

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN PHYSICIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY

"Not for ourselves do we labor"

Sept./Oct.
2009

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Newly elected VMS President Robert Tortolani, M.D., (left) presents Immediate Past President John Brumsted, M.D., with a certificate honoring Dr. Brumsted for his service to VMS and its members.

To read more about Dr. Tortolani and the other new VMS officers, turn to page three.

On page seven, Dr. Brumsted talks about his experiences during his year as president.

VMS MEMBERS ADOPT NEW RESOLUTIONS, SET PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2010

During the Vermont Medical Society's 196th annual meeting held the first weekend in October at the Basin Harbor Club in Vergennes, members adopted policy resolutions that position the organization to tackle a number of key health care issues in the upcoming year, including reducing the rising costs of health care and preventing childhood obesity.

"The policy resolutions were adopted by VMS members because they address issues that we as physicians encounter every day," said Robert Tortolani, M.D., VMS's newly elected president (see page three for related article). "Our members wanted to take a stand on these particular issues because they strongly believe that addressing them will result in better care for our patients and help to strengthen Vermont's health care system."

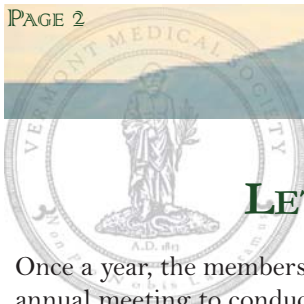
The resolutions will form the basis of the organization's 2010 public policy efforts. The adopted resolutions addressed:

PRESERVING PATIENT ACCESS TO PHYSICIANS BY REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS AND IMPROVING REIMBURSEMENT – To counter a growing shortage of physicians that threatens to severely limit patient access to health care, VMS advocates for public policies that improve the state's ability to recruit and retain physicians.

Remedies suggested by the VMS resolution include advocating loan repayment funding, adequate public and private payer reimbursement for physicians, and calling for communicating to Vermont's federal delegation the need to ensure that health care reform legislation address Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement issues such as a national floor for Medicaid reimbursement, a Geographic Practice Cost Index floor and repair of the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate formula.

PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY – VMS declares childhood obesity a major public health issue and calls upon the appropriate public and private entities to study and adopt public policies that address the impending childhood obesity crisis.

Continued on page



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Once a year, the members, elected leaders and staff of the Vermont Medical Society gather at the annual meeting to conduct the organization's business, plan for the future and celebrate the accomplishments of physicians and other leaders in health care improvement. Part business meeting, part reunion, the annual meeting is important because many of the decisions made there have a large impact on our organization during the forthcoming year.

If you weren't able to make it to the annual meeting, we've devoted most of this issue of the *Green Mountain Physician* to covering what took place there. And for those of you who were there, we thank you for devoting your free time to the betterment of health care in this state and hope that this issue serves as a useful summary of the meeting that you can refer to all year long.



Among the stories included in this issue are:

- o A summary of the five resolutions adopted by membership that will form the basis of VMS's public policy efforts in 2010 (page 1);
- o An article highlighting VMS's new officers, including the recently named president, Robert Tortolani, M.D. (page 3); and,
- o A recap of the awards given to five Vermonters who have exhibited outstanding service to the state's health care system and communities (page 4).

On a personal note, I'd like to thank VMS's Immediate Past President John Brumsted, M.D., for his service during an exceptional year as the organization's president. With his dedication to improving the delivery of health care, hard work and vast expertise and knowledge, Dr. Brumsted served the interests of Vermont's physicians extraordinarily well over the past year as VMS President.

Sincerely,


VMS MEMBERS SET HEALTH CARE PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2010

(cont'd from pg. 1) Among the approaches suggested by VMS include eliminating the sales of sugared drinks and candy from all public k-12 schools, reviewing physical education requirements in public schools, establishing funding for grants that encourage innovative school-based obesity prevention programs, studying the prevalence of "junk food" marketing directed toward children in Vermont, and research and recommend potential methods of restricting or eliminating such marketing.

COLLABORATING WITH THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ON H1N1 – As the threat of the H1N1 flu virus looms, VMS will collaborate with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) to disseminate information on H1N1, immunization efforts, common sense hygiene techniques, physician preparedness and volunteer needs to its members through all communication avenues and in turn will report back to the department any feedback from physicians. VMS will also support its members and VDH by encouraging the medical community to participate in any VDH volunteer recruitment efforts.

INCREASING THE IMMUNIZATION RATES OF VERMONTERS – VMS calls for an increase in immunization rates in the state and encourages its members to participate in VDH's

immunization program and immunization registry. Additionally, the resolution calls for collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, Vermont Academy of Family Physicians and VDH to educate their members and the public about the importance of fully immunizing the population in order to achieve the highest immunization rates possible.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS –

Among the remedies suggested by VMS to control the cost of health care are to reduce the burden of preventable disease, make health care delivery more efficient, reduce non-clinical health system costs that do not contribute value to patient care, and promote value-based decision-making at all levels.

The resolution calls for accomplishing some of the above objectives by advocating that sources of medical research funding give priority to studies that collect both clinical and cost data and widely disseminate cost effective information to physicians and other health care decision-makers, providing refunds or other incentives to enrollees who successfully complete certain behavior modification programs, and urging the General Assembly to enact medical liability reform.



Newly elected VMS officers, President Robert Tortolani, M.D. (second from right), President-Elect Paula Duncan, M.D., and Vice President Victor Pisanelli, Jr., M.D. (second from left) with Immediate Past President John Brumsted, M.D., at the annual meeting.



DR. ROBERT TORTOLANI, M.D., NAMED VMS PRESIDENT

As happens each year during VMS's annual meeting, a new leader has taken the reigns of the organization. Robert Tortolani, M.D., was named president of VMS following a year of service as president-elect and a year prior to that as vice president.

A board-certified family practice physician, Dr. Tortolani has practiced medicine in Brattleboro since 1973 and is an adjunct assistant professor of medicine at the Dartmouth Medical School. He earned his medical degree from the University of Rochester in 1967 and conducted his residency in family practice at the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont.

Also elected by the VMS membership during the annual meeting were President-Elect Paula Duncan, M.D. (Burlington) and Vice President Victor Pisanelli, Jr., M.D. (Rutland).

During his inaugural address, Dr. Tortolani thanked VMS members for entrusting him with the honor of serving as the organization's president.

"Being named president of the Vermont Medical Society is the greatest honor I could have as a practicing physician," said Dr. Tortolani. "I'm very excited about the opportunity and I look forward to working hard on behalf of the state's physicians and the patients in their care."

Dr. Tortolani also pointed toward VMS's motto as a source of inspiration.

"'Not for ourselves do we labor,' I just love that motto because that is what being good doctors is all about," said, Dr. Tortolani. "Throughout the next year I will keep that motto in mind quite a bit."

Dr. Duncan is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Vermont College of Medicine (UVMCM), where she is the Youth Project Director for the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program and the Medical Director for UVM's Area Health Education Centers program. Dr. Duncan received her medical degree from Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, trained in pediatrics at Albany Medical Center and Stanford and performed an adolescent medicine fellowship while a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar at Stanford. After five years on the faculty at Stanford, she joined the UVMCM faculty.

Dr. Pisanelli is a surgeon at Rutland Regional Medical Center and a Vermont Medical Society council member. Dr. Pisanelli earned his medical degree from the UVMCM and began practicing in 1973 when he joined his father's surgical practice in Rutland. Dr. Pisanelli was 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.

LEADERSHIP

Robert Tortolani, M.D.
President

Paula Duncan, M.D.
President - Elect

Victor Pisanelli, M.D.
Vice President

Howard Schapiro, M.D.
Secretary/Treasurer

John Brumsted, M.D.
Immediate Past President

STAFF

Paul Harrington
Executive Vice President

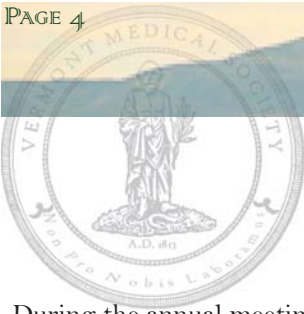
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Deputy Exec. Vice President

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Business Manager

Stephanie Winters
Operations Director

Justin Campfield
Communications Specialist

David Simmons, M.D.
VPHM Medical Director



VMS HONORS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO HEALTH CARE AND COMMUNITY

During the annual meeting VMS honored five Vermonters for their outstanding contributions to the health and well being of the state's residents.

Vermont Commissioner of Health Wendy Davis, M.D., was presented with the Distinguished Service Award for her dedication to improving the health of Vermonters and the state's health care system. Since being named commissioner of health in 2008, Dr. Davis has been a tireless advocate for children and has sought to ensure that public health is fully integrated with Vermont's chronic care initiative. Dr. Davis has also been on the forefront of Vermont's response to the H1N1 flu threat, and prior to being commissioner, was the director of the Vermont maternal and child health division, where she oversaw many important programs, including those concerning special supplemental nutrition, children with special needs, and family planning.



Robert Tortolani, M.D. (right), VMS President, presents Wendy Davis, M.D., with her Distinguished Service Award.

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.



David Johnson, M.D. (right), presents Attorney General William Sorrell with his Citizen of the Year Award.

Vermont Attorney General William H. Sorrell 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.

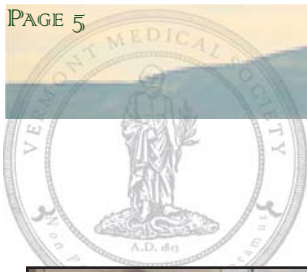
Attorney General Sorrell was recognized for his role in successfully defending Vermont's ban on the data mining of prescription information by pharmaceutical companies. The law, upheld by the U.S. District Court in Brattleboro, is an important element in the state's effort to control pharmaceutical costs and thereby helping to make health insurance coverage more affordable to the average Vermonter.

The Physician of the Year award was presented to Morrisville, Vt., physician **David Coddaira, M.D.** Dr. Coddaira was recognized by his peers for the exemplary care he provides his patients and the leadership role he has assumed within the physician community. He is highly regarded by the Copley Hospital medical staff and has given much of his time in the service of VMS as a Counselor from Lamoille County and a participant on public policy study committees.

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.



Glen Neale, M.D. (left), presents David Coddaira, M.D. with his Physician of the Year Award.



VMS HONORS



Mildred Reardon, M.D. (right), presents Mrs. Lois Howe McClure with her Founders Award

Lois Howe McClure 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.

Along with her late husband, Mac, Lois McClure has supported numerous community initiatives that have made a difference in Vermonters' health and well being. Through McClure's efforts, patients and their caregivers who travel to Fletcher Allen Health Care for cancer treatment stay in a comfortable home setting, mothers and their children are learning parenting and occupational skills in a safe environment at the McClure-supported Lund Family Center, and the changing demographics in Vermont are being addressed at the University of Vermont's new Center on Aging.

The Physician Award for Community Service was given to **Audrey von Lepel, M.D.**, for her work as a wildlife rescue worker in Franklin County. A member of the Vermont Wildlife Rescue Association, Dr. von Lepel is a Vermont Institute for Natural Science (VINS) recognized wildlife rehabilitator for songbirds and small mammals and has been known to treat wounded animals and release them back into the wild.

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.



Robert Tortolani, M.D. (right), presents Audrey von Lepel, M.D. with her Physician Award for Community Service.

VMS EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION

AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO TWO UVM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE STUDENTS



Mildred Reardon, M.D. (right), presents Amy Odefy with the Dr. Mildred A. Reardon Scholarship.

The VMS Education and Research Foundation awarded two University of Vermont College of Medicine students with the Dr. Mildred A. Reardon Scholarship. The \$5,000 scholarships were awarded to Amy Odefy and Isaac Leader during the VMS awards banquet.

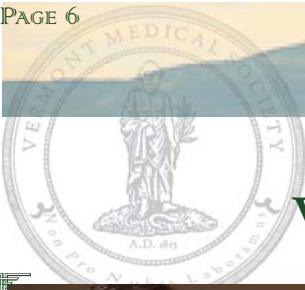
Each year the Vermont Medical Society Education and Research Foundation gives one or more scholarships to medical students who are committed to practicing medicine in Vermont and caring for Vermonters. The scholarship program was created to encourage young doctors to return to Vermont after completing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

The scholarship is funded through generous contributions from Fletcher Allen Health Care, members of the Vermont Medical Society, and the Chittenden County Medical Society. The scholarship is named in honor of Dr. Mildred Reardon, a faculty member at the UVM College of Medicine, who was instrumental in forming the Vermont Medical Society Education and Research Foundation.

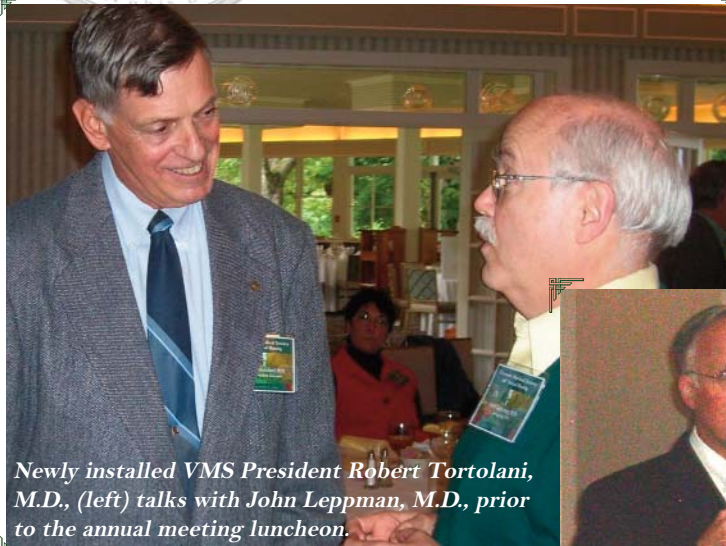
"It is our hope and intention, that by offering this annual scholarship, it will recruit medical students to practice medicine in Vermont, especially in its less-served areas, to ensure that Vermonters in all parts of the state continue to have access to excellent medical care," said Dr. Reardon.



Mildred Reardon, M.D. (right), presents Isaac Leader with the Dr. Mildred A. Reardon Scholarship.



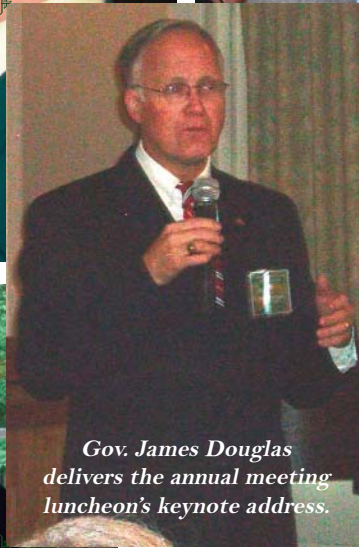
VMS 196TH ANNUAL MEETING - IN PICTURES



Newly installed VMS President Robert Tortolani, M.D., (left) talks with John Leppman, M.D., prior to the annual meeting luncheon.



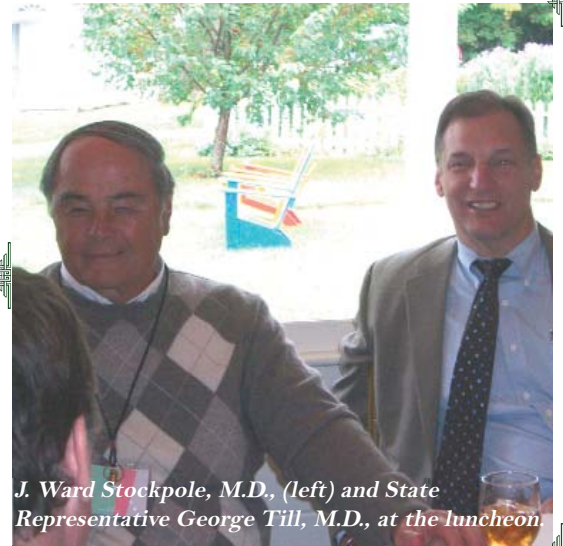
Jerry Rankin, M.D., (left) shares a few words with Governor James Douglas.



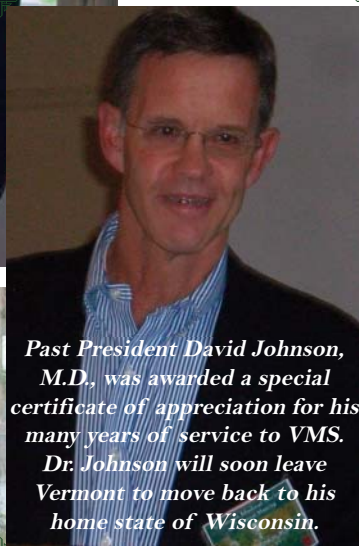
Gov. James Douglas delivers the annual meeting luncheon's keynote address.



George Phillips, M.D., (left) and Charles McLean, M.D., talk prior to the keynote address.



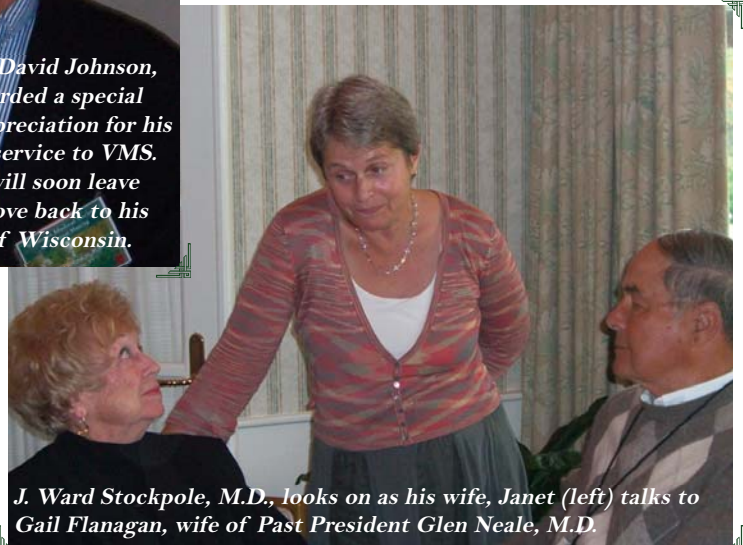
J. Ward Stockpole, M.D., (left) and State Representative George Till, M.D., at the luncheon.



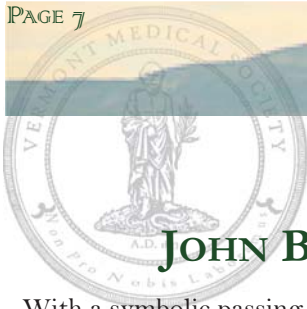
Past President David Johnson, M.D., was awarded a special certificate of appreciation for his many years of service to VMS. Dr. Johnson will soon leave Vermont to move back to his home state of Wisconsin.



Robert Block, M.D., (left) and Carol Vassar, M.D., (right) discuss technology with Tech Consultants' Michael Servidio.



J. Ward Stockpole, M.D., looks on as his wife, Janet (left) talks to Gail Flanagan, wife of Past President Glen Neale, M.D.



IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

JOHN BRUMSTED, M.D., REFLECTS ON HIS YEAR IN OFFICE

With a symbolic passing of a briefcase to newly installed VMS President Robert Tortolani, M.D., the transition of John Brumsted, M.D., from president to immediate past president was complete. Shortly after the 196th annual meeting concluded, the *Green Mountain Physician* asked Dr. Brumsted to reflect on his term in office, a year that saw him travel to all corners of the state – and even the corridors of the nation’s capital – as Vermont physicians’ most visible advocate.

Green Mountain Physician: What was most rewarding about being president?

Dr. Brumsted: It was being in a position to interact with physicians from around the state and really understand the breadth of issues that they are facing. It was educational as well as enjoyable to work with so many people and solidify great relationships with them.

GMP: What did you learn during your year in office?

Dr. Brumsted: I did learn that although there are varying opinions on lots of issues that affect physicians, there is unanimity when it comes to wanting to take really good care of Vermonters. Physicians in the state really have an altruistic bent that runs deep and it's nice to be a part of that group.

GMP: Did anything about the position surprise you?

Dr. Brumsted: It didn't surprise me but it was an exciting time to have the opportunity to go to Washington and talk to others in medicine from around the country with the fact that the health care reform debate has been front and center. It was lucky timing rather than something that surprised me.

GMP: How did you balance your clinical and administrative responsibilities at Fletcher Allen with your VMS presidential duties?

Dr. Brumsted: My non-clinical job description at Fletcher Allen is fluid enough that it was relatively easy to adapt my schedule to include VMS activities. It is likely much harder for an individual that spends 100 percent of their time seeing patients to do that. It required extra time, but it was time spent working on activities that I manage for Fletcher Allen as well.

GMP: What are you going to do now with that extra time that was once devoted to VMS?

Dr. Brumsted: That time will get taken up with duties at Fletcher Allen or the College of Medicine. For instance, I've already been asked to chair the search for a new chair of the department of family medicine at UVMCOM.

GMP: What impressions do you come away with in terms of the status of Vermont's health care system?

Dr. Brumsted: That actually relative to other states we are in a good position with coverage and a variety of access options for people, but that is only a moment in time. Having a responsive, high quality health care system takes constant work and diligence and the Society is well positioned to help us stay on top of those global issues. We have a really good situation now, but we need to focus on retaining and recruiting new physicians and developing collaborative relationships that serve our patients well.

GMP: What was it like to represent Vermont's doctors before elected officials in Montpelier and Washington, D.C.?

Dr. Brumsted: It was an honor and a pleasure. We have a physician work force that is very altruistic and our elected officials recognize that. We are also fortunate to have elected officials who are similarly altruistic, so it was a pleasure to represent our interests.

GMP: How will serving as VMS president affect the way you practice medicine in the future?

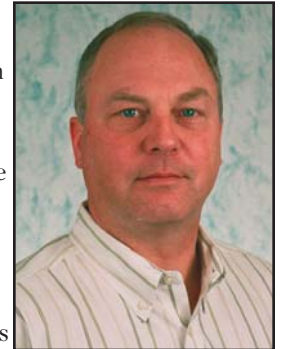
Dr. Brumsted: I think it will affect more my administrative duties because having good relationships with people around the state is important to what I do at Fletcher Allen.

GMP: How do you plan to stay involved with VMS?

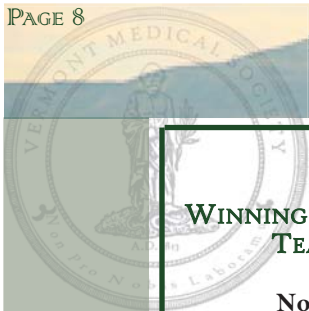
Dr. Brumsted: I'll remain on the council and have frequent discussions with the staff and others involved with the Society. Fletcher Allen does have the largest group of physicians in the state so the activities of the Society are very important to us.

GMP: What advice did you give the new VMS president, Dr. Tortolani?

Dr. Brumsted: I told him to really enjoy the year and enjoy working with Paul, the staff and all the other people around the state. I'm sure that he will.



CONFERENCES



WINNING AT WOUND CARE: A TEAM APPROACH

November 3, 2009
DHMC
Lebanon, NH

For more information call (603) 653-1234, email ccehs@hitchcock.org, or go to https://ccehs1.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/eventinfo_3182.html

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: A CONFERENCE FOSTERING COLLABORATION BETWEEN PRIMARY CARE, MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

November 16, 2009
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For more information call 802-656-2292 or go to the website at <http://cme.uvm.edu>

CHILD PSYCHIATRY FOR THE PRIMARY CARE CLINICIAN

November 17, 2009
Sheraton Conference Center
Burlington, VT

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

AAPVT CHAPTER FALL MEETING

Nov. 6, 2009
Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center
Burlington, VT

For more information Contact Stephanie Winters at swinters@vtmd.org or 802-223-7898.

DHMC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE UPDATE SYMPOSIUM 2009

Dec. 7, 2009
DHMC
Lebanon, NH

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