

## Message from the President

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Michael A. McAdoo, M.D.  
TMF President

## Compassion Fatigue

As I start my term as president of the TMF, I want to thank Tennessee physicians and especially the TMF Board of Directors for the opportunity and privilege to serve in this capacity. There is no greater

honor than to serve your colleagues through an organization that is focused on rescue, restoration, and sustaining a professional career.

This issue focuses on compassion fatigue. To discuss compassion fatigue, one must assume that you originally had compassion or understanding or empathy for others. A foremost question to ask is whether medicine is merely your job and a way of earning a living or whether it is a calling; a ministry of serving others. The patient has to be the central focus no matter what. Without our patients, we would not have a practice of medicine. After all, it is really not about us.

While we may have begun our careers with compassion and good intentions, the demands of reduced and uncompensated care, lost autonomy, heightened expectations and the realization that we are not super heroes begins to take its toll. Physical and emotional issues may surface along with the loss of personal accomplishment, satisfaction, and joy. Family, friends and special interests are sacrificed while prayer, daily devotions and exercise evaporate. Since we set the office's tone, before long everyone dreads coming to work.

Yes, I have been through this dismal process. It required some self-reflection about what is really important to me. The question is not about what I do or how I do it. The question is WHY do I do what I do. I realized medicine was a calling and ministry for me with an opportunity to impact the health and quality of life of my patients. I can't blame others. I must understand the meaning of *carpe diem*, to seize the day, as opposed to placing all my hope in the future. I will never live this moment again.

As physicians, we must never lose focus on our patients. We must continue our work with personal integrity. Have we done all we can for our patients today? Do we really serve our patients as if there is no tomorrow?

Recently I saw an older, rugged outdoorsman who unfortunately had longstanding diabetes and tobacco addiction. As you might expect, he developed peripheral vascular disease. This progressed from initially a sore on his toe to a toe amputation. It was a progressive disease. I then sent the patient to the Wound Care Center and Vascular Center. His family related that "they" told him frankly, abruptly, and without compassion that he was going to lose his foot and/or leg. This was not well received by this man who silently determined that he could not exist as a one-legged man. Quietly he returned home and ended his life with a gunshot to the head. I never got to try to share any additional compassion with my patient and my friend. Did we as a profession drop the ball? Did we discuss the patient's medical disease without compassion? I now have a new commitment to try to connect with compassion to every patient.

To extend compassion to our patients is the ultimate goal for success in our lifetime. Have we achieved success?

In closing, I would like to share "What constitutes Success" by Bessie Stanley (1905)...

He has achieved success who has lived well,

Laughed often and loved much;

Who has gained respect of intelligent men

And the love of little children;

Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;

Who has left the world better than he found it,

Whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem or rescued soul;

Who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty

Or failed to express it.

Who has always looked for the best in others

And given them the best he had.

Whose life was an inspiration, whose memory a benediction.

The TMF has restored and allowed many of our colleagues to regain success. Let me challenge you to extend that success by making a contribution to the Tennessee Medical Foundation today and by always looking for the best in others as you give them your best.

THE MISSION OF THE PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH PROGRAM (PHP) IS TO PROTECT PATIENTS THROUGH IDENTIFICATION, INTERVENTION, REHABILITATION, AND THE PROVISION OF ADVOCACY/SUPPORT FOR PHYSICIANS IMPAIRED BY ADDICTIVE DISEASE, MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL ILLNESS.

# PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH

## MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Roland Gray, M.D.  
TMF Medical Director

### Compassion Fatigue: Warning Signs and Management

Compassion fatigue (CF) is a severe form of burnout and affects all aspects of a physician's physical, mental, and spiritual life. It drains the physician of empathy for his or her patients.

#### Warning Signs

There are clues to when a doctor is at risk or already suffering from CF. Often he or she has no life outside medicine. Frequently, patient complaints or dissatisfaction occur. While still practicing good clinical medicine, doctors with CF will see more of the physical, clinical aspects of what's going on rather than having empathy for what the patient is feeling or going through.

The physician beleaguered by CF may begin to self-medicate with alcohol and other drugs, blame others for problems or begin showing up late for appointments.

Once CF sets in, no matter how well a physician is doing or how successful, he or she may feel diminished personally and fall into exhaustion, no matter how much rest they get. Somatic complaints such as headaches may develop along with a sense of hopelessness and meaninglessness.

#### What to do?

We of the Tennessee Medical Foundation have known about CF for years. We recognize the toll it takes and understand the suffering involved when the joy of practicing medicine is lost.

The best treatment, of course, is prevention in the form of practicing what most of us already prescribe for our own patients:

#### Do's

- Take care of yourself as well as you take care of your patients
- Get adequate food & rest
- Exercise regularly
- Schedule alone time and social activities
- Speak with a trusted friend or therapist about your feelings when needed
- Embrace spiritual or religious practices which comfort and support

#### Don'ts

- Don't look for an answer in a new job or car, an affair or a divorce
- Don't work harder or longer
- Don't self medicate

Most physicians enter medicine to heal and relieve suffering. CF can rob a doctor of the ability to do so. It overly taxes the body, mind and spirit. Finding and practicing sustainable ways to care, comfort and nourish oneself can renew and reenergize a physician when the capacity to care is overdrawn.

Remember there are solutions. I'd like to encourage you to contact us if you are suffering from CF or know someone who is. We have resources to help.

## Calendar of Events



### Southeast Regional Meeting of the Federation of State Physician Health Programs

October 11,12, 2013

Nashville, Tennessee

### 45th Annual ASAM Conference

April 10 - 13, 2014

Orlando, Florida

### FSPHP Annual Meeting & Conference

April 23 - 26, 2014

Denver, Colorado

### Caduceus Retreat

June 6 - 8, 2014

Montgomery Bell State Park

### IDAA Annual Meeting

July 30 - Aug 3, 2014

Palm Desert, California

Dr. Gray has served as Medical Director of the Tennessee Medical Foundation's Physician's Health Program since January 2001. Prior to this, he served as a TMF Board member and long-time volunteer for the Physician's Health Program. Certified in Addiction Medicine in 1987, Dr. Gray has treated more than 10,000 patients for addiction diseases over the course of his career. He serves as a Special Government Employee and Consultant to the FDA Subcommittee on Drug Abuse. A practicing pediatrician from 1976 through 2001, Dr. Gray is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as a Fellow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Dr. Gray is also a member of the clinical faculty at Vanderbilt University.

# PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH

## PHYSICIAN STRESS

Roland W. Gray, M.D.

### Myths in Medicine

An examination of physician stress must begin with a review of the medical myths that not only set physicians up to experience stress, but also make it difficult for many of us to recognize or admit that we are under significant stress. Our training leads us to believe that any uncertainty in the practice of medicine is a sign of weakness; we must be all knowing all the time. Emotional revelation also is viewed as a sign of weakness by many physicians, often subconsciously. We learn to put our patients first, often at great personal cost, particularly during training when our own health may suffer significantly. As we conclude training, the belief that we are immune from illness has been reinforced.

Everything in our history tells us that technical excellence will provide all the satisfaction we will ever need, we have no requirements beyond that point.

### Physician-related Causes of Stress

An honest appraisal of stress in our lives should take into account the personal characteristics of physicians. Often the very qualities that make us good doctors also contribute to stress in our lives. Physicians are perfectionists, and we need to be in control of every situation. These characteristics create an exaggerated sense of responsibility, leaving us with excessive, unrealistic guilt when things go wrong.

Physicians do an excellent job of suppressing their feelings, a condition reinforced by the above myths. And ask for help? No way! Perfectionists in charge don't ask for help. We *are* the help. That's why so many of us have difficulty with simple life occurrences, such as taking a vacation or enjoying leisure time. It's hard to relax when you're always responsible.

### What can we do?

Some physician stressors are easily anticipated: time pressures, chronic fatigue, dealing with life and death issues, difficult, demanding or chronically ill patients. We know these issues inside and out. Maintaining our clinical competence, always important, has become a foreseeable stressor with new requirements for 40 hours of continuing medical education every two years.

For most of us, it's the unexpected issues that cause the most debilitating stress. No one ever tells us during training how to handle violent patients, or how to repair breakdowns in the doctor-patient relationship. We are somehow supposed to magically know how to handle third party intrusions and government regulation in our practice. We cannot openly discuss our concerns and often outright fears over the increase in malpractice litigation and the resulting pressure to practice defensive medicine.

By now, it should come as no surprise to us that the stresses in physician lives can lead to addictive behavior, relationship distress and emotional and behavioral problems. The professional consequences of stress in our lives can threaten our careers.

### Learning to Cope

Stress is a part of all of our lives. It is unrealistic to think that we can eliminate stress from our lives and practices. Recognition of the level of stress we live under and its impact on our

lives is the first step toward managing stress. Taking this important first step allows us to then take responsibility for managing stress and finding ways to cope with crises. Some of the best strategies for physicians to manage stress include:

- Learn to relax and meditate
- Practice acceptance, restore or renew your spiritual life
- Make a gratitude list, recognize your blessings
- Monitor use of alcohol and drugs
- Develop a support network – talk to friends, physicians and those outside the medical community
- Physical exercise
- Develop a positive attitude – see life as a challenge and an opportunity
- Open yourself to new experiences – try new things, food and places
- Give personal and family relationships the necessary time and effort
- Develop hobbies, have a life outside of medicine
- Take time off – vacations as well as daily personal time to restore your spirit
- Recognize when to seek professional help

Each of these strategies works in different ways to restore balance in our lives. It is not enough to engage in just one or two strategies; to truly achieve balance in our lives, we must recognize all of life's dimensions.

It is important for physicians to learn to care for themselves. If we can accept the fact that there will be a certain level of stress in our lives, take responsibility for stress management and master stress reduction strategies, we can avoid many of the long-term and often career damaging effects of stress. Learning to value ourselves as people first, rather than as physicians, will prevent every stressful situation from becoming a crisis.

### Physician's Health Program – Not Just Alcohol and Drugs

For many years, the Physician's Health Program served primarily alcohol and drug dependent physicians. We still intervene and assist physicians with chemical dependency; in fact the list of substances physicians must overcome has grown and today includes drugs such as oxycontin and ultram, which were not even available when the program began.

Today, the PHP addresses physician problems masked by chemical dependency, such as disruptive behavior, boundary issues, psychiatric issues, improper prescribing, cognitive defects and stress or career concerns. In cases where there is no chemical dependency, the PHP will work with physicians to help correct the underlying problems and restore lives and practices. In working with physicians, I find that inadequate stress management often leads to other debilitating issues and must be addressed on an individual basis to give physicians the support they need.

Physicians can easily access the TMF Physician's Health Program by calling (615) 467-6411 or writing the TMF, 216 Centerview Drive, Suite 304, Nashville, TN, 37027. All communications to the program are strictly confidential.



# PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH

## CADUCEUS RETREAT

### 2013 Caduceus Retreat June 7-9, 2013 Montgomery Bell State Park

In June of 2013, the Tennessee Medical Foundation held its 27th Annual Retreat at scenic Montgomery Bell State Park in White Bluff, Tennessee.

Attended by more than 230 participants, former participants and family members, registrants enjoyed a weekend of pleasant summer weather and fellowship in the park's tranquil, relaxing setting.

Dr. Roland Gray kicked off the Retreat's traditional Friday Night Newcomer's Meeting by welcoming the attendees. Newcomers to the TMF then introduced themselves to their peers by briefly sharing their recovery story.

On Saturday, C.C. Nuckols, Ph.D. shared insights and wisdom drawn from over 35 years of research and experience in the recovery field. His presentation on "The Ego-Less Self" incorporating spirituality and recovery was well-received. A recipient of multiple national honors and commendations, C.C. will return for the 2015 Caduceus Retreat.

Saturday evening, attendees convened for "Movie and Popcorn" to view the recently released, award winning film *Bill W.*, a documentary about the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Retreat concluded on Sunday morning with a musical performance by Steve Dan Mills, a Nashville contemporary singer, songwriter and storyteller. Steve's message of hope, healing and recovery was both entertaining and inspirational.

Throughout the weekend, Open AA, NA, SA and Al-Anon meetings were held for attendees.



Mike Todd, TMF Administrator, C.C. Nuckols, Ph.D.,  
Dr. Roland Gray, TMF Medical Director  
2013 Caduceus Retreat Montgomery Bell State Resort Park

If you know a physician who may need help or have a question about physician health, please contact the TMF Physician's Health Program at (615) 467-6411 or visit our website at [www.e-tmf.org](http://www.e-tmf.org)

### 2014 Caduceus Retreat June 6-8, 2014 Montgomery Bell State Park



Claudia Black, MSW, Ph.D.

The Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician's Health Program is pleased to announce that Claudia Black, MSW, Ph.D., will be the featured speaker for the 28th Annual 2014 Caduceus Retreat. Dr. Black is an internationally recognized addiction author, speaker and trainer recognized for her pioneering and contemporary work with family systems and addictive disorders.

Dr. Black has produced numerous audio CDs and DVDs on addiction and treatment, family and codependency, abuse and trauma, and relationships. She is especially well known for her bestselling books, including *It Will Never Happen To Me*, *Repeat After Me*, and *Intimate Treason*.

Dr. Black is a longtime friend of the TMF having previously presented at the 2006 Caduceus Retreat. The staff of the TMF is truly excited to welcome her back to middle Tennessee in 2014 for what promises to be a powerful and informative learning experience.

"Claudia's work is both powerful and ageless.  
She continues to be a pioneer."

- John Bradshaw



### Montgomery Bell State Resort Park Inn and Conference Center

Montgomery Bell State Park is located seven miles east of Dickson in Dickson County. A place of quiet natural beauty, the park abounds in fox, squirrel, raccoon, opossum, deer and a wide variety of birds and wildflowers. There are three lakes for fishing, boating or swimming, trails for hiking, and an 18 hole golf course.

# PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH

## MEET THE BOARD



**Michael A. McAdoo, M.D.**

**TMF President**

Michael A. McAdoo, M.D. has served for the past five years on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Medical Foundation, serving first as a member, then Vice President, and currently as President, a post he assumed in June, 2013.

Board membership and community involvement is nothing new for Dr. McAdoo. As a 28 year member of the Tennessee Medical Association, he has served the organization in 12 leadership capacities including the role of President. He has been a Board member and President of the Milan Chamber of Commerce and Milan Family YMCA, the University of Tennessee Martin President's Council, the Board of Governors of the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association, and President of the University of Tennessee Martin Alumni Council. He also has found time in the past 32 years to serve as team physician for Milan High School.

Married for 42 years to Dixie Criswell McAdoo, the couple lives in Milan, Tennessee and have 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

Dr. McAdoo is Board Certified in Family Medicine. He has practiced family medicine for 34 years since receiving his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Tennessee Center for Health Sciences in Memphis. Since 1981 he has held appointments as Clinical Instructor and Preceptor at the University of Tennessee Department of Family Medicine and has been President, Chief Executive Officer and Principal Investigator for Integrity Clinical Research.

When asked about his support of the PHP, Dr. McAdoo said, "Throughout my professional career I've been afforded the opportunity to observe and be directly involved in many organizations. No other organization has the profound restorative impact on medical careers like the TMF. What a reward to see a successfully salvaged life, family, and career! This positive result is what motivates me to serve and be an active part of the TMF."



**Kimberly Rosdeutscher, M.D.**

**TMF Vice President**

Kimberly Rosdeutscher, M.D. has devoted 4 years of volunteer service to the Tennessee Medical Foundation, first as a member, next as Secretary/Treasurer, and currently as Vice President.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, Dr.

Rosdeutscher did her undergraduate work in Microbiology at Vanderbilt University before graduating with a medical degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in Cincinnati, Ohio. She completed her residency at Children's Hospital Medical Center of the University of Cincinnati.

Dr. Rosdeutscher cannot recall a time she did not want to be a Pediatrician. She voiced her gratitude for the "good fortune of being able to live the dream of working with children and their families." She loves being in Nashville and counts pediatrics as "the most rewarding practice she can imagine."

Dr. Rosdeutscher met her husband, plastic surgeon John David (J.D.) Rosdeutscher, while attending Vanderbilt University. Married in 1992, they have two sons, ages 16 and 11, who continue to teach her "how much she has to learn about pediatrics."

About her volunteer activities on the TMF Board, Dr. Rosdeutscher said, "We are all fortunate to practice in Tennessee thanks to the TMF. By providing physicians an opportunity to get help for addiction and mental health issues we have established a culture of rehabilitation rather than of punishment. This environment is unique to this state thanks to Dr. Gray and the TMF. I am thankful that the physicians in the state know that the TMF is there for them through difficult situations and can see them through to the other side. This is truly a life saving and changing organization and I feel privileged to have been associated with it for so many years."

Noting Dr. Rosdeutscher's contributions to the PHP, Dr. Gray stated, "her support for the TMF is passionate and steadfast. We are so fortunate to be the benefactor of her volunteer service."



## Honoring Leonard A. Brabson, M.D.

At the conclusion of the June, 2013 TMF Board Retreat in Nashville, Dr. Leonard A. Brabson passed the President's gavel to Dr. Michael A. McAdoo of Milan, Tennessee. Having completed his two year term as President, Dr. Brabson will remain on the TMF Board for two years as Past President.

A native of Knoxville, Dr. Brabson attended the University of Tennessee before graduating from medical school at the University Of Tennessee College Of Medicine in Memphis. Inspired by the mentoring of a former professor, Dr. Sam Patterson, Dr. Brabson selected OB/GYN as his specialty.

Having practiced in Knoxville for 35 years, Dr. Brabson currently is Chief of the OB Department at Tennova Physicians Regional Hospital (TPRH), the Medical Director of the Women's Pavilion at TPRH and serves as Vice Chair of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) of Tennessee and the Chair of Legislation.

Dr. Brabson is active in the Tennessee Medical Association (TMA) and is a member and past president of the Knoxville Academy of Medicine. He has served on the Board of the Holston Home for Children and he and his wife of 32 years, Gail, have been board members of the March of Dimes and the UT College of Nursing Advisory Board. When asked about their extensive community involvement, Dr. Brabson said, "Gail and I are just trying to make the world a better place to live." Together they have five children and eight grandchildren. In his off hours, Dr. Brabson enjoys reading, biblical archeology, traveling, and staying abreast of developments in computers and technology.

Commenting on Dr. Brabson's tenure as Board President, TMF Administrator Mike Todd recalled that "regardless of whether he needed to deliver a baby, take care of his grandchildren or take some valuable 'down' time for himself, Dr. Brabson was always available to help the Physician's Health Program in any way he could." Mr. Todd went on to say that "one of Dr. Brabson's most admirable traits is the calm manner with which he led the TMF to the success we enjoy today." Medical Director Roland Gray, M.D. echoed Mr. Todd and added "how wonderful it has been to have someone of Dr. Brabson's intelligence and talent give so freely and generously to the TMF."

# PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH

## TMF NEWS

### THE MEDALLION SOCIETY

Every donation to the Tennessee Medical Foundation matters and is deeply appreciated. Yet, special appreciation is reserved for individuals whose substantial contributions exemplify their commitment to the mission of the TMF Physician's Health Program. Their leadership giving is recognized by membership in the TMF Medallion Society.

Inaugurated in 2013 and created for physicians who have given \$ 10,000.00 or more to support the Physician's Health Program during the ten (10) year period between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2013, the TMF Medallion Society honors and acknowledges their pacesetting benevolence.

#### TMF MEDALLION SOCIETY

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J. Mack Worthington, M.D.	Chattanooga, Tennessee

### NATIONAL DOCTORS DAY

March 30, 2014

As physicians, we work as individuals but also as members of a tribe that includes elders, beloved teachers and mentors, cherished colleagues, and business associates.

From medical school on, our practice is supported and shaped by fellow physicians. To some of them we owe an enormous debt of gratitude.

In March of 1958, a resolution commemorating Doctor's Day was adopted by the United States House of Representatives. Later in 1990, legislation was introduced to establish a National Doctor's Day. Following overwhelming approval by the United States Senate and House of Representatives, on October 30, 1990, President George Bush signed S.J. RES. #366 (which later became Public Law 101-473) designating March 30th as "National Doctor's Day."

We warmly invite you to celebrate National Doctor's Day by honoring or memorializing an influential physician in your life with a contribution to the Tennessee Medical Foundation's Physician's Health Program. When you do, you support the cause of physician health while publicly saying thank you to a special individual who has sustained and encouraged your professional development. The physician you acknowledge will be notified of your gift and also noted in the Spring 2014 issue of *Physician's Health*.

By financially supporting the Tennessee Medical Foundation on 2014 National Doctor's Day, your money is immediately put to work assisting doctors and colleagues who care for Tennessee's patients and their families.

Thank you for all that you do to promote the health of our fellow citizens.



Michael A. McAdoo, M.D.  
President, TMF Board of Directors

Roland Gray, M.D.  
Medical Director, TMF



Bob Kirkpatrick, M.D., Mike Todd, TMF Administrator, and David Gerkin, M.D.

### We Pause to Remember Robert D. Kirkpatrick, M.D.

Bob Kirkpatrick was a friend, ally, and faithful supporter of the Tennessee Medical Foundation. He believed in the cause of physician health and devoted generous amounts of his time, talent, and energy to efforts to relieve physician suffering. He was a valued member of the TMF's Physician's Health Program Board of Directors from 2001 to 2007 where his involvement, practical advice, counsel, and welcoming, caring spirit were ever present.

Robert D. Kirkpatrick, M.D. was born June 5, 1947 and died April 26, 2013 at age 65. He is survived by his wife of 44 years and high school sweetheart, Glenda Gail Kirkpatrick, and his daughter Kimberly Kirkpatrick.

Dr. Kirkpatrick graduated with honors with an M.D. from the University of Tennessee Health Center in Memphis, Tennessee. He was involved in multiple facets of administrative medicine; he served as the 154th President of the Tennessee Medical Association. Following his passion to train medical practitioners desiring to make a difference in the medical field, he was the program director of the St. Francis Family Medicine Residency Program at the University of Tennessee, Memphis and served on the Impaired Medical Student Committee at the University of Tennessee.

The entire staff and membership of the TMF Board of Directors extend their heartfelt condolences to the Kirkpatrick family. He will be missed and long remembered.



# PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH

## DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### OUR MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

For many years, the Tennessee Medical Foundation has enjoyed the staunch financial support of three loyal and generous benefactors: State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Company (SVMIC), the State of Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners (BME) and the Tennessee Medical Association (TMA). Together they provide 63% of the annual budget for the Physician's Health Program. Without their support, our crucial work of *Saving Lives. Saving Careers* would not be possible. We are immensely grateful to them.

### CONTRIBUTIONS JANUARY 1 - JUNE 30, 2013

#### FOUNDATIONS

The HCA Foundation .....	\$ 25,000.00
The Memorial Foundation.....	\$ 25,000.00

#### HOSPITAL & HEALTH SYSTEMS

Vanderbilt University Hospital .....	\$ 7,500.00
Regional Medical Center at Memphis .....	\$ 5,000.00
Methodist Health Care .....	\$ 5,000.00
Maury Regional Hospital.....	\$ 2,000.00
East Tennessee Children's Hospital .....	\$ 1,500.00
Laughlin Memorial Hospital, Inc. ....	\$ 1,000.00

#### HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

Team Health, Inc.....	\$ 1,000.00
Tennova Healthcare Medical Staff.....	\$ 500.00

#### MEDICAL COMPONENT & SPECIALITY SOCIETIES

Northwest Tennessee Academy of Medicine .....	\$ 3,000.00
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#### GROUP MEDICAL PRACTICES

Urology Associates, P.C.....	\$ 1,000.00
Cumberland Family Practice.....	\$ 100.00

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## PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH



### We Are Family

By Michael Todd, Administrator

I recently attended a family reunion in Highland, North Carolina. I was able to visit with relatives I don't get to see often; catch up on the lives of relatives I rarely see; celebrate the lives of those family members no longer with us; learn about new children and grandchildren born into our family; hear about upcoming births and marriages; and just reminisce about days gone by. All of the activities that are common to large extended families.

When I am asked to describe the TMF and its work I find that most of the time I describe our structure; our mission; our employees; the wide range of issues we work with, etc. However, if I try to find one word to describe our organization, I use the word *"family"*. The TMF is in actuality a large extended family bound together by shared experiences; struggles, celebrations of life and death; concerns about the well-being of our other *"family members"*; and a willingness to reach out to others in our *"family"* during good times and bad.

Over the last several months, I have learned about the deaths of several members of the TMF family some time after the fact. I have heard and used the expression, *"I wish I had known"*. This has reminded me that one important function of an extended family is *"staying in touch"*.

We are interested in each of you. A family shares its joys and sorrows and we want to know about important milestones in your lives. Please contact us with this information so we can stay in touch with our family and be there to wish happiness, good health, condolences, congratulations, gratitude, and other words of support to the members of our TMF family.