



October 1, 2014

Conversation with Gateway's President:

As president of Gateway Medical Society, Inc. (GMS), a 501(c)(3), it is important for me to share with you the full scope of what makes GMS unique in the Pittsburgh community and around the country. In addition to our [Journey to Medicine mentorship program](#), we have organized two signature symposiums for the past 10 years: the Community Symposium, held this year on May 31st, 2014, and the Medical Provider Symposium, held September 13th, 2014. The growth and popularity of these symposiums can be attributed to the strength of our newly-developed partnerships.

2013:

In June 2013 at UPMC Herberman Conference Center, the Community Symposium attracted close to 400 attendees and focused on the cities' African Americans and underserved communities. Multiple workshops were held: (1) HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; (2) abuse behind closed doors; (3) stress management; (4) men only discussions on sexual dysfunction & prostate cancer; (5) women only discussions on breast and ovarian cancer; and (6) diabetes and associated diseases of the eyes. Blood glucose, cholesterol, and prostate specific antigen (PSA) screenings were provided to interested attendees.

Simultaneously, in the Cooper Conference Center across the street, youth workshops were conducted, where almost 100 kids learned about bullying prevention,

HIV/AIDS 101, obesity, and hip hop & health. To accomplish this huge task, we teamed up with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Diversity Programs (Dr. Chentis Pettigrew), Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Alpha Omega Chapter, Pittsburgh Black Nurses in Action, Kappa Chapter Inc. of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., Educating Teens About HIV/AIDS, Inc., ID/PACT Clinic (AIDS Clinic), Macedonia FACE Church Children's Program, and K.R.U.N.K Movement (Christian Hip Hop group). Each have specific teaching prowess in one of our selected areas of emphasis.

On Saturday, September 21, 2013, GMS held its 10th annual Provider Symposium. During the symposium, co-sponsored for the last two years by Allegheny County Medical Society (ACMS), we discussed issues surrounding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Western Pennsylvania's GMS (a National Medical Association (NMA) affiliate organization) and ACMS (an American Medical Association (AMA) affiliate organization) lead the nation. Pittsburgh was among two or three locations nationwide where an AMA affiliate and an NMA affiliate held concurrent meetings for any reason. We see the value of combining our efforts to keep Western Pennsylvania physicians informed, knowledgeable, and prepared to handle any changes that might affect our ability to practice and care for the citizens in this region and those who choose to come here for medical specialty care. Partnering with ACMS in our Provider Symposium gives us the unique opportunity to attract many high quality and knowledgeable speakers to bring that information to the whole medical community.

Yearly, GMS organizes a Physician of the Year Awards and Scholarship Gala. Our 50th Anniversary Gala was held on Saturday, October 19, 2013 at the Marriott City Center in downtown Pittsburgh. Champions of GMS's "Making a Difference" Awards were given to Donamarie Wilfong, DNP, RN, Director of Education at West Penn STAR Simulation Center, and John P. Williams, MD, then Chair of the UPMC Department of Anesthesiology, affiliated with the Peter M. Winter Institute for Simulation, Education, and Research (WISER). Both received awards for this significant contribution to the

mentorship program. During our Gala, GMS additionally always encourages high-performing minority medical students by giving multiple scholarships to selected University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine students of color.

2014:

Building partnerships has been one of my major contributions to GMS. Our partners for the May 31, 2014 Community Symposium were: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Alpha Omega Chapter, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, Kappa Chapter, Inc. of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., the Pittsburgh Black Nurses in Action, and Omega Chi Phi Fraternity. Like last year, multiple workshops were organized for adults and teens and free screenings (glucose, cholesterol, PSA, and blood pressure) were provided by UPMC Shadyside Hospital during the meeting. The 2014 Community Symposium attracted 500 attendees, which included our largest turnout of African American men to a health symposium. Men's-only and women's-only sessions were again created to allow attendees to ask personal questions without embarrassment.

The Provider Symposium occurred on September 13th 2014 and focused on Veteran Health Issues. Evelyn Lewis, MD, CMO of the Steptoe Group and Vice President of the American Academy of Family Practices Foundation was our keynote speaker. We were also proud to include a special lecture from Rory Cooper, PhD, FISA & Paralyzed Veterans of America Chair and Distinguished Professor of the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Pittsburgh and Director of the Human Engineering Research Laboratories. Pennsylvania has one of the largest populations of veterans in the United States, so it is critical that we address issues that veterans may face in the healthcare marketplace. Contrary to popular belief, only 30-40% of veterans use the VA system for their healthcare. Your next patient's cough and congestion may not be from a simple cold or

smoking, but from an exposure he or she received in the Middle East. Most times, we proceed blindly and never ask about military service. Nationally, minority veterans are expected to increase from 20.9% to 34% from 2011 to 2040. The percentage of Black veterans is significantly higher than other minority groups and is projected to continue to compose the largest portion of minority veterans.

Upcoming Events:

For our 2014 Scholarship and Award Gala, which will be held at the main ballroom, City Center Marriott on October 25, 2014, we selected two physicians to share Physician of the Year honors. Please join me in congratulating Steven Evans, MD, UPMC Shadyside, the only African American general surgeon in Western Pa, and Anita Edwards, MD, MBA, Allegheny Health Network, Internist, and GMS Board member. [Please make plans to attend our gala](#), celebrate with us, and find out the wonderful contributions these doctors and others are making to our community.

We are doing great things for the community and building outstanding partnerships. Journey to Medicine, our academic mentorship program, now hosts nearly 84 students from grades six to 11. Our students' achievements have not gone unnoticed. They have received Distinguished Achievement Awards from the Pittsburgh Board of Education. The National Medical Association also honored GMS with their James M. Whittico Award for Mentorship. Exceptional reports were published in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, all three Pittsburgh newspapers, and some national blogs. WQED aired a [half hour TV special](#) that highlighted Journey to Medicine and included cameos of our students and the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

The distinguishing factor that makes GMS's mentorship efforts more successful is the use of West Penn's STAR and UPMC's WISER Simulation Centers as a means of

academic stimulation of our students. Our students have distinguished themselves in the city's public schools, as the vast majority are members of their school's honor rolls. Our 15 eighth grade students going to ninth grade were all on the honor roll and were all accepted into the advanced placement segments of their chosen high schools. Five of our 10 students in the 10th grade matriculating to the 11th grade have been inducted into the National Honor Society. We are negotiating a partnership with the UPMC Department of Surgery, who wishes to create a surgical simulation experience for our 11th grade students in their efforts to interest more African Americans in the field of surgery.

We have just been awarded partner status (August 2014) with the Pittsburgh Public School System, which shows that they recognize the success of our work with a population of boys that have traditionally not done well in the school system. Pittsburgh Promise is a wonderful program that aids college-bound city graduates with the rising cost of a college education. We target African American males because in Pennsylvania, they have a high school graduation rate of 58% compared to white males' rate of 85%. Of all groups in Pittsburgh, African American males are the lowest utilizer of the Pittsburgh Promise grant program for college funds because they rarely qualify for the minimum grade point average or school attendance requirements. All of the boys in the Journey to Medicine mentorship program are on track to qualify for Pittsburgh Promise. During the eighth and ninth grade, we partner with Investing Now, a PSAT and SAT preparatory program sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Engineering Department. Students must have a 3.0 minimum grade point average to apply for that program. By the eighth and ninth grade, all of our students qualify. To accomplish that, we tutor students through the Carnegie Learning Series for Mathematics and we arranged for a Pitt alumnus and a Carnegie Mellon professor with graduate students to teach science camps. We hold summer camps for science, engineering, and computers and create an atmosphere where achievement is expected and positively reinforced.

We are also negotiating with Community College of Allegheny County to target selected STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) courses that our boys, who will be seniors next year, could take for credit so that they can graduate from high school already exposed to the rigors of college classes and matriculate with a number of transferable college credits.

Journey to Medicine is getting larger and requiring more grants. To address this, GMS has recently applied and qualified for the State of Pennsylvania Educational Investment Tax Credit (EITC). This allows companies/corporations who donate to GMS to deduct 70% of their contribution to GMS as tax credits. And if they contract to give the same amount the next consecutive year, they can deduct 90% of their contributions as tax credits.

Thank you very much for allowing me to share the successes of GMS. I felt it was important to tell you the full scope of our activities. These events are possible due to the prominent roles that Heinz Endowments, UPMC, Highmark BCBS, and physician volunteers play in allowing us to achieve our community missions.

Sincerely,

William Simmons, MD

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Visiting Associate Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, UPMC Presbyterian
Shadyside Hospital

President and Chair of the Board, Gateway Medical Society, Inc.