



W. Stancil Starnes, JD

Physician Advocacy is ProAssurance's Specialty

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ProAssurance's roots run deep in Wisconsin—back to PIC WISCONSIN's cofounding by the Wisconsin Medical Society—and those roots are anchored in our philosophy then and now: we are unfailing advocates for our insured physicians and indeed the entire the medical community.

In these efforts we are fortunate to have an ally such as the Wisconsin Medical Society, whose leaders share our values and our commitment. The prime example of this is your Member Benefit Plan, which protects insured Society members with enhanced coverage at competitive rates.

In addition to strong professional liability protection, your Member Benefit Plan includes coverage for cyber threats—and added benefits for challenges like an audit of billing practices, a request to appear at a deposition, or a response to a licensing board investigation. Your Member Benefit Plan includes savings on Society webinars, plus ProAssurance Risk Resource services designed to enhance your interactions with your patients while reducing the chances of a medical incident.

I am especially proud of the level of physi-

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W. Stancil Starnes, JD, is chairman and chief executive officer of ProAssurance Corporation, the parent company of ProAssurance Casualty Company (formerly PIC Wisconsin) and the endorsed medical professional liability carrier of the Wisconsin Medical Society.

cian involvement in our Wisconsin operations. Today there are 13 Wisconsin physicians serving on our claims and underwriting review panel and another 23 who serve on Regional Advisory Boards to help us shape the cov-

benefits of the work done by the Society and ProAssurance, but we are continuing our tradition of advocacy on your behalf.

ProAssurance also shares the Society's focus on physician wellness, taking our com-

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erage and benefits that mean the most to Wisconsin physicians.

Our Physicians in Collaboration (PIC)-Wisconsin program provides valuable peer-to-peer support for physicians facing a medical liability lawsuit. While there may be nothing as daunting as being sued for malpractice, there is nothing more reassuring than receiving emotional support from a colleague who has been through it before. That's a key part of our efforts to be an advocate for you and your colleagues.

ProAssurance, in collaboration with the Society, remains active on your behalf in pursuit of fair treatment in the Wisconsin court system. As you are aware, hard won caps on noneconomic damages in Wisconsin have been struck down by lower courts. The Society and ProAssurance are both mounting aggressive appeals. Other insurance companies may sit on the sidelines, as usual, to reap the

company's physician advocacy efforts to a national level. Its cornerstone is our endowment of the ProAssurance Endowed Chair for Physician Wellness at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). This academic chair is the first of its kind in the United States and underscores ProAssurance's commitment to its role as a leading advocate for America's physicians.

The initial \$1.5 million gift to the UAB School of Medicine will endow an academic chair and also will support a research team dedicated to addressing health issues that are unique to physicians as they deal with the stress and pressures associated with practicing medicine in today's rapidly evolving health care environment.

The research that will emerge will be groundbreaking. Physicians have always been subject to high levels of stress from a variety of factors such as society's expecta-

tions for successful outcomes, the threat of litigation, and the effect of their professional obligations on the quality of their lives, and their families' lives. As medicine evolves to address the changing dynamic of healthcare in America, we must find ways to address these pressures.

UAB expects to recruit an expert in the field of physician wellness who can implement well-designed interventions to enhance a sustainable culture of physician wellness and provide tools and resources to manage stress and burnout. They plan to make these resources available throughout the nation, resulting in more engaged physicians who can provide the highest-quality care to their patients.

In order to ensure that the research is broadly applied, ProAssurance also expects to give an additional \$500,000 to UAB to fund the dissemination of these initiatives in support of physician wellness. The company's Chief Medical Officer, Hayes V. Whiteside, MD, views such programs as a logical extension of ProAssurance's role as a trusted partner with physicians and the nation's health care community. He said, "Assisting physicians has always been a high priority for ProAssurance. Now more than ever, we need to ensure that today's physicians maintain their commitment to our high calling, and that future physicians are equipped to deal with the realities of our vital chosen profession." ProAssurance looks forward to collaborating and coordinating our physician wellness efforts with the Society whenever possible.

As Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in the delivery of cost-effective, high quality healthcare, we work with your Society, advocating for you and providing a Member Benefit Plan tailored to address your liability challenges. The ProAssurance Endowed Chair for Physician Wellness takes our commitment to you—and all US physicians a step further—it's one of the ways we strive to treat you fairly now and into the future.

To learn more about the Member Benefit Plan, contact your Wisconsin Medical Society Insurance & Financial Services Agent at 866.442.3810 or visit www.wisconsinmedical-society.org/insurance.

The Changing Face of Hospital Medicine

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Medicine is challenged to find the correct balance between relationship-centered care and maintaining satisfied physicians. Divisions of responsibilities may go a long way in preventing burnout among primary care physicians.

Also in this issue are 2 papers describing violent injuries. The first looks at firearm mortality in Wisconsin between the years 2000 and 2014.⁴ Most firearm deaths (72%) in Wisconsin are related to suicides, and firearms accounted for over 70% of all homicides in 2014. The second looks at accidental spine and spinal cord injuries in people falling from hunting blinds between 1999 and 2013.⁵ One hundred seventeen people were seen at the emergency department during the allotted timeframe and 25 patients (38%) required surgical fixation of their injuries.

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Antibiotic Stewardship in the Outpatient Setting

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publica.org/checkup/states/wisconsin), clinicians can search by their name to find additional information in the antibiotic category on prescribing practices. Adult and pediatric treatment recommendation resources are also available on the CDC's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/community/for-hcp/outpatient-hcp/index.html>.

The Core Elements of Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship provides a framework for for outpatient clinicians and facilities that routinely provide antibiotic treatment. They were developed through a combination of consolidating evidence-based antibiotic stewardship practices and building on or adapting known best practices for antibiotic stewardship across other clinical settings. More information is available at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6506a1.htm?s_cid=rr6506a1_w.

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