

# Bulletin

*Editor: Dr. John W. Sneed*

NOV. - DEC. 2020 • Volume 44 Issue 6



*Physicians Caring for our Community*



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The Lee County Medical Society Bulletin  
is published bi-monthly.

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### Lee County Medical Society Mission Statement

*The mission of Lee County Medical Society is to advocate for physicians and their relationships with patients; promote public health and uphold the professionalism of the practice of medicine.*

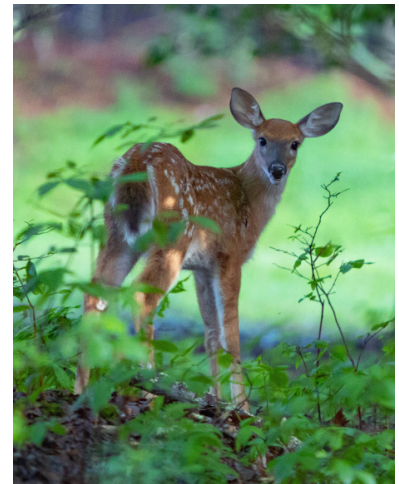
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A little visitor one day in  
my yard.

Photo contributed by,

Ed Guttery M.D.



**We welcome member pictures to be  
considered as a cover to the Bulletin.  
Email them to [valerie@lcmsfl.org](mailto:valerie@lcmsfl.org)**



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### Retired

Joseph Hobson, DO

### Moved out of Area

Juan Carlos Torres Urrutia, MD

## LEE HEALTH WELCOMES EIGHT NEW RESIDENT PHYSICIANS

### PRESS RELEASE

The Florida State University College of Medicine (FSU.COM) Family Medical Residency Program at Lee Health welcomed eight new resident physicians, who started their training on June 22, 2020. The new residents include:

- Dr. Francesca Blazekovic from Port Charlotte, FL
- Dr. Jenna De Francesco from Naples, FL
- Dr. Thomas Flynn from Sarasota, FL
- Dr. Shane Geffe from Cape Coral, FL
- Dr. Joseph Guernsey from Ave Maria, FL
- Dr. Gerard Mulles from Fort Myers, FL
- Dr. Dakin White from Bradenton, FL
- Dr. Luke Wren from Carmel, IN

The FSU COM Global Health Fellowship Program also welcomes two new fellows:

- Dr. Bradley Green, Global Health Fellow – completed residency in Cleveland, OH
- Dr. Alice Shallcross, Global Health Fellow – completed residency in Milwaukee, WI

“We received more than 1,500 applications from U.S. medical students and physicians from all around the world,” says Alfred Gitu, M.D., Program Director of the residency program at Lee Health. “Our program continues to grow and expand with residents who are passionate, compassionate and academically strong. The new class of residents scored in the top 20% in the nation on the United States Medical Licensing Examination, and they are dedicated to caring for the underserved.”

Based at Lee Memorial Hospital with The Florida State University College of Medicine as its institutional sponsor, the residency program was created to abate the shortage of primary care physicians anticipated nationally, an issue that is compounded locally by rapid population growth in Southwest Florida. Medical school graduates are required to complete residency training in their chosen specialty to become independently practicing physicians.

Statistically, about 60% of residents will practice medicine in the same area in which they are trained. Since 2014, when the program started, 18 of the 32 graduates (56%) of The Florida State University College of Medicine Family Medicine Residency Program at Lee Health have stayed in Southwest Florida following graduation from the program. Four graduates of the residency program were accepted into fellowship programs with one planning to return to the area to practice medicine following her fellowship training. Membership news for Nov. Dec Bulletin.

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### Members At Large

Dr. Arie Dosoretz, Dr. Harmindar Gill, Dr. Justin Casey, Dr. Asif Azam and Dr. Janet Gaw.

We would like to thank those leaving our Board this year.  
We appreciate your years of service

Dr. Daniel de la Torre - eight years  
Dr. Joanna Carioba - eight years  
Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad - three years



## NEW MEMBERS

### **Cathy Balogh, DO**

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### **Francesca Blazckovic, MD**

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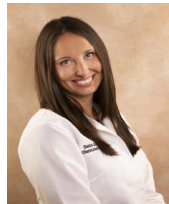
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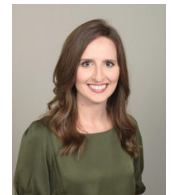
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By ELIZABETH COSMAI M.D.

2020 is coming to a close. Should we be excited for this? For many that answer is a resounding YES! It certainly gives me pause to think about what this year has brought to our country from an economic and health standpoint. Even locally, we have seen a significant change in our own economic, healthcare, and social status. After this year, I will be very careful to even guess what this coming year will bring. It has been both an honor and challenge serving as the President of the Lee County Medical Society (LCMS). It is difficult to appreciate the work involved in keeping a medical society relevant and solvent unless you have the opportunity to serve in a leadership position. I appreciate my medical society colleagues who have donated countless hours from their already busy schedule. LCMS is a nonprofit organization that relies on the voluntary work of physicians.

Most importantly, LCMS is quite reliant financially on active and recurrent membership. The dues paid by each physician allows for the medical society to not only exist, but to play an important role in the support of our physicians at a local, state, and federal level. Our ability to send delegates to the yearly Florida Medical Association meeting allows for our local physicians to be duly represented. Many policy debates occur at these yearly meetings and we need to ensure that Lee County will always have a 'seat at the table'. Physicians and our ability to practice medicine always seems to be under attack, whether that's from the media or from our very own government and their legislative decisions. As previously witnessed in Collier County in 2018, an effective county medical society response, through savvy communication and patient education, was able to protect its independent physicians against a detrimental hospital admissions policy that was proposed by the NCH healthcare system. That could have only been accomplished by a strong membership number and medical society physicians working together for a common goal. For this, I urge my physician colleagues to continue to be not just a member of our LCMS but to also be INVOLVED.

One of the greatest achievements that our local society has made over the years is the creation and

continual funding of the Physician Wellness Program. As part of your yearly physician dues, you have access to up to eight meetings with a licensed psychologist. This year alone has seen an increase in utilization of this fantastic program.

It will be a challenge this coming year to fund this excellent and essential program. Our physicians need and many rely on the ability to have access to mental healthcare. We have seen a significant increase in physician burnout rates and physician suicide. We NEED to continue to support our colleagues' mental well-being. The annual 5K charity race directly funds this program. I hope that we will see our community step up to the challenge of participating in this charity run/walk. For those who are not able to physically participate, you can send a monetary donation or act as a sponsor for the event. In addition to the annual charity race, we will also be asking for monetary donations from our community and in return we will be offering personalized, medical grade fabric masks as a 'thank you' gift.

Despite the incredible challenges of 2020, I am proud of the accomplishments made by the Lee County Medical Society and the overall unity of our member physicians. Keeping an intact local medical society should always remain a priority for us as physicians. If we do not defend our profession and the role that we play in our society, then no one else will. Let us continue to stand tall and proud.



## RAMIREZ REPORT

By JULIE RAMIREZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Keeping Focused on the Passion

This year is nearly over but Covid continues, uncertainty reigns supreme and everything seems a mess. A week or so, at my virtual staff meeting, I was hashing over such uncertainties when my membership coordinator, Diana, said something to me so poignant and appropriate. Don't forget why you are passionate about the Medical Society. Her comment was the words I needed at that very moment; an encouragement to look up from the weeds and see the big picture. Too often, and especially this year, we get bogged down with the little details and forget the main mission and purpose of why we do what we do. As physicians, I am sure that all the things that include insurance payments, government regulations, Covid liabilities, financial strain and HR stressors can cloud the real reason you became a physician.

The mission of the Lee County Medical Society is to advocate for physicians and their relationships with patients; promote public health and uphold the professionalism of the practice of medicine. We have definitely lived this mission in 2020 by advocating for physicians and patients with a mask mandate letter to officials, a letter to the Florida Governor requesting that elective services restart in May, creating a Public Service Announcement video encouraging the public to wear masks, providing PPE to over 100 physician offices in Lee County, and opening up our Physician Wellness Program to ALL physicians in Lee County regardless of membership status.

My passion for the past 5 years within the Society has been about physician mental wellness. Losing a physician 5 years ago, who was my own age and had a similar family life to mine, left a great impact on me. I am so thankful that our physician leaders saw the need to act quickly and create a program to help physicians stay mentally healthy. If you are not familiar with this membership benefit, please let me share with you my passion!

The Medical Society has a great program that allows physician members (and non-members until December 31, 2020) to see a vetted psychologist 8

times a calendar year to talk about things that are causing mental stress. These topics can include family issues, relationship problems, work related difficulties, burnout, stress management, health issues and if needs be, mood swings and suicidal thoughts. These psychologists use their usual protocols to refer to psychiatrist when it is appropriate. The beauty of this program is that it is confidential and free. No staff at the Medical Society knows who has visits. Monies raised for the Foundation pay for the visits.



This year the program has been used by almost 40 physicians. A new trend of physicians being seen, is that physicians are recommending their physician colleagues to the program. This is great in so many ways. It shows that despite being behind a mask, physicians are caring for their fellow physicians. It shows that this program is a testament to the quality of care that is being given.

To continue this passion, we are inviting you to donate to the Foundation. As token of appreciation, for your specific level of donation, we will be creating special medical grade masks with the emblem "Supporter of Healthcare Heroes" on it.

Make your donation today.

\$50 donation = 2 masks

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All donations made between December 1-December 22, 2020 will be eligible for mask delivery the 2nd week of January 2021. Donations can be made online at [www.lcmsfl.org](http://www.lcmsfl.org), calling the office at 239-936-1645 or by mailing a check to: LCMSF, 5781 Lee Blvd., Ste 208-104, Lehigh Acres, FL 33971



# TELEHEALTH'S RISKS TO PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS EXAMINED IN NEW WHITE PAPER

CONTRIBUTED BY THE DOCTORS COMPANY

**Napa, California—August 12, 2020**—Telemedicine use skyrocketed during COVID-19—by the end of April, visits in the U.S. had risen to nearly one million per week. While telemedicine can provide sweeping benefits, healthcare providers must also be aware of existing and emerging risks to protect themselves and their patients. The Doctors Company addresses these risks and how to mitigate them in a new white paper, *(Please take a moment and review the link below, if you are a Telehealth provider) [Your Patient Is Logging on Now: The Risks and Benefits of Telehealth in the Future of Healthcare](#)*

While medical malpractice claims involving telemedicine have been minimal in the past, these claims may increase as telehealth—which includes telemedicine, remote monitoring, asynchronous data collection, and a variety of other incorporations of technology into nonclinical patient and professional health-related areas—continues to gain popularity. The white paper examines foreseeable future risks such as:

- Missed diagnoses, particularly of cancer.
- Increased cyberattacks.
- Breaches to patients' privacy.
- Decreased access to care for some patients without access to internet, with language barriers, or a lack of technological savvy.
- Uncertainty around the future of reimbursement.
- Lack of proper licensure as physicians perform state-to-state care.

“This white paper reflects our mission to advance the practice of good medicine and our commitment to serve healthcare providers so they can help others during the pandemic,” said David L. Feldman, MD, MBA, FACS, chief medical officer of The Doctors Company Group. “For example, during the pandemic, telemedicine patients may refuse to come into the medical practice for further evaluation. We advise physicians on how to be prepared for such incidences so they can focus on caring for those who need it the most.”

“We also invited experts to contribute advice on reducing risks so providers and patients can take advantage of telehealth's many benefits such as increased access to care for most patients, enhanced ability to manage chronic conditions, and reduction of infection risks,” Dr. Feldman added.

The paper includes commentary from Til Jolly, MD, FACEP,

chief medical officer of Aveshka and senior consultant for emergency care to the assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the Department of Health and Human Services; Michael Leitman, MD, dean for graduate medical education, designated institutional official, professor of surgery, and professor of medical education, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, New York; Ashish Atreja, MD, MPH, chief innovation officer of medicine and head of Mount Sinai's AppLab; and Milton Chen, PhD, who has worked with many small practices and large systems to implement telehealth and telemedicine services.



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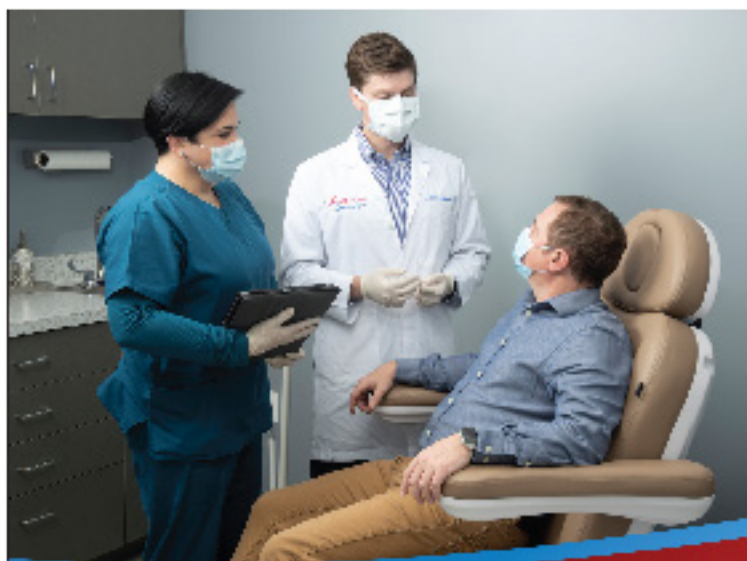
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Organized by

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We will be following all CDC Covid protocols to keep everyone safe and having a fun time.





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