

## The Physician “Community”, Does It Exist?

One wonders how we learned anything 25 years ago. The internet, today's seemingly single source of one's information, did not exist. I believe there were such things as Encyclopedias, Dictionaries and of course magazines and newspapers. We now; however, are in an environment where information is at our finger tips, whether it be online, on our cell phone, portable digital devices, or any other numerous ways people can interconnect and share information. Many of our old forms of gathering information have died out or are dying. Newspapers are closing or going “online” only, encyclopedias are a thing of the past.

Cell phones, faxes, texting, twittering, blogging were non-existent. I recall when on call I needed to make sure I had enough change to stop at a pay phone to respond to a page (are there still pay phones?). Today one can be in constant contact with anyone you want.

Just having the communication tools; however, does not necessarily make communication better. The irony is that in recent years I think we as physicians are doing a poorer job of communicating and networking with each other. The hospital used to be the hub of information exchange, it seemed there were more social events to network and catch up with each other. We would see each other at CME activities and functions, now one can complete requirements for CME online. Now with many of us not even going to the hospital, physicians going to fewer hospitals and less social events, we are less connected than ever before. Add to that the increasing demands of the practice, increasing overhead and stress of managing our businesses, the energy left to reach out to our colleagues is minimal.

I would welcome feedback from the membership how we can enhance networking and communication. The Maricopa County Medical Society has a Facebook page, a twitter site as well as regular email communications with the e-newsletter, *InforMed Society*. Also, the main staple of our communications, *Round-up*, is looking to find ways to better communicate with our membership.

As I stated, being cognizant of our practices, patients and healthcare regulations, is a full-time job in itself. To be better informed in a timely and effective manner is why pagers, cell phones and digital devices were created. Access to us as physicians has become a 24/7 issue. To be as informative as possible, the Medical Society has implemented these new communications models to better inform you. From *Round-up*, to *InforMed Society*, to Twitter and Facebook – these 4 vehicles of communication are solely for us physicians. Will it be enough? Is there more that we as a Society can do to better inform physicians of what's going on and really important?

Perhaps there are other ways we can enhance that sense of community among us as physicians. It only takes one good idea to change the ways things operate. It could quite possibly be your idea that changes the way medical associations communicate. Share them with me. I can be reached at [briveland@mcmsonline.com](mailto:briveland@mcmsonline.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

President's Page – June 2009

Until next month,

Brian R. Riveland, M.D.

President

“The problem with communication ... is the *illusion* that it has been accomplished”

George Bernard Shaw