

## Governor to veto caps bill?

By Steve Busalacchi

As promised, Wisconsin's legislative leaders proposed and acted on a bill to reinstate a cap on noneconomic damages in medical liability cases. At press time, AB 766 had passed the State Legislature and would soon go to the Governor for his consideration.

Even though the bill passed the State Senate on a party line Republican vote, all Senate Democrats did vote for a cap, albeit a higher limit than GOP Senators considered reasonable in terms of being effective for stabilizing medical liability insurance rates.

"It's essential that physicians let Governor Doyle know how critical this legislation is to maintaining access to medical care in Wisconsin," advised Susan Turney, MD, CEO/EVP of the Wisconsin Medical Society. "We do not want to go down the road that Illinois and other crisis states have traveled, where family doctors stopped delivering babies and specialists were forced to move or retire early," added Dr. Turney. The Governor's office can be reached at 608.266.1212.

AB 766 creates a two-tiered system of noneconomic "pain and suffering" caps: \$550,000 for a child under age 18 and \$450,000 for an adult. It's patterned after the current wrongful death statutes, which were recently upheld as constitutional.

To keep tabs on the latest developments, pay close attention to the e-mail newsletter, *Insider* that is sent to all members who submit an e-mail address, and go to [www.keepdoctorsinwisconsin.org](http://www.keepdoctorsinwisconsin.org).

## Doctors who "escaped" to Wisconsin

Scott Hansfield, MD, OB/GYN

"I came to Waupun in July 2003 from Illinois after learning that my insurance premiums were going to exceed my take-home pay. I decided to leave Illinois, and the only states I looked to for positions were those that the AMA labeled "safe." When I came to this state, I referred to it as "enlightened." The people here solved issues with access to medical care years ago with the establishment of caps on noneconomic damages."

Paul Casey, MD, Emergency Medicine

"One year ago, I left beautiful Seattle to move to Green Bay. In 15 years of practice, I have never been sued, yet I saw my malpractice premiums increase 400% over a 4-year period. Specialists no longer wanted to take emergency call because it meant providing very high-risk care, often for free. I had been in Seattle for over 10 years and never anticipated I would ever leave."

For up-to-the-minute information on this issue, visit [www.keepdoctorsinwisconsin.org](http://www.keepdoctorsinwisconsin.org).

## Doctor Linnea Smith named 2005 Physician Citizen of the Year

By Steve Busalacchi



Linnea Smith, MD, treats a patient in Peru.

What began as an exotic 1990 vacation for Linnea Smith, MD, became a calling that led to a medical practice unlike any other. Doctor Smith spends half of the year practicing in Black Earth so she can afford to spend the other six months treating the poor of Peru. It typically takes her one and a half hours traveling by boat to reach patients who lack access to medical care.

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## Workers Compensation Cost Cutting Proposal Needs Physician Review

Wisconsin's Workers Compensation Advisory Council is trying to curb the cost of medical care for injured workers by adopting proposed treatment guidelines in necessity of treatment appeal cases. The guidelines are available on [www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org](http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org). The Society's Occupational Medicine Section would like doctors to review them and offer their reactions.

The Advisory Council, with members representing labor and management, brings proposals to the legislature every two years, which are usually adopted. If you would be interested in joining a group that gives the Advisory Council input on the proposed guidelines, contact Maja Jurisic, MD, Secretary, Occupational and Environmental Medicine Section, [maja\\_jurisic@concentra.com](mailto:maja_jurisic@concentra.com). Those without e-mail access may call 262.814.2547.

## Upcoming Events

**Membership Committee:** December 14, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Contact Kris Hebel at 608.442.3712 or e-mail [krish@wismed.org](mailto:krish@wismed.org).

**Executive Committee:** December 15, 8 a.m. Contact Linette Colón Herron at 608.442.3704 or e-mail [linettec@wismed.org](mailto:linettec@wismed.org).

**Board of Directors:** December 15, 10:30 a.m. Contact Linette Colón Herron at 608.442.3704 or e-mail [linettec@wismed.org](mailto:linettec@wismed.org).



**Wisconsin Medical Society**

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## Foundation to Roast Bo Ryan

*By Steve Busalacchi*

Badger Men's Basketball Coach Bo Ryan is willing to let doctors have some fun at his expense, and doing so promises to be a slam-dunk for an evening of laughs. Ryan, recipient of four national "Coach of the Year" awards, is guest of honor at the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation's 2006 Charity Celebrity Roast and Silent Auction, April 6 at Madison's Monona Terrace.



"Physicians and other health care professionals play an instrumental role in athletics from youth leagues to college and professional levels," said Ryan. "I am glad to accept this honor and hope I can inspire students to pursue careers in medicine," he added. "There is more than one way to be part of an athletic team."

"Coach Ryan's commitment to excellence is definitely something to celebrate," said Foundation President Ayaz Samadani, MD. "And in doing so, we'll help equally committed students to achieve

their goal of becoming health professionals," he added.

A significant portion of the proceeds from the roast and raffle will fund grants for individuals and organizations that offer innovative ways to promote healthy living. The event also will help provide scholarships for students pursuing medical and allied health care careers. In 2005, the Foundation awarded more than \$115,000 in scholarships and grants.

For information on roast tickets, contact Angie Tyler at 608.442.3721 or [angiet@wismed.org](mailto:angiet@wismed.org).

## PCY

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"We are proud to select Dr. Linnea Smith as the Wisconsin Medical Society's 2005 Physician Citizen of the Year," said Bradley Manning, MD, president-elect of the Society. "Doctor Smith's dedication to the poor who live a long way from Wisconsin is truly extraordinary and deserves to be recognized and celebrated." The Physician Citizen of the Year Award is bestowed upon one Wisconsin physician each year who demonstrates a commitment to his or her community through volunteer or charitable activities.

Doctor Smith is the founder of the Yanamono Clinic, which has been operating for 14 years, according to Jill Haglund Hailey, who nominated Dr. Smith for the award. "The goals are to encourage preventive medicine, to continue to provide primary care to the people of the locale, and to involve locally trained people in the operation of the clinic," wrote Haglund Hailey in her nomination letter.

Doctor Smith received the award November 9 in Prairie du Sac during a Sauk County Medical Society meeting.

# Wisconsin Medical Journal

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