efforts on behalf of its 2,000 physician members. The adopted resolutions addressed:

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• **VMS Honors Outstanding Service**

Unfunded Mandates – Because unreimbursed administrative tasks present escalating challenges for physician practices, this resolution calls for, among other things: a distinct and transparent set of payment rules for multiple payers, a single claim form, a standard set of rules for claim submission, reimbursement for time spent on administrative tasks, and the adoption of uniform state and/or national standards for quality data, formularies, prior authorizations, and claim payments.

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• **Scholarship Awarded to UVM Medical Student**
• **Dr. Hsiao Speaks at VMS Annual Meeting; Meets with Members**

Tort Reform – Over-testing, defensive medicine, and medical liability insurance premiums are not only major health care cost drivers, but also deterrents in attracting and retaining physicians in the face of an impending doctor shortage. This resolution commits VMS to working with the Governor and the General Assembly to establish pretrial screening panels, require certificates of merit, create expert witness standards, and design an administrative process for addressing adverse events.

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• **Renowned UVM Professor Passes**
• **Red Flag Act Clarified**
• **All Deaths to be Certified Electronically**

Reaffirming the Physician/Patient Relationship – This resolution highlights the unique relationship between physicians and their patients by asserting VMS' support of shared decision-making, as well as open dialogue regarding palliative care services and end-of-life planning. Additionally, it commits VMS to working with the medical profession to reaffirm the importance of its obligation to the patient through professional societies and academic, research, and hospital organizations.

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• **Anticoagulation Management in the Physician Office**

Physician Leadership – This resolution encourages the appointment of physicians to leadership roles in the delivery of health care and health care system reform. It also commits VMS to ensuring that physicians have a voice in health care reform efforts taking place in Vermont, while recognizing the changing employment status of many VMS members.

Contact Us

PO Box 1457
Montpelier, VT 05601

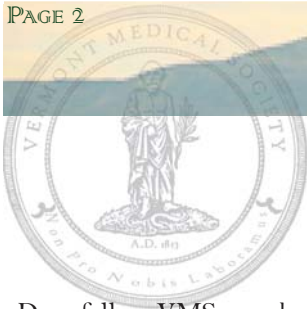
800-640-8767 or 223-7898

Fax 802-223-1201

Online at:

www.vtmd.org

Anatomical Gifts for Transplantation – VMS encourages the creation of a statewide registry for living donors and supports efforts to educate health care professionals and the public about the unmet need for, and how to register and make, anatomical gifts. Additionally, the resolution calls for VMS to work with the Departments of Health and Motor Vehicles to establish a program permitting donors to a desire to become a donor at the time of registering or renewing a driver's license.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Paula Duncan, M.D.

Dear fellow VMS members:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our society as your president for the upcoming year. As you all surely know, we find ourselves at a very critical and exciting time for our profession and our patients. The way we practice medicine is changing on several fronts, whether it is the technology we use or the payment system we are reimbursed by. The Vermont Medical Society will continue to represent our interests assertively before entities that impact us on a daily basis, including national and state governments, managed care organizations and professional boards. I believe that our potential for success directly relates to the incredible strength we are building on – our members – physicians who provide health care, guidance and encouragement to Vermonters on a daily basis, 24/7. Because these changes can so profoundly affect our lives professionally and personally, it is vitally important that you all stay engaged in the issues and let our collective voices be heard.



During my time as president I'd also like to focus Vermont's health care, government, education, social service, and business communities on tackling a handful of what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control calls "winnable battles." The CDC has highlighted these issues because real results are achievable with a one- to four-year time frame. Each causes great harm, both to individuals and society as a whole. Scalable interventions already exist and are relatively easy to implement. They include topics that many physicians address each day with patients: tobacco, nutrition, physical activity, obesity, motor vehicles injuries and sexuality related issues (HIV and teen pregnancy).

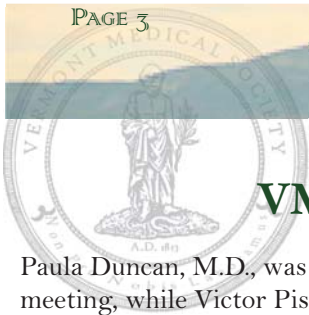
With the use of shared decision-making strategies with patients and partnerships at the state level, progress on these health outcomes is within our reach. Throughout the upcoming year I'll be looking for opportunities to advance these issues, and welcome any input, advice or offers of assistance that members may have.

For more information about the CDC's "Winnable Battles," including why these issues are important and what can be done about them, visit www.cdc.gov/about/winnablebattles.htm.

I am always amazed by the compassion and commitment to care that Vermont's physicians provide their patients and communities, so I am especially honored to be able to work on behalf of you and our patients.

Sincerely,

Paula Duncan, M.D., President
Vermont Medical Society



VMS ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

Paula Duncan, M.D., was named president of VMS during the 2010 annual meeting, while Victor Pisanelli, M.D., and Norman Ward, M.D., were elected president-elect and vice president, respectively.

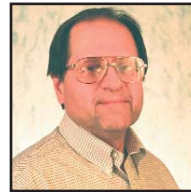


Dr. Duncan is a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, where she is the Youth Project Director for the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program. She earned her medical degree from Women's Medical College and trained in pediatrics at Albany Medical Center and Stanford University. Nationally, Dr. Duncan is the chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Implementation Advisory Committee and co-editor of the third edition of Bright Futures Guidelines for Preventive Services.

In assuming the position Dr. Duncan takes the mantle of an organization that is expected to play a large role in a number of health care reform efforts taking place in Vermont and on the national level.

"It's an honor to be picked by my peers to lead the Society during such a crucial time in the profession," said Dr. Duncan. "The way health care is delivered is changing at a rapid pace and I look forward to being part of the debate while advocating on behalf of the state's physicians and the patients they care for."

Dr. Pisanelli is a surgeon at Rutland Regional Medical Center and a Vermont Medical Society council member. Dr. Pisanelli earned his medical degree from UVM's College of Medicine in 1973 and joined father's Rutland surgical practice in 1977.



Dr. Pisanelli is the chairman of the RRMC credentials committee and the cancer liaison physician between the hospital's cancer center and the American Commission on Cancer. Previously he served as chairman of the hospital's department of surgery in the mid 1980s, president of its medical staff from 1994 to 1996 and a member of its board of directors from 1992 to 2006.

Dr. Ward is a family practice physician medical director of case management at Fletcher Allen Health Care's South Burlington Family Practice. An associate professor at UVM's of Medicine, earned his M.D. at Brown University Medical School and completed his residency at the University of Rochester.



LEADERSHIP

Paula Duncan, M.D.
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Victor Pisanelli, M.D.
President - Elect

Norman Ward, M.D.
Vice President

Howard Schapiro, M.D.
Secretary/Treasurer

Robert Tortolani, M.D.
Immediate Past President

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Justin Campfield
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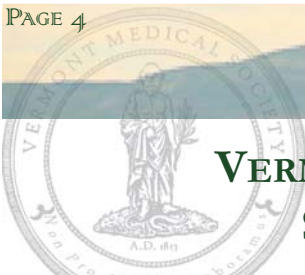
Suzanne Parker, M.D.
VPH Medical Director

PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE LIKELY TO BE A TOP PRIORITY OF THE LEGISLATURE IN 2011

VMS has learned that the legislature will likely consider a physician assisted suicide bill in the 2011 legislative session. The expectation is that the bill would create a program similar to the one that has been in effect in Oregon for about 12 years and was recently adopted in Washington State. VMS' current policy on physician assisted suicide, adopted in 2003, states there should be no laws for or against physician assisted suicide due to a concern that such laws could hinder the provision of high quality end-of-life care.

In preparing to address this issue in the legislature, VMS recently sent out a legislative bulletin (www.vtmd.org/Newsroom/LegBull/LegislativeBulletinHomePage.html) and is conducting a member survey (www.surveymonkey.com/s/VMSPASSurvey) in order to gain an understanding of physicians' views and to assess current membership support for VMS' Physician Assisted Suicide policy. Results of the survey will inform the organization's approach to the legislation.

For updates, visit VTMD.org and subscribe to our Twitter feed at [Twitter.com/VMSAdvocates](https://twitter.com/VMSAdvocates).



VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY HONORS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO HEALTH CARE AND COMMUNITY

Five Vermonters were honored for their outstanding contributions to the health and well being of the state's residents during the 2010 annual meeting.



The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Peter Gibbons, M.D., who has for many years served as the Chief Radiologist at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. His commitment to his colleagues and dedication to the medical profession have helped earn him the decades-old title of "President for Life" of the Windham County Medical Society. He has also served as the medical staff's education coordinator, which involved planning and recruiting for educational in-house programming. Facing an exhausting schedule paired with institutional hurdles, Dr. Gibbons has remained the consummate professional. Not just an accomplished and dedicated physician, he is also a skilled athlete and accomplished violinist with the Windham Orchestra.

The Distinguished Service Award, the highest award VMS can bestow upon one of its members, is given on the basis of meritorious service in the science and art of medicine and for outstanding contributions to the medical profession, its organizations, and the welfare of the public.

The Physician of the Year award was presented to Neil Hyman, M.D., the Chief of General Surgery at Fletcher Allen Health Care. Dr. Hyman's record for helpfulness and sincerity is reflected in his service as a mentor at the medical school, as well as through the multiple teaching awards he's earned since 1990. Well-known for taking the time to understand both patients and colleagues, Dr. Hyman has consistently been acknowledged as one of the Best Doctors in America® and America's Top Doctors for Cancer®. He also co-chaired the Curriculum Task Force on Ethics and Professionalism and is a previous recipient of the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medical Faculty Award.



The Physician of the Year Award is granted annually to a physician licensed in the state of Vermont who has demonstrated: outstanding performance in the quality of care given to his/her patients; skillful and compassionate patient care; and, dedication to the welfare of his patients in accordance with accepted principles of good medical practice.



The Physician Award for Community Service was given to Barbara Frankowski, M.D., for her dedication to primary care pediatrics and passion for helping underserved youth. As a primary care physician at University Pediatrics since 1985, she has proven to be both compassionate and hardworking. For the past fifteen years, Dr. Frankowski has maintained a grueling medical schedule, while also working one day a week in Burlington Schools assisting with health education and services. She chaired the interdisciplinary VMS School Health

Committee for numerous years and recently received an award from the National Association of School Nurses. She has also served as a co-leader for the Vermont Youth Health Initiative.

The Physician Award for Community Services is granted annually to a physician who has compiled an outstanding record of community service, which, apart from his or her specific identification as a physician, reflects well on the profession.

Ken Libertoff, Ph.D., received the Citizen of the Year Award, which is presented to a non-physician who has made a significant contribution to the health of the people of Vermont. As the Executive Director of the Vermont Association for Mental Health, Dr. Libertoff has been a tireless advocate for all Vermonters, but particularly those with mental illness or substance abuse problems. From his work with Camp Daybreak to his efforts in pursuing legislation that enhances mental health care, he consistently champions for Vermont's most at risk citizens. As he retires this year, his warmth, wisdom, and sense of humor, as well as his commitment to health and well-being will be missed.





OUTSTANDING SERVICE



Governor James Douglas was presented with the Founders' Award, which is presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, vision, and achievement in improving the health of Vermonters and all Americans.

For more than 35 years, Governor Douglas has been serving the people of Vermont, starting with the Vermont House of Representatives in 1972. As the 80th governor of the state, he has shown his devotion to Vermonters through his support of innovative health reforms that have enabled Vermont to emerge as a preeminent leader in health care. Furthermore, his support for Catamount Health and the Blueprint for Health has allowed the state to expand access to health insurance coverage. Recognized for his collaborative spirit, Governor Douglas has been active in many community organizations. The past president of the Porter Medical Center, he has also served as Town Moderator for Middlebury for greater than two decades.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO UVM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE STUDENT



The Vermont Medical Society Education and Research Foundation awarded a \$10,000 scholarship to University of Vermont College of Medicine student Melissa Marotta during the annual meeting.

A third-year medical student at the University of Vermont where her peers recognized her with the Wellness Award for "embodiment of wellness and caring for others," Marotta is in the process of completing a clinical clerkship in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Fletcher Allen Health Care. She expects to receive her Doctorate of Medicine in June 2012.

Marotta coordinated research and clinical care protocols at the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Research Center in the Division of Gastroenterology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Her work at The Health Center in Plainfield, Vermont involved not only spending hours of free time engaging with patients and community members, but also coordinating direct interventions as part of the pilot program for HRSA's federal Patient Safety Pharmacy Collaborative.

Each year the Vermont Medical Society Education and Research Foundation gives one or more scholarships to medical students who are committed to practicing medicine in Vermont and caring for Vermonters. The scholarship program was created to encourage young doctors to return to Vermont after completing their residency training.

"It is our hope and intention that by offering this annual scholarship we can successfully persuade medical students to practice medicine in Vermont, especially in its less-served areas, ensuring that Vermonters in all parts of the state continue to have access to excellent medical care," said Dr. Mildred Reardon, the award's namesake and a faculty member at the College of Medicine who was instrumental in forming the Vermont Medical Society Education and Research Foundation.

The scholarship is funded through generous contributions from Fletcher Allen Health Care, members of the Vermont Medical Society, and the Chittenden County Medical Society.

DR. HSIAO SPEAKS AT VMS ANNUAL MEETING; MEETS WITH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

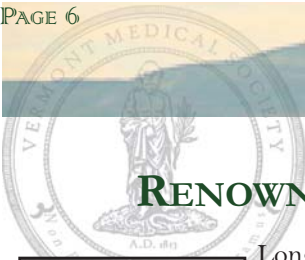
A Harvard professor tasked with designing new health care systems for Vermont has reached out to the Vermont Medical Society to share ideas and receive input from physicians.

William Hsiao, Ph.D., has been retained by the Vermont General Assembly to design three plans, including a single-payer option, to be considered by the legislature in 2011. Considered one of the world's foremost experts on health care economics and financing, Dr. Hsiao regularly advises U.S. government agencies and has conducted studies of medical payment systems in a number of countries, including Taiwan, Singapore, Cyprus, South Africa, and China.

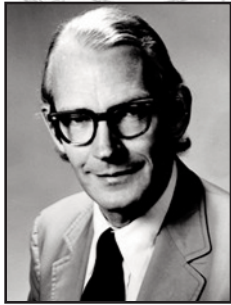
In addition to a delivering a presentation and discussion entitled "The Vermont Option: Achieving Affordable Universal Health Care" at VMS' recent annual meeting, Dr. Hsiao met with members of the VMS executive committee and other physician leaders in Burlington on Dec. 15.

Dr. Hsiao used both opportunities to ask members about various aspects of health care in Vermont.

"Dr. Hsiao knows that the heart of the health care system is the physician/patient relationship," said Victor Pisanelli, M.D., VMS president-elect. "Doctors have great insight into what reforms will and will not work and I really got the sense that Dr. Hsiao valued our input."



RENOWNED UVM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE PROFESSOR PASSES



Longtime University of Vermont College of Medicine professor and researcher Ethan A.H. Sims, M.D., passed away in early November at the age of 94. Dr. Sims was an internationally renowned obesity and diabetes researcher who gained fame for challenging the Atkins Diet claim that a low-carbohydrate diet decreases appetite.

Dr. Sims joined the College of Medicine faculty in 1950 and continued to teach and conduct research there until 1981. In 1991, Dr. Sims was honored by UVM with the naming of the Sims Obesity/Nutrition Research Center and in 2002 with the creation of the Ethan Sims Clinical Research Feasibility Fund Award.

Dr. Sims was the great, great, great grandson of Green Mountain Boys leader Ethan Allen.

RED FLAG ACT CLARIFIED TO EXEMPT PHYSICIANS

On Dec. 7, the U.S. House of Representatives passed S. 3987, the Red Flag Program Clarification Act of 2010. This legislation, which passed the Senate earlier, limits the type of "creditor" that must comply with the Red Flags Rule. The legislation will now be sent to the White House where President Obama is expected to sign it into law before the January 1, 2011, compliance deadline.

The Red Flags Rule requires creditors to develop identity theft prevention and detection programs, and was originally scheduled to take effect on Nov. 1, 2008. According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), physicians who do not accept payment from their patients at the time of service are creditors and so must comply with the Rule by developing and implementing written identity theft prevention and detection programs in their practices. As a result of continued discussions with the FTC, AMA efforts prompted the agency to delay the Nov. 1, 2008 compliance deadline on several occasions, up through the end of 2010.

S. 3987 defines creditors as those who regularly and in the ordinary course of business: (1) obtain or use consumer reports, directly or indirectly, in connection with a credit transaction; (2) furnish information to certain consumer reporting agencies in connection with a credit transaction; or (3) advance funds to or on behalf of a person, based on the person's obligation to repay the funds or on repayment from specific property pledged by them or on their behalf. The legislation explicitly excludes those who advance funds on behalf of a person for expenses incidental to a service that is provided. Under this definition, physicians, dentists, and other professionals would not generally meet the definition of a "creditor," and so they are exempt from the rule's requirements.

~SAVE THE DATE~ VMS 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

The VMS 198th Annual meeting will be held Saturday, October 29, 2011 at Topnotch Resort and Spa. Mark your calendars today!

For reservations call 1-800-451-8686. Make sure to mention the VMS room block when you call.

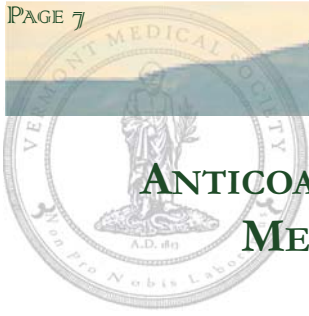
Topnotch is a great place to bring the family for a weekend getaway. All attendees get 20% off in the spa!

ALL DEATHS TO BE CERTIFIED ELECTRONICALLY BEGINNING MARCH 1, 2011

The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) recently implemented an Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). This is a web based application used by funeral directors and physicians to report deaths in Vermont and is replacing the current paper process. Beginning March 1, 2011 medical certification for all deaths that occur in Vermont must be completed by the physician using the EDRS. Certification completed on paper forms will no longer be accepted.

Anyone who has certified a death or may be in a position to do so is encouraged to enroll via an online tutorial. The tutorial includes information about how to access and navigate the EDRS system as well as instruction developed by Vermont's Chief Medical Examiner regarding how to appropriately certify the medical cause of death. The tutorial can be accessed by visiting www.HealthVermont.gov and then selecting "Health Care Professionals", "Education and Training", "Death Certificate Tutorial". Fletcher Allen physicians can access the tutorial within the Angel system.

For additional information regarding the EDRS project, go to <http://www.healthvermont.gov/hc/EDRS/index.aspx> or contact Dawn Anderson, EDRS Outreach and Training Coordinator at (802) 652-2070.



ANTICOAGULATION MANAGEMENT IN THE PHYSICIAN OFFICE: MEDICAL MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY OF MAINE RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICE TIP

Management of a patient undergoing oral anticoagulation therapy, such as warfarin, requires the physician office to have an established system for test tracking and order management.

Diligence in following established processes is key in avoiding potential impact on patient care due to over or under anticoagulation. Systematic follow-up enhances patient care by decreasing the likelihood of significant complications.

Warfarin has a very narrow therapeutic window. Failure to adequately monitor a patient or provide appropriate dosing could lead to serious, potentially life threatening complications. The patient may become supratherapeutic and have a serious bleeding event or subtherapeutic and be at risk for a clotting episode. An INR result that is outside the therapeutic range and becomes “lost in the shuffle” in a physician’s office can lead to life threatening complications.

Establishing a tracking system is the first step in effectively managing patients who are on warfarin for anticoagulation. A tracking system is implemented to assure that patient testing is completed when ordered, results are received and evaluated and adjustments are made to the patient’s medication regime (if necessary).

In addition to a tracking system, protocols need to be developed to address the process for patients who fail to show for an appointment/lab test. This process should include a review by the medical provider to determine what follow-up is necessary. Establish a process outlining how to manage a patient who cannot be contacted with results or who fails to respond to attempts to contact. If a patient demonstrates repeated non-compliance with the recommended testing and follow-up, schedule an appointment to discuss the importance of close monitoring

and the potential risks of non-compliance. Clear, timely documentation in the medical record is essential.

Beyond tracking of test results and appointments, managing the patient’s INR effectively requires a knowledgeable, experienced practitioner to follow established guidelines in dose determination.

Assessment of the patient to determine noncompliance, dietary impact or changes in medications needs to occur. Making warfarin dose adjustments based solely on “experience” or “history” with the patient can lead to challenges if the patient suffers a bad outcome due to anticoagulation management. Using an established algorithm is an objective, systematic way to manage warfarin therapy.

If your patient has multiple providers, establish and clearly document which provider will be responsible for prescribing, monitoring and adjusting the warfarin dose for the patient. For those patients receiving anticoagulation management in your practice, communicate the patient’s status with any other providers involved in their care. If you refer your patient to another provider, assure that information regarding the anticoagulation status is communicated.

Provide patients with clear, understandable educational material. Document patient education and understanding of their responsibilities regarding follow-up and ongoing monitoring as well as the expectation of compliance.

Medical Mutual's "Practice Tips" are offered as reference information only and are not intended to establish practice standards or serve as legal advice. MMIC recommends you obtain a legal opinion from a qualified attorney for any specific application to your practice.

VMS LAUNCHES HEALTH CARE POLICY AND NEWS TWITTER ACCOUNT

Vermont Medical Society members now have a new way of keeping track of important health care policy updates and industry news. VMS has launched a new Twitter account, [Twitter.com/VMSAdvocates](https://twitter.com/VMSAdvocates), that will be continuously updated with happenings from the statehouse and across the nation.

Meant to augment the regularly produced Legislative Bulletin (weekly) and Green Mountain Physician (every-other month) newsletters, @VMSAdvocates will allow VMS staff to provide brief, up-to-the-minute updates on the issues that matter to members.

Joining Twitter is not required to view the updates, although members with accounts are encouraged to help spread VMS news by “following” @VMSAdvocates. Stay up-to-date by visiting @VMSAdvocates at www.Twitter.com/VMSAdvocates.

CONFERENCES

ADVANCED CARDIOVASCULAR LIFE SUPPORT (ACLS)

January 11, 2011
DHMC
Lebanon, NH

For more information call
603-653-1531 or go to the website at
<http://ccehs.dartmouth-hitchcock.org>

22ND ANNUAL EASTERN WINTER DERMATOLOGY CONFERENCE

January 14-17, 2011
Stoweflake Hotel & Spa
Stowe, VT

For more information
go to: <http://uvm.cme.edu>
or call 802-656-2292

PEDIATRIC ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT (PALS)

January 18, 2011
DHMC
Lebanon, NH

For more information call
603-653-1531 or go to the website at
<http://ccehs.dartmouth-hitchcock.org>

EMERGENCY MEDICINE UPDATE

February 2-5, 2011
Stoweflake Hotel & Spa
Stowe, VT

For more information go to: <http://uvm.cme.edu>
or call 802-656-2292

NORRIS COTTON CANCER CENTER RADIATION ONCOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

February 5, 2011
DHMC
Lebanon, NH

For more information call
603-653-1531 or go to the website at
<http://ccehs.dartmouth-hitchcock.org>

Mark Your Calendars!

October 29, 2011
Topnotch Resort and Spa, Stowe, VT

Vermont Medical Society 198th Annual Meeting

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