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NEW BOARD, PHQIC OFFICERS AND MEMBERS ANNOUNCED

Tennessee Medical Foundation is delighted to announce leadership changes on its Board of Directors and Physician's Health Quality Improvement Committee (PHQIC), including two new members.

"The Tennessee Medical Foundation is pleased to welcome new Board members Lee McLellan as Treasurer and Dr. Reeves Johnson, as well as new PHQIC member Dr. Brigham Scallion. We are also happy to announce that Dr. Clay Runnels and Dr. Eric Berg, III, have moved into the role of president and vice president, respectively, of our Board of Directors for 2024-2025," said TMF Executive Director Jennifer Rainwater.

Dr. Runnels succeeds Dr. Michael Miller, who has moved into the ex officio role of past-president. Mr. McLellan succeeds Martin Akin of Nashville, who rotated off the board after serving eight years as treasurer. Dr. Johnson succeeds Dr. Keith Gray as an East Tennessee representative. In addition, Dr. John Woods is now a co-chair of the PHQIC, alongside longtime Chair Dr. John D. Rosdeutscher of Nashville.

"We are grateful to all of our dedicated Board and Committee members, those who are departing and those who remain, and look forward to serving with our new members this year," Ms. Rainwater added.

(Continued on page 4)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

YOUR MISSION-DRIVEN PARTNER IN PROFESSIONAL HEALTH

BY CLAY RUNNELS, MD, MBA
President

As I write my first column for the newsletter, I am reminded how thankful I am to serve with an organization that is mission driven. Several years ago, I was asked to serve on the TMF board. I already had a significant level of respect for the TMF and an understanding of the work of the organization. Having served as a chief medical officer, I had seen the incredible positive impact the organization had on friends and colleagues, and always felt I had a partner in the process with the TMF. It was not until I served with the TMF that I fully understood the depth of commitment the organization has to serving physicians and the public.

The TMF team led by Jennifer Rainwater and Dr. Michael Baron continues to not only make a difference in the lives of people across the state but also to innovate and lead the nation as one of the best physician health programs

in the country. As an example, the TMF successfully launched the TN-PSQ mental health screening tool and was recognized for the effort at the American Conference on Physician Health in October. Dr. Baron is known as a national advocate for physician suicide awareness and mental health and was recognized along with fellow leaders of the Federation of State Physician Health Programs (FSPHP) on the National Physician Suicide Awareness Day website for the good work PHPs are doing in this critical area of physician wellness.

Additionally, the work of the TMF has never been more needed by our colleagues. Post-pandemic stress and strain in health care from provider and staff shortages and resource limitations have continued to apply pressure to professionals. Mental health and substance abuse issues continue to plague physicians

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MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

WHAT IS AN "APPROPRIATE REFERRAL" TO THE TMF?

(PART 2)

BY MICHAEL J. BARON, MD, MPH, DFASAM

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of a two-part series on appropriate referrals to the TMF Physician's Health Program. Part 1 ran in the Spring 2023 edition of "Physician's Health."

Referrals to the TMF deal with a wide range of problems, from substance use to distressed behavior, physician burnout syndrome, boundary and professionalism issues, and primary psychiatric disorders. Tennessee physicians and other healthcare providers and their trainees are referred to us in various ways - by an employer, colleague, friend or family member, health professional school or training program, regulatory board, or even by the provider themselves. Referrals are always welcome as long as the licensee, student, or trainee is under our charge; this includes those licensed by the Boards of Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine, Physician Assistants, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry, Chiropractic, Radiologic Imaging, and the Committee for Clinical Perfusionists.

In Part 1 of this article series, we addressed the problematic referrals we see, including those without proper documentation, the wrong way to make an anonymous referral, retractions, and inappropriate use of the word "report" when describing a referral, since we are not a reporting or punitive entity. In Part 2, I want to explain appropriate referral reasons and processes, and alleviate fears associated with contacting the TMF.

APPROPRIATE REFERRALS

Appropriate referrals can come from any source including the health care professional (HCP) themselves, but they always need to involve the person being referred. Our most appropriate referrals come from the physician or healthcare provider who has been directly referred by a chief wellness officer (CWO) or chief medical officer (CMO) who understands our process and our mission. They know what information we need and what boxes should be checked off on their end before an official TMF referral is made.

We think it's a best practice if a referred provider has a workplace/employer letter stating the reasons for the referral and including an expected timeframe to make contact. If there are concerns of impairment, the healthcare provider should be removed from clinical responsibility immediately. If there are no concerns of patient harm or quality care issues, a slower approach can be utilized.

A third-party referral should include the name of the physician, the reasons for the referral with some details that exclude patient information, and what the third party hopes to accomplish with the referral. In cases involving patients, they should be referred to in the letter or documentation as male patient 1, male patient 2, female patient 1, etc. The letter should also include the contact person and contact information for the referring facility.

Release of Information (ROI) forms are required for us to be able to gather information and provide updates; those should be filled out at the time of the referral and can be found on the TMF website under "Forms & Resources." After initial contact, for clarity reasons the HCP should always be instructed to call us themselves.

The TMF is not a regulatory body - we do not have investigators or investigate; we do not do in-house evaluations or treatment. Rather, the TMF does intake and triage assessment, referring to vetted outside entities for formal evaluation or treatment as indicated. We are considered a Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) under state statute (TCA 68-11-272); as such we do not release our records or re-release outside records. This ensures participant confidentiality.

Appropriate referral cases include distressed behavior, burnout, depression, or other mental health disorders, including substance use disorders. Please plan to have the healthcare provider themselves contact us directly, even if you make the initial call or contact through our website.

If you are still not sure whether or how to make an appropriate referral, you can always call our office for clarification and assistance at 615-467-6411. For more information, including a walk-through of our process and FAQs visit e-tmf.org. We are here to help. 🙋

Share your thoughts with Dr. Baron at michaelb@e-tmf.org.

Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

TMF has earned a 2024 Platinum Seal on GuideStar. Check out our nonprofit profile to keep up to date with our impact: www.guidestar.org/profile/62-0541813

2024 CADUCEUS RETREAT: “YOUR FUTURE SELF”

TMF Physician’s Health Program participants and graduates can register now for the 2024 Caduceus Retreat. The 37th retreat is scheduled for Friday, June 7-Sunday, June 9, at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs in Franklin, TN. Details and links are on the TMF Caduceus Retreat web page at e-tmf.org/2024-caduceus-retreat.

This year’s Saturday program, entitled “Your Future Self, Pitfalls to Avoid, and the Precious Present,” will be led by Stephanie Thornton, MSW, LICSW, MAC, who serves as clinical director for the West Virginia Judicial & Lawyer Assistance Program.

The Sunday session will feature former TMF Case Manager Nancy Hooper, DPh, sharing her own recovery journey in a talk titled “A Personal Story of Substance Use Disorder and Recovery.”

REGISTRATION

The registration and room deadline is May 17. Registration for the Retreat is \$125.00 per person, which includes Saturday lunch. Attendees can register and pay online or download a PDF form and mail the completed form with payment to the TMF.

Hotel rooms at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs are available at the TMF rate of \$175.00 per night, plus tax. Make reservations from a link on the TMF Retreat web page or by calling the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs directly at 615-261-6100; please mention you are with the TMF Caduceus Retreat to receive the special rate.

For details and registration options, visit the Retreat web page at e-tmf.org/2024-caduceus-retreat.

ABOUT THE RETREAT

The Caduceus Retreat is required attendance for current participants in the Physician’s Health Program; graduates are welcome and encouraged to attend to continue learning and growing in recovery, and to connect with and support colleagues who are just beginning their recovery journey.

The weekend is totally devoted to recovery, allowing for networking with other healthcare professionals. Those newly under contract can learn from veterans with years of recovery. New ideas and old standards are shared in group and lecture venues. The schedule includes time for 12-Step meetings as well as time with family.



2024 CADUCEUS RETREAT

JUNE 7-9
FRANKLIN MARRIOTT
COOL SPRINGS
FRANKLIN, TN

Register & Book Rooms by May 17

e-tmf.org/2024-caduceus-retreat

SESSIONS & SPEAKERS

Saturday: Your Future Self, Pitfalls to Avoid, and the Precious Present

Course Description:

Improving the relationship with your future self (who you think you will be in five, 10, 20 years) has shown to improve planning in the present related to finances, healthier decision making for current well-being, and support for sustained behavior change. For persons in recovery, that means aligning current behaviors to a clearer perception of the future self, reducing feelings of sacrifice that can lead to resentment and overcoming immediate obstacles – not reacting to the dopaminergic reward system’s drive for return to use or engaging in other maladaptive behaviors.

For loved ones living with someone in recovery, this means aligning themselves with their future self to learn to trust, begin to hope, and envision sustainability in their loved one’s future recovery: forgiving in the present will strengthen patience for the future. Taking stock of oneself and exploring one’s vision for future self while being mindful of workaholism, relapse red flags, and risk for moral injury along the way, will be part of this interactive day of presentation, discussion, group work, and more.



Stephanie Thornton, MSW, LICSW, MAC, CCTP, CSOTP, is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and Master Addiction Counselor focusing on access to trauma and substance use disorder treatment to ensure the health and well-being of affected individuals. Recognizing the prevalent intersection of stress, substance use, and mental health conditions often experienced by professionals, she believes in health, sustainability, and mindful practices to ensure those in the helping professions care for themselves to better care for those they are serving.

Ms. Thornton earned a Master of Divinity degree from Emory University Candler School of Theology in the Honors Program, and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Georgia. She has been clinically licensed as a social worker and addictions counselor since 2004 and additionally holds certificates as Certified Addiction Counselor Level III, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, and Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider. Her clinical training background is in trauma (EMDR and somatic methods), and she is on the Trauma-Informed Care Network Speakers Bureau and presents on trauma, substance use, and self-care across the state and at national conferences.

(Continued on page 5)

QUESTIONS? For more information, visit the Retreat webpage at e-tmf.org/2024-caduceus-retreat or contact Jennifer Rainwater at 615-467-6411 or jenniferr@e-tmf.org.

TMF RECEIVES OPIOID ABATEMENT GRANT FOR OUD EDUCATION, RECOVERY, & MORE

The Tennessee Medical Foundation is among 85 organizations across the state to receive grant awards in the first round of funding by Tennessee’s Opioid Abatement Council.

The TN OAC was created to manage the disbursement of proceeds from lawsuits relating to opioids. A total of \$81 million in grants was approved in March 2024.

“The \$1 Million grant over three years will allow us to do many things we could only dream of, such as create professional educational videos about opioid addiction treatment, as well as about our PHP, what to expect as

a participant, and others,” said TMF Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron. “We will also use a portion of the funds to complete an in-depth outcome study. I am very excited,” he added.

The TMF grant will fund ongoing training lectures, modes, and events for Tennessee’s health professionals on proper opioid prescribing, prevention and treatment of opioid use disorder, and appropriate prescribing for acute and chronic pain management without opioids. Additional projects will include the outcomes study and ongoing recovery support for opioid use disorder among TMF-PHP participants. †

NEW LEADERS *(Continued from page 1)*



TMF Board President Clay W. Runnels, MD, MBA, FACHE, FACEP, is chief physician executive of Ballad Health in Johnson City, TN, overseeing all clinical services, quality, service lines, Ballad Health Medical Associates, health research, and graduate medical education. Dr. Runnels is a licensed and ABEM-

certified emergency physician and has served in various leadership positions in the health system since 2000. He has helped spearhead several award-winning projects, including initiatives to reduce time to treatment for oncology patients and to streamline the physician credentialing process. Dr. Runnels also participated in the development of regional stroke care protocols, as well as a teleneurology program. He received his BS from Texas A&M University and his MD from University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.



Vice President Eric W. Berg, III, MD, FCAP, FASCP, of Clarksville, is a graduate of the TMF Physician’s Health Program. He serves as chief of Anatomic Pathology Service at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital at Fort Campbell, KY, and is a retired colonel in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. As a regional medical examiner for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, he participated in identification and autopsy examination of those killed in the September 11, 2001, Pentagon attack, the Space Shuttle Columbia explosion, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and other national and international crisis and terrorist events. Dr. Berg is a graduate of Mercer University School of Medicine in GA.



Treasurer Lee McLellan is an investment consultant with Pinnacle Asset Management in Nashville, and a Registered Representative with Raymond James Financial

Services. A native of Madison, MS, McLellan graduated from The University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Business Administration with a focus on Managerial Finance. He is a member of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee.



Board Member W. Reeves Johnson, Jr., MD, FAAFP, served as a clinical professor of Family Medicine at East Tennessee State University and clinical assistant professor at the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville before retiring from full-time practice in 2022. He was a member of the Tennessee

Board of Medical Examiners from 2013-2021, serving as vice-president from 2016-2018, and then president in 2019-2020.

He then served as a consultant for the BME’s Office of Investigations and most recently as interim medical consultant. Dr. Johnson currently serves on the Wellness Committee at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center in Knoxville, and has testified before state legislative committees on the importance of physician wellness.



PHQIC Member Brigham S. Scallion, DO, of Bells, TN, is a faculty associate professor of biology at Dyersburg State Community College. He holds degrees from Pikeville College, the University of Memphis, and Lambuth University. He is the father of a teenage daughter with Down syndrome

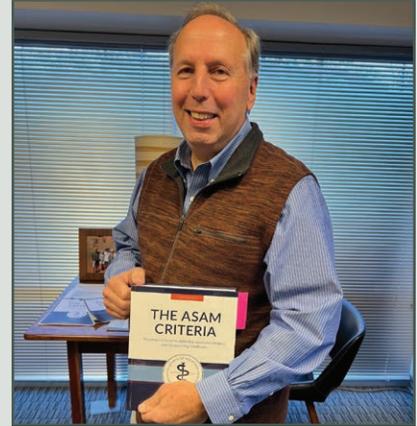
and volunteers with the Down Syndrome Association of West Tennessee. In 2019 he was appointed by Governor Bill Lee to a three-year term on representing the state’s Northwest Development District on the state’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. He was reappointed for a second term to the council in 2023. Dr. Scallion received his medical degree from the University of Pikeville-KY College of Osteopathic Medicine. †

DR. BARON CO-AUTHORS CHAPTERS FOR ASAM CRITERIA & ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE NEUROLOGICAL SCIENCES

TMF Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron has co-authored new chapters in two distinguished publications in the field of psychiatry and addiction medicine.

In December 2023, a chapter titled “Supporting Patients Working in Safety-Sensitive Occupations” was included in the *ASAM Criteria, 4th Edition*. It was authored by Dr. Baron, Paul H. Earley, MD, and Alexis G. Polles, MD. The chapter addresses addiction and substance use treatment among workers in industries with significant public impact and responsibility, including health care, transportation, security and armed forces, energy, and public administration. “This is really important as ASAM has not felt that this population should be treated differently, until now,” said Dr. Baron.

A new chapter on “Fitness for Duty” for the *Encyclopedia of the Neurological Sciences* was also published in January 2024, authored by Dr. Baron, Reid Finlayson, MD, and Ciaran Considine, PhD. Written for neurologists who specialize in Fitness for Duty evaluations of health professionals, the chapter describes the key considerations for these FFD evaluations for safety-sensitive workers, which include physicians and other licensed health professionals. 🏆



TMF Board Past-President Dr. Tim Davis was honored last fall by readers of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* as a **2023 Champion of Health Care-Lifetime Achievement**. The award profile focused on his five decades of care for pediatric patients in and around Chattanooga. The Lifetime Achievement category honors a health care leader who has left a legacy on the quality and delivery of health care. Congratulations to Dr. Davis!



The **Tennessee Lawyer's Assistance Program (TLAP)** honored TMF's **Dr. Michael Baron** with its **Stephenson Volunteer of the Year** award during its April conference. Dr. Baron has served on the TLAP Commission since 2021. Pictured: TLAP Commission Chair TN Circuit Court Judge Michael Spitzer, Dr. Baron, and TLAP Executive Director Buddy Stockwell.

CADUCEUS RETREAT (Continued from page 3)

Sunday: A Personal Story of Substance Use Disorder and Recovery



Nancy Hooper, DPH, is director of the Tennessee Pharmacy Recovery Network (TPRN) and manager of Wellbeing Services for the Tennessee Pharmacist's Association. As a pharmacist in long-term recovery and previous participant in the TPRN, she is driven both personally and professionally to serve and advocate for people suffering with or in recovery from substance use disorder. Her current position with the TPA allows her to play an integral role in supporting Tennessee's pharmacists and technicians in their efforts

to further their careers as healthy pharmacy professionals.

Dr. Hooper is a healthcare professional with over 25 years of pharmacy experience, including long-term care, corporate, and community pharmacy. She received her training at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy where she was a member of the Rho Chi Pharmacy Honor Society. She also works part time as a district support pharmacist for CVS Pharmacy. 🏆

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

The TMF annually enjoys strong financial support from **State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Company (SVMIC)**, the State of Tennessee **Board of Medical Examiners (BME)**, **Board of Osteopathic Examiners (BOE)**, **Board of Physician Assistants (BOPA)**, and the **Tennessee Medical Association (TMA)**. Together they provide approximately 70% of the annual budget for the Physician's Health Program. Without their support, our crucial work would not be possible. Below are contributors who provide the rest of our program funding. We thank each and every one of you for the support you give to the mission of *Saving Lives, Saving Careers*.

Our acknowledgements have changed to a single annual listing in the Spring issue of *Physician's Health*, reflecting all gifts received in the prior year.

Organizational Contributions 2023

HOSPITAL & HEALTH SYSTEMS

Ascension Saint Thomas	\$10,000
Ballad Health	\$5,000
Blount Memorial Hospital	\$5,000
Bristol Regional Medical Center-Ballad Health	\$1,000
CHI Memorial Health Care System	\$1,000
Community Health Systems/Tennova	\$5,000
East Tennessee Children's Hospital	\$1,000
Erlanger Health System	\$10,000
Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center Medical Staff	\$6,000
Hardin Medical Center	\$500
Holston Valley Medical Center-Ballad Health Medical Staff	\$2,000
Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare	\$5,000
Parkwest Medical Center Medical Staff	\$1,000
Southern TN Regional Health System-Winchester	\$500
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Sweetwater Hospital Association	\$1,000
TriStar Summit Medical Center Medical Staff	\$5,000
University of Tennessee Medical Center-Knoxville	\$2,500
Vanderbilt University Medical Center	\$7,500
West Tennessee Healthcare	\$10,000

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Camellia Foundation	\$1,044.05
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Medical Foundation of Chattanooga	\$3,000
Memorial Foundation, Inc.	\$10,000
Tennessee Medical Education Fund, Inc.	\$15,000
James H. Tharp Award	\$5,000

GROUP MEDICAL PRACTICES

Abercrombie Radiology	\$1,000
Heritage Medical Associates, PC	\$1,000
InSight Recovery & Wellness	\$258.01
O'Brien, LLA	\$100
Premier Medical Group	\$1,000
State of Franklin Healthcare Associates	\$5,000
Summit Medical Group, PLLC+	\$3,000
The Surgical Clinic, PLLC	\$1,000

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Pinnacle National Bank	\$2,500
Ross E. Rainwater and HealthMarkets+	\$1,200

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Montgomery County Medical Society	\$2,000
Nashville Academy of Medicine	\$1,000
Northwest Tennessee Academy of Medicine	\$3,000
Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants	\$1,000
Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians	\$1,000
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association	\$1,300
Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine	\$1,500
Tennessee Society of Anesthesiologists	\$2,000
Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association	\$2,500
West Tennessee Consolidated Medical Association	\$1,000

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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH PROGRAM!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

SAFEGUARDS FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY

BY JENNIFER RAINWATER

It's a beautiful day at the Ellington Agricultural Center.

Many young families are taking advantage of the mild weather to get some exercise and fresh air. As I walk, one particular family catches my eye. It is obvious that for most of their walk Mom has been carrying their adorable two-year-old in a backpack carrier. But at the moment, the cute little guy has been freed from the carrier and is enjoying toddling around in an open area just off the trail. Mom and Dad watch from a short distance, allowing the child some limited freedom even though the far edge of the open field drops steeply into a large creek bed filled with cold water and jagged rocks. Mom and Dad begin to realize that their little one is gradually getting closer and closer to this danger. They begin to call to him to come back to them but, of course, his curiosity is getting the better of him. Instead of obediently running back to Mom and Dad he uses his lightning-fast toddler speed to make a beeline for the creek bed. Acting fast, Dad jumps into action, reaching the little guy just in time to save him from a nasty, possibly life-threatening fall.

Mom and Dad, with their life experience, knew there were dangers in the area – a busy street, a rocky creek bed, untamed animals. But they also knew their precious toddler did not yet have the experience to navigate or even be aware of these dangers. They know that eventually their child will need to be able to do things without them, so they allow him some appropriate freedom with safeguards in place. This way, he'll eventually be ready to identify and avoid these dangers on his own. But this process will take time and patience. Thankfully, this little boy has caring parents who are guiding him on his journey.

This young family at the creek bed reminded me that the TMF works in much the same way. There are lots of things that a person new in recovery needs to learn to navigate – some of them hazardous. Thankfully, there are a lot of caring people who work at the TMF, as well as grad-



uates who have been through our program who are happy to help along the way. Our program offers appropriate freedoms with tools that safeguard the recovery of our participants. The ultimate result is healthy medical professionals who are free to do what they do best: help others.

Thank you for your continued support of medical professionals in Tennessee. Your generosity helps not only our participants, but their patients as well. ♡

Jennifer Rainwater
Executive Director

Share your thoughts with Ms. Rainwater at jenniferr@e-tmf.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *(Continued from page 1)*

and other professionals. I am thankful for the hard working and dedicated team from the TMF that is there to serve professionals and safeguard patients.

I am exceedingly proud to serve on the board and as current president for the Tennessee Medical Foundation. Supporting the dedicated staff that makes such a difference to so many people affords great meaning and value. I want to thank the TMF team: Dr. Baron, Ms. Rainwater, Case Managers Dr. Tamiko Webb and April Mallory, Brenda Williams-Denbo, Dot Walker, and Barbara Nicks.

I also wish to thank our donors. The TMF depends heavily on you to support the programs that accomplish the mission “to protect patients through identification, intervention, rehabilitation, and the provision of advocacy/support for physicians and other health professionals impaired by addictive disease, and mental or emotional illness.” It's an important, life-saving mission. Please consider partnering with the TMF-PHP to support our teams as they provide a source of hope and healing. ♡



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TMF MEDALLION SOCIETY

RECOGNIZING SPECIAL COMMITMENT

Every donation to the TMF is deeply appreciated. Yet, special acknowledgement is given to those of you whose contributions exemplify your commitment to TMF mission of *Saving Lives, Saving Careers*. Your leadership is recognized by membership in the **TMF Medallion Society**, honoring individuals who have given \$10,000 or more over a 10-year period. We honor you for your generosity and commitment.

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