

May 7, 2009

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American Medical Women's Association

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Dr. Omega Silva, Dr. Margot Onek, Dr. Bea Desper, and Dr. Nancy Nielsen (Front) at the 2009 AMWA Annual Awards Banquet

Photos from the 2009 Annual Meeting can be viewed here: [AMWA 2009 Annual Meeting Photos](#)

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Policy, Legislation & Oversight

'Morning After' Pill Cleared for 17-Year-Olds

After a federal judge recently ordered the FDA to extend access to Plan B emergency contraceptive pills to 17-year-old girls without a prescription, the FDA has complied, by lowering the age of over-the-counter access by 1 year. Men 17 and older are also able to buy Plan B for a partner without a prescription. The dispute over Plan B and who has easy access to it has largely been a political debate, not a scientific one. Most health experts agree that age has no bearing on the medical ramifications of taking the 'morning after' pill. By overturning the previous decision to block access to Plan B by women under the age of 18, the US FDA is signaling a change in policy that veers more toward the scientific, and less towards the political. Thus far, statistics on Plan B indicate that

programs by supporting the American Women's Hospitals Service. AWHS supports medical clinics for the underserved and international travel grants for young women physicians and medical students. Your gift to AWHS is fully tax deductible, and you will have the comfort of knowing that each AWHS-supported clinic's service and quality of care is monitored by AMWA physicians. You can see the stories of our clinics and read stories told by students who have received our travel grants posted on our website, www.amwa-doc.org. To order AWHS logo note cards, [click here for an AWHS Note card Order Form](#)

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availability of the drug without a prescription has not had a huge impact on the number of teenagers having sex or the number of women having abortions.

[Read the full story on nytimes.com](#)

Health & Wellness



AMWA Member Dr. Mary Guinan, state health officer, center, discusses swine flu Monday. She is flanked by Mike Willden, director of the state's health and human services, Nevada Adjutant Gen. Cindy Kirkland and Gov. Jim Gibbons.

Flu prompts trip cancellations, calls to Reno-area hot lines

State health officials sought to assure the public Monday that they are prepared to deal with an outbreak of swine flu, emphasizing Nevada is well-stocked with flu medication.

As of Monday evening, no cases had been reported in Nevada of the influenza strain that has killed nearly 150 people in Mexico and sickened 1,400 more in that country.

Nearly 50 people in five U.S. states have become ill with the same flu virus, all milder than those in Mexico.

Four Nevadans with flu symptoms have been tested for the virus, but the results came back negative, officials said. With no one sick in Nevada, health officials said they are focused on prevention and monitoring.

In an afternoon news conference, Gov. Jim Gibbons and his top health and public safety officials urged the public to diligently practice good hygiene and hand-washing and stay home if they feel sick.

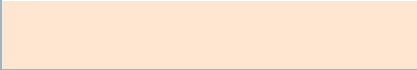
"It is really important to have good hygiene," Dr. Mary Guinan, the state health officer, said. "Wash your hands and if you are sick, if you do have flu symptoms, you should stay home."

The swine flu outbreak comes at the end of Nevada's flu season, which Guinan described as being quite mild this year. As a result, the state has plenty of medication available if an outbreak occurs.

"We have the medications available," she said. "There is no shortage of medication. The private sector has them, the public sector has them."

Over the past five years, Nevada health officials have designed a flu outbreak response plan. As part of that planning, the state bought 140,000 doses of Tamiflu and Relenza.

"Some states didn't buy doses of Tamiflu over the last several years; Nevada chose to buy 140,000 doses," said Mike Willden, director of the state Health and Human Services Department.



The state is awaiting shipment of another 86,000 doses from the Strategic National Stockpile.

With Nevada's traditional flu season winding to a close, health officials were getting ready to close the statewide surveillance system until next fall. The monitoring system collects lab results from 60 sites across the state in order to catch a potential outbreak early.

The emergence of the swine flu forced the extension of the surveillance period, Guinan said.

Methadone Misuse: A Complex and Pressing National Concern

Methadone is a commonly known drug used to assist addicts in their recovery of habit-forming drugs or prescription medications. Methadone is also prescribed to treat moderate-to-severe chronic pain patients. Whether used for addiction treatment or pain management, methadone is safe and effective when taken properly.

In an effort to inform healthcare professionals and consumers about safe methadone use, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), agencies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), are collaborating on a nationwide educational campaign.

Follow Directions: How to Use Methadone Safely – is designed to reach treatment programs and patients, and consumers to help educate them about the safe use of methadone

It is essential that prescribing clinicians and physicians are aware of a patient's overall health and other medications being taken. Patients need to be educated on the safe use of methadone and counseled on the possible adverse consequences of misuse, abuse or sharing of the medication. Due to its complex pharmacology, methadone can be lethal or life threatening if it is not used exactly as directed or is mixed with certain other medicines.

To further spread the message to consumers, educational information is being distributed through pharmacies to patients who have been prescribed methadone. SAMHSA and FDA will partner with federal agencies and healthcare organizations to distribute the message of safe use.

"The methadone safety campaign materials provide simple instructions for illicit and prescription drug addiction treatment and for pain management patients," noted H. Westley Clark, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. "Our goal is to ensure the understanding of methadone's safe use by all patients and prescribing healthcare professionals."

Methadone's use as a pain reliever has dramatically increased over the last several years. According to a 2008 federal government report, methadone has been associated with an increase in deaths and emergency room visits.

People who take methadone normally feel relief within four to eight hours. However, a single dose of methadone can remain in the body anywhere from eight to 59 hours. As a result, methadone may build up to toxic levels if taken too often, in too high an amount or with other medications.

"Used as prescribed, methadone is a safe and effective drug," said Douglas Throckmorton, M.D., Deputy Director of FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "Prescribing methadone is complex. However, with proper education to physicians and patients, the risk of misuse or abuse can be minimized."

Programs and clinics dispensing methadone for addiction treatment must be certified by SAMHSA and registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). When used as an analgesic, methadone may be prescribed by any practitioner registered by the DEA to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances and dispensed by any licensed pharmacy. FDA updated the methadone product label for physicians prescribing methadone for pain management to update dosing information and to include the potential for serious and life-threatening side effects in 2006.

For more information on the campaign, or to download free copies of the educational materials, please visit www.dpt.samhsa.gov/methadonesafety or call 1-800-662-HELP.

Breast-Feeding Benefits Mothers, Study Finds

A new study has found that there are health benefits for mothers who breast-feed their children. These benefits are on top of the proven health benefits for babies who are breast-fed. The study, which analyzed data on almost 140,000 women, found that postmenopausal women who had breast-fed their children were 20% less likely to have diabetes, 12% less likely to have hypertension, 19% less likely to have high cholesterol, and 9% less likely to have had a heart attack or stroke than their contemporaries who had not breast-fed. The benefits appear to increase with duration of past breast-feeding. Women who breast-feed also tend to lose the fat they put on during pregnancy more quickly, since producing milk burns calories. Breast-feeding also causes uterine contractions that help restore the uterus to its original size more quickly after giving birth. Although researchers have not yet conclusively identified the association between breast-feeding and a lower risk for diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart attack, and stroke, some hypothesize that it may involve oxytocin, a hormone crucial to milk production that is known to relax blood vessels.

[Read the full story on healthday.com](#)

Pregnant and Older May Mean Complications

The rate of complications during pregnancy has remained steady in the US for the past 15 years, but a new study discovered that the percentage of pregnant women with preexisting conditions such as hypertension and diabetes has increased. This increase is likely driven by higher numbers of older women and obese women having children. Older maternal age and obesity are both linked to a higher rate of delivery and pregnancy complications. Researchers also observed rising numbers of women experiencing preeclampsia, asthma, and bleeding after delivery. The rate of Caesarean section deliveries has greatly increased over the past two decades, which may also be tied to the number of women whose pregnancies are considered high risk.

[Read the full story on healthday.com](#)

Family Planning When Cancer Intrudes

remember and make sense of all of the information your team of doctors is presenting to you. One piece of information that often slips past patients is the fact that many cancer treatments—radiation, chemotherapy, surgery—can render a patient infertile. For a diagnosis of cancer can be frightening and overwhelming for patients, and it can be difficult for children or young adults, there are measures that can be taken before cancer treatment begins that can enable them to have children later in life, even if they become sterile. Men can bank sperm, while women can have their eggs harvested. Doctors should clearly discuss the possibility of sterility after cancer treatment with their patients, and lay out all the options for preserving a patient's ability to have children later on. Pediatric patients are the most overlooked when it comes to discussing future fertility, so parents of children with cancer should take it upon themselves to ask about fertility-saving options. Although some health insurance companies do not cover egg harvesting, embryo creation, and later in vitro fertilization for female cancer patients, the National Institutes of Health is currently financing a new program to assist patients that are concerned about preserving fertility. More information can be found at www.myoncofertility.org.

[Read the full story on nytimes.com](#)

AMWA News

Save the Date!

AMWA will again team up with the Institute for Women's Health for the 2010 meeting. It will be held at The Crystal Gateway Marriott in Crystal City, VA. The

dates will be Friday, March 26 through Sunday, March 28.

AMWA, in partnership with Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health, invites you to participate in Conversations on the Hill!

AMWA is excited to team up with Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health (PRCH) on June 11-12 in Washington, DC, to engage our Congressional representatives on healthcare reform issues. With the urgent need to cure our ailing healthcare system and the opportunity for real change, AMWA and PRCH will bring a unique perspective to Capitol Hill. Together, physicians can ensure that comprehensive reproductive healthcare remains a part of all reform efforts in Washington.

The event will begin on the evening of June 11 when AMWA and PRCH physicians will participate in a training event that will cover advocacy techniques, the legislative process, messaging on healthcare reform, and the importance of storytelling to convey your message. On Friday, June 12, physicians will hit the Hill! We will meet with our legislators and key policy staff to educate them on the importance of improving access to sexual and reproductive health education, counseling and care within the context of ensuring high-quality healthcare for all Americans.

Come join us in Washington, DC, on June 11-12.

SAVE THE DATE!

Please contact AMWA Associate Director, Rebecca Mathis, associatedirector@amwa-doc.org, for more information and to RSVP.

Join Us! - Call for Committee Members

Interested in getting more involved with your AMWA membership? Join one of our **14** committees, and donate your time and enthusiasm to grow AMWA as an association.

Choose one or more: *American Women's Hospitals Service, Awards and Nominations, Annual Meeting/Program, Communications, Fundraising, Global Outreach, Membership, Physician Branch Affairs, Policy and Advocacy, Resolutions/Position Papers, Senior Physicians, Student Affairs, Women's Health, and Career Development.*

Email your interest in a committee or questions to associatedirector@amwa-doc.org.

AMWA Legacy Fund

Help preserve AMWA's legacy for future generations. Funds are needed to support AMWA's permanent exhibit in the lobby of Drexel University's new building for the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership (Philadelphia, PA). The institute is also the home for the Archives & Special Collections on Women in Medicine, the largest collection of material pertaining to the history of women in medicine, including AMWA's historical documents and photos from the founding meeting in 1915 to the present day. Donations of \$2,500 and above will be individually recognized in the lobby's "Wall of Fame" display. **Click here to donate now!**

Congratulations to AMWA Member Dr. Lesly Mega, the winner of the 2009 Women's Advocacy Award

This award is given in honor of her decades of service to advancing women leaders, decreasing gender inequities in academic medicine, and to empowering

women to lead in improving health for all.

Dr. Mega, who joined the faculty in 1982, specializes in child and adolescent psychiatry and directs medical student education in psychiatric medicine. She is nationally recognized as a leader in the professional development of women physicians and medical students. She founded the local branch of the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), established and chaired the BSOM Status of Women in Medicine Committee, and helped create the National Center of Excellence in Leadership in Academic Medicine at ECU. She also co-founded the Pitt County Domestic Violence program and served on its board for many years.

Mega, in 2005, was designated a "Local Legend" by the US Congress and National Library of Medicine for her work in psychiatry and her advocacy for women in medicine and was one of the few national recipients of AMWA's highest honor, the Bertha Van Hoosen, MD Award, for her exceptional leadership and service. She is past president of the North Carolina Psychiatric Association, Women Liaison Officer to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) since 1987, and is a vice chair of diversity at the medical school.

The Brody Women Faculty Advocacy Award was established in 2008 to recognize those who have demonstrated leadership in promoting, encouraging or implementing policies to facilitate the professional development of women faculty and/or students. Nominees must have made a sustained contribution on behalf of women, provided leadership in advocating for women, and actively mentored women faculty or students.

This award was announced in Pieces of Eight Magazine and at the full faculty meeting April 23, 2009.

Medpedia.com

In order to raise the professional profiles of our members, facilitate group dialogue and increase the networking potential of the AMWA, we've joined Medpedia, the new technology platform for the global health community.

Medpedia is a long-term project, launched last week, that includes three features: a collaborative knowledge base, a professional network and directory for health professionals and organizations, and communities of interest in which medical professionals and non-professionals can share information about conditions, treatments and lifestyle choices.

By joining Medpedia, physicians and PhDs will have the opportunity to create and edit medical articles, or opt to oversee content on a specialized topic and receive credit for it. Each member of our group can set up their own professional profile, viewable by the public, and participate in the AMWA discussion forum. We hope that this will open dialogue within our organization, and that you'll post questions or comments to the community on Medpedia.

Follow this link to join the group.

On Mother's Day, Wear and Share a Pearl of Wisdom to Help Prevent Cervical Cancer!

This year, more than 11,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with cervical cancer and more than 4,000 women will die of the disease. Worldwide, it is the second-leading cause of cancer in women. Cervical cancer, however, is preventable – if every woman knows about and benefits from the tools – the Pap test, HPV test and HPV vaccine – now available to protect them from this disease.

That's the message that the Pearl of Wisdom™ Campaign to Prevent Cervical Cancer (www.PearlofWisdom.us) wants women to get – and share – in honor of Mother's Day on May 10. As a partner in the campaign, AMWA urges women to help do this by wearing a Pearl of Wisdom, the global symbol for cervical cancer prevention.

Pearl of Wisdom pins are available for purchase at www.PearlofWisdom.us. All proceeds go to the U.S. Pearl of Wisdom Campaign Fund, which supports U.S.-

based cervical cancer prevention activities. Visitors can also send Mother's Day e-cards featuring "virtual" pearls of wisdom about cervical cancer prevention through the website to special women in their lives.

The Pearl of Wisdom Campaign to Prevent Cervical Cancer is a united, global effort that raises awareness of the new tools for preventing cervical cancer, encourages women to take full advantage of these tools, and advocates for the implementation of these tools for girls and women everywhere. In the U.S., the campaign is led by Tamika and Friends, Inc., a national nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness about cervical cancer. The U.S. effort is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from QIAGEN, Inc. More information is available at www.PearlofWisdom.us.

Professional Development

MWIA Conferences

All AMWA members are also members of MWIA (Medical Women's International Association).

The Medical Women's International Association (MWIA) wants to remind AMWA members that by virtue of their membership in AMWA that they are automatically members of MWIA. MWIA is divided into eight regions—Northern, Central and Southern Europe, North and Latin America, Central Asia, Near East and Africa and Western Pacific. Each region is represented by a Vice President and Dr. Shirley Hovan from Red Deer, Alberta, is the current Vice President for North America.

The executive of MWIA is elected for a three year period and this took place at the International Congress in Accra, Ghana, in August, 2007. Dr. Atsuko Heshiki from Japan is the current President, Dr. Afua Hesse from Ghana is the President-elect, Dr. Gabrielle Casper from Australia is the Past President, Dr. Shelley Ross of Canada is the Secretary-General (secretariat@mwia.net) and Dr. Gail Beck from Canada is the Treasurer.

Each triennium, each region has a regional meeting. In the past few months, Latin America's meeting was held in Puerto Rico and Northern Europe's meeting in Malmo, Sweden. In 2009, MWIA looks forward to three regional meetings: Central Europe in Vienna in May, Near East and Africa in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, in July and our very own North American meeting on board ship sailing from Boston through the Canadian Maritimes and Quebec City to Montreal from September 19-26, 2009.

Let me take this opportunity to invite all AMWA colleagues to attend the North American meeting. Let us make it truly international as both Canadians and Americans meet to discuss the theme of ***Taking Care of the Caregiver***, aimed at the health and well-being of physicians. For further information and booking before the early bird deadline of November 30, 2008, please e-mail cruises@seacourses.com. All bookings must be made through this agency.

Membership Updates

New AMWA Members Only section

Please be sure to check out the new AMWA Members Only page of the AMWA website. An email was sent out in early April with your user ID and password, so please be sure to test out the new features. You can now update your profile online, renew your dues, and browse the member directory. If you have any questions, or need a user ID and password, please email associatedirector@amwa-doc.org.

Are you involved in a local AMWA branch?

AMWA headquarters is updating the branch listings, so please email your branch name and contact information to associatedirector@amwa-doc.org.

Finally – Scrubs & Lab Coats for Female Clinicians

Lara Manchik, PA-C

Graduating from PA school in 1999, almost a decade of wearing frumpy scrubs and lab coats became a twisted comedy of getting “ready” for work in a pajama-like uniform. I’ve always been somewhat into fashion and style. At one point, I calculated that I was spending 30% of my week wearing scrubs. I was so used to it, but why?? Surely there must be a better option for female clinicians. And when I couldn’t find one - I was fueled with motivation to change that.

The goal was simple – to source the highest quality fabrics and trim, with a focus on comfort and quality. More difficult of a task – was to maintain the traditional features of unisex style scrubs and lab coats, yet to introduce professionally appropriate feminization and modern functionality. “Finally!” seems to be the most common, welcomed response. This gives me tremendous pride – to be able to offer my colleagues scrubs and lab coats with abundant upgrades and a flattering, professional appearance. We all deserve that.

 Medelita proudly supports AMWA in its mission to advance women in medicine and improve women's health. AMWA members will receive free shipping and embroidery on their www.medelita.com orders by entering the coupon code **AMWA** at check out. Medelita will donate 10% of all AMWA sales to the American Medical Women's Association.

The STAR Doctor Medical Professional Liability Insurance Program for Women in Medicine

The Star Doctor Insurance Program provides Preferred Medical Professional Liability Insurance for Women Physicians. Coverage is available for most specialties.

The Star Doctor Insurance Program product is backed by an insurer who has provided Medical Professional Liability Insurance for over 35 years and is rated “A XIII” (Excellent) by A.M. Best Company.

Our program for Women in Medicine combines the value of competitive premiums with preferred and specialized features for Women Physicians who need to balance their personal and professional lives. (Some states are not eligible).

STAR Doctor Medical Professional Liability Insurance Highlights

- “Nose” or Prior Acts Coverage is available
- Affordable, part-time rates
- Free, automatic coverage for your locum tenens physician for up to 45 days
- Free, Unlimited Tail protection in the event of death, disability, or retirement (certain conditions may apply)
- Unlimited Tail available
- Legal Defense protection
- No deductible
- Defense expense paid in addition to the limit of liability
- Leave of absence features designed for new parents, illness, continuing education, and caring for family members
- Outstanding claim services

For more information, please contact: Jodie Cole, Senior Vice President, Ext. 222 jodiec@woodinsurancegroup.com.

Journal of Women's Health is expanding its monthly Bulletin Board section to include more information on the following topics. Kindly put JWH@liebertpub.com on your news alerts and/or let us know when there is news or new projects or programs that the women's health community should be aware of, such as:

- Centers of Excellence activities
- Fellowship announcements
- New women's health programs
- New funding opportunities
- Special events
- Advocacy activities

If you are an AMWA member, and you are not taking advantage of your FREE online Journal Subscription, email info@amwa-doc.org and we will send you the instructions on how to receive this great membership benefit!

Doctor's Digest

March/April 2009 Accurate Billing and Coding

As claims data is used for quality improvement projects and other purposes beyond reimbursement, getting coding right is more important than ever.

- Tips for Correct Coding
- Expediting Payment
- Dealing with Private Payers
- Special Medicare Procedures
- Technology that Can Help

Doctor's Digest: January/February 2009 Time Management

Effective time management can make practices more efficient and profitable and improve the quality of physician's lives. This issue will offer practical tips and real-life examples for managing a busy schedule at work and at home.

- Best Practices for Time Management
- What's the Right Scheduling Philosophy for Your Practice?
- Making the Most of a 15-minute Appointment
- Supporting Staff to Work Efficiently
- Making the Most of Your Off-Hours

Doctor's Digest: Free E-Subscription, Podcasts and Vodcasts on Demand

Doctor's Digest provides information and expert advice written by thought leaders and experts on topics that really matter to us, such as Personal and Professional Growth, Consumer-Driven Healthcare and Small Practice Survival. AMWA members and subscribers receive a free e-subscription to *Doctor's Digest*, access to all back issues and practice management podcasts and vodcasts on demand 23/7. Getting your free 2009 e-subscription and accessing the back issues is easy: just go to the **Doctor's Digest** page on AMWA's website and click on the link provided. Follow the links on www.doctorsdigest.net for access to the podcast and vodcast series. And now—Doctor's Digest "Essential Practice Tips" App on the iPhone/iPod Touch!!

AMWA invites you to participate in our continued E-evolution by giving us feedback about what you like or don't like about our weekly news and information e-mail. If you have suggestions regarding readability, content, timeliness, etc. send them to amwa@fernley.com.

If you have been forwarded this message and would like to subscribe, please email amwa@fernley.com with your name and "subscribe to e-newsletter" in the subject line.

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