



The Roadrunner

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President's Column

By Alfredo Vigil, MD

"Follows directions well."

Remember getting that comment on your report card in grade school? Or maybe you weren't that kind of student. Hmmm.

There is an increasing awareness that one of the gaps between our potential for improving the health of our patients and actual outcomes is the difference between clinical practice guidelines and actual clinical practice. This has now been well-documented in many areas of acute care, chronic care, and prevention.

Case in point: **asthma management**. Data gathered by the NM Health Policy Commission and analyzed by the Environmental Health Epidemiology Bureau (EHEB) of the NM Dept. of Health during the years 2003-2005 reveal some amazing variations in asthma morbidity throughout the state. Child hospital discharge rates by county for asthma vary all the way from 8 per 10,000 population to 153. Meanwhile, all age emergency room discharge rates for asthma during the years 2001-2003 vary from 5 per 10,000 all the way to 82. The variation is shocking to say the least.

Now immediately your response should be, "There could be a lot of reasons for that." Of course, but even allowing for the usual data collection problems there is no denying that the range is huge and indicates that some populations in New Mexico clearly suffer more problems from asthma than others. You'll have to take my word for

it that at least so far issues like poverty, access to care, air quality, culture, and general health resources do not seem to adequately explain the extremes of variation completely.



The clues so far seem to point to excess use of "rescue" medication, i.e. bronchodilator and inadequate use of "maintenance" medication, i.e., inhaled corticosteroids, as reflected in prescribing patterns. Hmmm.

It has now been 18 years since the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute published the landmark *Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma* which has been updated regularly. There have been numerous studies that have revealed a significant lack of adherence by physicians with the guidelines especially in the area of inhaled corticosteroids. To quote a recent review: "Despite the publication of national guidelines for asthma therapy, inhaled corticosteroids continue to be underutilized by primary care clinicians. We demonstrate that primary care clinicians in both urban and private practice settings can use the guidelines and, when used, the guidelines are effective in reducing asthma morbidity." (*Pediatrics* 2006; 118:1880-1887.)

As you probably know, the data are similar for numerous other practice guidelines that have been studied. Certainly we are aware that the reasons behind this gap of guidelines versus practice are several: education, error, and resources, but the major issue is TIME. It's difficult, if not impossible,

to stay on top of everything for each and every patient.

Nevertheless, our responsibility as Family Physicians is to provide the best care possible to all of our patients. So raise your hand and repeat after me, I promise to maximize the appropriate use of inhaled corticosteroids in patients that are indicated by the NHLBI guidelines.

Don't you feel better already? ■

Call for "Physician of the Year" Nominations

The New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians seeks your nominations for New



Mexico Family Physician of the Year. All NMAFP members are urged to give this matter serious consideration and submit nominations to Sara Bittner, familydoctor@newmexico.com no later than May 1, 2009. This is an excellent opportunity for members to recognize an esteemed peer. All nominees must be an active member of the NMAFP. Nominations must include an explanation of why the nominee deserves this prestigious award.

The winner will be announced at the Awards Dinner and Dance on Friday, July 17th, during the 52nd Annual NMAFP Family Medicine Seminar in Ruidoso. NMAFP will pay the winner's 2010 AAFP/NMAFP dues. ■

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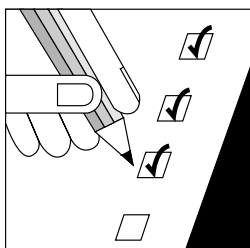
- Healthcare Reform Survey
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Healthcare Reform Physician Opinion Survey

Physicians Prioritized Reducing the Uninsured, Protecting the Medical Malpractice Act, Indexing Medicaid Payment to Physicians to the Inflation Rate

By Daniel Derksen, MD

New Mexico physicians prioritized reducing the number of uninsured New Mexicans as their top legislative priority. In a survey conducted by the NMMS in late November, and presented at the Interim House of Delegates meeting on 12/5/08, 76% of respondents ranked reducing the uninsured in their top three legislative priorities, and over half ranked it as the top priority. Protecting New Mexico's model Medical Malpractice Act was second, and indexing Medicaid payment to the inflation rate was third. Primary care physicians comprised 46% of respondents. That correlates with data that 49% of actively practicing physicians in New Mexico are primary care physicians.



tal health benefits, are particularly important to improve access to necessary care.

Over 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all Americans should have access to quality care and have affordable health insurance, that the current economic crisis will increase the number of uninsured, that patients should take more responsibility for their health care, and that current payment methodologies undervalue primary care. On the other hand, 83% disagree or

strongly disagree with the statement that they are satisfied with the current health system. The response to the statement: "I am in favor of a 'single payer' system" was almost evenly split at about 20% for each of the five choices. The statement "Our health system should be 'pluralistic' with both public payer and private insurance coverage" had 59% agreeing or strongly agreeing. The Health Securities Act was introduced again in the state legislature, where it has stalled in committees.

Of the 476 responses, 302 (64%) were from NMMS members, 427 (90%) are clinically active – a 14% response rate. There are 3,858 physicians in New Mexico, of which 3,100 (80%) are clinically active.

NMMS members (2,800) comprise 73% of NM's 3,858 physicians. The response rate by employed and private, and by primary care as well as medical and surgical specialty physicians was consistent with their percentage in the state. Thus 46% of respondents were primary care physicians, consistent with the percentage active in NM ($1,518/3,100 = 49\%$). Similarly, the 11% response rate from medical specialties reflected the percentage practicing in NM at 9%. The surgical specialty response of 10%

underrepresented surgical specialties in NM (18%). Of the respondents, 235 (50%) are employed and 192 (40%) private practice; employed physicians comprise 48% of NM physicians, and private practice 39%. ■

* * *

Special thanks to Dr. Jim Tryon, to Betty Skipper (Professor, Biostatistics at UNM), to Meredith Neal MS III, and to the NMMS Health Reform Committee.

¹Physician Supply & Distribution in New Mexico 2006. The Center for Health Workforce Studies, School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York. December 2007. Released by NM Health Policy Commission 12/07.

T. R. Reid to Launch New Speaker Series in Santa Fe

T.R. Reid, one of the nation's best-known correspondents through his coverage of global affairs for the Washington Post, his nine books, many documentaries and his light-hearted commentaries on National Public Radio, will host the first "Luminary Speaker Series" at the Lensic Theatre on Tuesday, April 28, at 7 pm.



Presented by Presbyterian Medical Services Foundation, the series will feature speakers who reflect the mission of Presbyterian Medical Services: delivering health-care, education and human services to underserved communities throughout New Mexico.

Tickets are on sale at the Lensic Box office. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$50 for premier seating and a reception with T.R. Reid immediately following the event. Call 988-1234 or order online at www.ticketssantafe.org. For more information about the series call 505-954-2302.

Winter Refresher Well Attended Once Again

By Sara Bittner

Dr. Trey Dodson put on an outstanding Family Medicine Conference on Saturday, February 7th at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Albuquerque. Over 130 attendees spent the day listening to high-quality continuing medical education provided by the following speakers: Dion Gallant, M.D., Carol Havens, M.D., Ben Hoffman, M.D., Rich Hoffman, M.D., Janice Knoefel, M.D., Erin Lunde, M.D., and Saverio Sava, M.D. NMAFP extends their thanks to the speakers for sharing their time and expertise. Judging from the evaluations, they were all very well received.

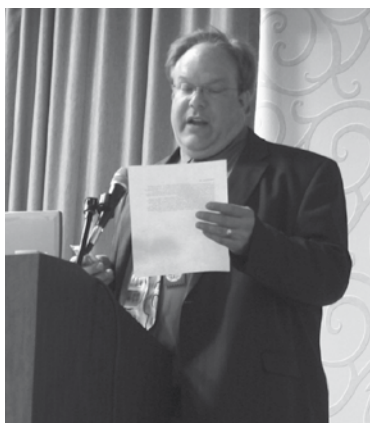
Thanks to the Vendors that helped support this Conference: AccuStat Medical Transcription, Inc.; American Heart & Stroke Association; American Massage Therapy Association, NM Chapter; American Physicians Assurance Corporation; AstraZeneca; Dairy MAX; Forest Pharmaceuticals; Kaiser Permanente Northern California; Mitchell's Silver & Turquoise; NM Department of Health – NMservices; NM Health Resources; NM Medical Society/ NM Health Care Takes on Diabetes; PDS CORTEX; Sanofi-Aventis; The Children's Center at Presbyterian Hospital; U.S. Army Medical Recruiting; and UNM School of Medicine, Preceptorship Office.

Thanks to the Co-Sponsors of the Winter Refresher: Merck & Co.; Montanas Del Norte Area Health Education Center, Las Vegas, NM; and Southern Area Health Education Center, Las Cruces, NM.

Make plans now to attend the 52nd Annual Family Medicine Seminar that will take place July 16-19 in Ruidoso. Dr. Alfredo Vigil will be the Scientific Program Chair. ■



The lecture hall was packed for this year's Winter Refresher...



Dr. Trey Dodson did an awesome job as Scientific Program Chair of the Winter Refresher



Dr. Trey Dodson, President-Elect, honoring Dr. Lana K. Wagner for her year of service to the Academy with the Past-President's plaque.



NMAFP Past Presidents attending their annual breakfast prior to the Winter Refresher at the Embassy Suites.

Top photo, L to R: Warren Heffron, MD; Dave Holten, MD; Trey Dodson, MD; Dion Gallant, MD; Arlene Brown, MD; Alfredo Vigil, MD; Lana K. Wagner, MD; Jim Koch, MD; Karen Vaillant, MD; Bert Umland, MD; Nancy Guinn, MD; Melissa Martinez, MD.



Bottom photo: Rick Madden, MD; Dan Derksen, MD.



Trey Dodson Heads Colorado Residency

Our Chapter will miss Dr. Trey Dodson. Besides giving three years of service culminating in President-Elect for NMAFP, he served the UNM Department of Family and Community Medicine as Associate Residency Program Director for seven years. He implemented the new web-based residency system, and role-modeled full service Family Medicine. But a career opportunity and family led him to a new endeavor.

His new position is Program Director for the St. Anthony North Family Medicine Residency Program, in Denver, Colorado. He plans to promote technology advances in the hospital, resident education and evaluation, and continuing inpatient medicine and obstetrics.

He can be reached by email: WilliamDodson@Centura.org; mailing address: 8510 Bryant, Suite 200, Westminster, CO 80031. Trey wishes us all to know "I will miss all my friends in New Mexico. I appreciate all the support and good memories."

And we wish him the very best. Thank you Trey. ■



Medical Students Elect New Officers

The Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) has changed leadership positions for 2009. The new officers are:

President: Haily Lee-Wallace, hlee-wallace@salud.unm.edu
 Vice President: Rena Singleton, rsingleton@salud.unm.edu
 Secretary: Rasha Elmaoued, raelmaoued@salud.unm.edu
 Treasurer: Kate McCalmont, kmccalmont@salud.unm.edu
 Care Bag Coordinator: Eric Robinson, ecrobinson@salud.unm.edu

The New Mexico FMIG organization is promoting student involvement and knowledge of Family Medicine in New Mexico and globally. Current activities on our agenda include lunch lectures for medical students to learn about opportunities in Family Medicine, Web-based Educational Forums hosted by the AAFP as well as Care Bag assembly and delivery to homeless individuals in our community. We are excited about what the year will bring for FMIG and are excited to have the opportunity to promote Family Medicine to the University of New Mexico medical students. ■

Multi-State Forum – Brainchild of a NM Doc

By Mario Pacheco, MD

New Mexico will be hosting the 25th Annual Multi-State Forum in Dallas, TX in February, 2010. The meeting brings together ten or more state AAFP chapters from the west and mid-west to collaborate. It is quite appropriate and timely for us to have this opportunity on this meeting's Silver Anniversary, since the Multi-State Forum was the brainchild of former NM Chapter President Dr. John Casebolt.

As we all are acutely aware, health care reform is once again at the forefront of political debate. As the numbers of unemployed and uninsured continue to rise, the cost of health care continues to increase and health outcomes lag behind other, less expensive systems. As Family Doctors we understand that the crux of this problem is insufficient access to preventive and primary care services within a system that rewards more expensive and invasive specialty care.



Payment reform, workforce development, primary care infrastructure development and care coordination are all critical to the success of a reformed health care system. As Family Physicians, we must participate in efforts to improve this system.

The Multi-State Forum offers us an opportunity to hear what state legislators in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas are doing to address these issues. More importantly, the Forum allows an opportunity for Family Physicians from these same States to share best practices and innovations. I would encourage anyone interested in policy to attend this meeting at the Grand Hyatt (DFW Airport) on February 27-28, 2010. Please contact Sara Bittner at the Chapter office for details. ■

ABSAME Call For Papers and Meeting

The Association for the Behavioral Sciences and Medical Education (ABSAME) is soliciting presentations and attendance for its annual meeting, which will be held October 7-11 in Santa Fe. The 2009 meeting theme "Behavioral Competence for Integrated Health Care: Development and Implementation" is designed to facilitate improvement of evidence-based practices in integrated health care by developing medical students' behavioral competencies in patient care, medical knowledge, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, and systems-based practice. Presentations from professionals in medicine, psychology, and humanities are welcomed. Submissions are due by April 15. For more info, see www.absame.org. ■

Board Notes

February 6, 2009 – Embassy Suites Hotel, Albuquerque

- Current Doctor of the Day activities at the NM State Legislature includes testimony about health care issues. The Board voted to oppose expected legislation that would open the Medical Malpractice Act to higher limits. The Board also heard from medical student Gabriel Pallay about two bills introduced to limit undue pharmaceutical industry influence on physicians.
- President-Elect Dr. Trey Dodson has moved to Colorado to head a residency program. The Board will miss him and is in the process of replacing him.

- The Family Medicine Residencies in Albuquerque and Roswell have both had a highly successful interviewing season this year.

- Haily Lee-Wallace represented the students to the Board as the new Family Medicine Interest Group President at UNM. Stephanie Benson, MD got the resident group going at the recent Albuquerque Refresher. She will be staying in New Mexico and staying active on our Board from the Las Cruces residency after her residency is completed.

- Next meeting: May 1, 2009 at 6 PM at the Flying Star Restaurant downtown in Albuquerque.

NM Legislature Closing Day Outcome

By Daniel Derksen, MD, President, New Mexico Medical Society

The final hours of the 2009 state legislative session passed inexorably toward its end on Saturday, March 21 at high noon. In a year where \$500 million had to be cut from the budget, we knew it was going to be a difficult year.

In its December Interim House of Delegates meeting, the New Mexico Medical Society identified priority legislative issues. In advance of that meeting, a survey of NM physicians overwhelmingly identified reducing the uninsured and protecting the Medical Malpractice Act as its top two priorities. Help on the former came with the quick passage by the U.S. Congress of the Children's Health Insurance Plan Reauthorization Act of 2009, followed by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The CHIP bill increased funding to New Mexico by 277% this year and included provisions that Senator Jeff Bingaman helped push through including expanding and streamlining the process for medical and dental coverage for uninsured children.

Thanks to the incredible response by NMMS members, and the tireless work by the Ad Hoc Malpractice Committee (Drs. Blake, Boehm, Beaudette), the NMMS was able to deliver on the second highest priority – protecting the Medical Malpractice Act. Space limitations prevent a more detailed telling of that tale, but suffice it to say that it was quite a defensive effort to prevent raising the cap from its current \$600,000 to the \$1.5 to \$2 million that our opponents desired. That would have driven up premiums 45 to 70%. It speaks to the importance of being prepared and staying on message. Instead, it was gratifying to receive news from the malpractice carrier for many of New Mexico's physicians a few weeks ago that liability premium rates will decrease overall by 5.9% (and 14% for Ob/Gyns) on June 1st, 2009. This was a most welcome bit of news in what has otherwise been a frightening, turbulent economic time.



Representative Picraux introduced HB 710 (medical homes program for Medicaid, SCHIP, SCI), a concept endorsed at the NMMS Interim HOD meeting in December and the NM AFP. It sailed through two House Committees and was unanimously passed by the House 64-0. It received a unanimous DO PASS from the Senate Finance Committee, went to the Senate floor where it passed unanimously. It came down to the final hours of the Senate session where it was passed late Friday night. Thanks to Drs. Madden and Brislen (our NMMS Health Policy Fellow) for their great work, and to Krysta Johnson, a UNM medical student who helped with the bill and speaking points.

Senator Wirth's SB 278 (Electronic Medical Records) bill passed and went to the Governor for signature. The bill had been amended to assure privacy and protections. It had been endorsed by the NMMS. Thanks go out to the expert assistance by Dr. Kanig.

Senator Feldman carried four important health bills, SB 40 (Pharmaceutical Recycling), SB 99 (Gift Disclosure Act), SB 104 (Any Willing Provider), and SB 593 (Primary Care Conditional Tuition Waiver). The first two were vehemently opposed and successfully scuttled by Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PHRMA). SB 40 almost made it through anyway. It had smooth sailing through the Senate

with a unanimous vote on the floor, made it through the House Committees, and missed getting voted on by the House by a matter of minutes. After many attempts at negotiation with health plans and hospital systems, the House Corporations and Transportation Committee tabled the Any Willing Provider legislation. Our sincere thanks go out to Senator Feldman for her hard work and dedication on these important health issues, and to the NMMS staff and physician members who spent so many hours on working on them including Randy and John, and Drs. McAneny, Fleg, McLaughlin and Kanig. The fate of the Primary Care Conditional Tuition Waiver came down to the final hours of the session, waiting to be heard on the House floor, where it passed unanimously, and goes to the Governor for his signature.

While Representative Stewart's HB 267 (Health Authority) got through the House without any problems, it did not make it out of the Senate Finance Committee despite persistent efforts by Dr. Tryon and the NMMS staff. We were not able to move Representative Gardner's HB 585 (Scope of Practice Act). Because of an erroneous fiscal impact report, the bill to eliminate the Gross Receipts Tax on co-pays and deductibles stalled. It was not a particularly good year to ask for tax deductions or for increases in fee schedules.

An emotional moment of the session came during the passage of a joint memorial in honor of Patty Jennings. With her passing, New Mexico lost an effective, persistent and unrelenting advocate for our most vulnerable populations – the uninsured, the disabled and those with cancer. She had an extraordinary spirit and energy. Those touched by Patty's extraordinary life can honor her memory and support her advocacy by making a contribution to the Patricia K. Jennings Foundation, P.O. Box 1797, Roswell, NM 88202. ■



AGENDA - 52ND ANNUAL NMAFP FAMILY MEDICINE SEMINAR

Lodge at Sierra Blanca & Ruidoso Convention Center – July 16-19, 2009

Alfredo Vigil, M.D. – Scientific Program Chair

THURSDAY, JULY 16

7:30 a.m. Registration, Exhibits Open

8:30 a.m. Introduction & Welcome
Alfredo Vigil, M.D.
President
Scientific Program Chair

9:00 a.m. "Medical Care of the Developmentally Disabled",
Carol Merovka, M.D.

10:00 a.m. "Pediatric Obesity", Jane Mcgrath, M.D.

11:00 a.m. "SIDS", Winona Stoltzfus, M.D.

12:00 p.m. Lunch - Exhibit Hall

1:00 p.m. "Contraception 2009: Beyond 'The Pill'"
Larry Leeman, M.D. & Jennifer Phillips, M.D.

2:00 p.m. "Yoga as Medicine", Satkirin Khalsa, M.D.

3:00 p.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

3:30 p.m. "The Physician's Role in Improving the Public's
Health by Eliminating Social Inequities",
Robert Valdez, Ph.D., MHSA

6-8 p.m. Welcome Reception – Lodge at Sierra Blanca
Introduction of Candidates for Office – 2009-2010

FRIDAY, JULY 17

7:30 a.m. Registration, Exhibits Open

7:45 a.m. "Asthma Status in New Mexico"
Elizabeth Matthews, M.D.

9:00 a.m. "Acute Stroke", Howard Yonas, M.D.

10:00 a.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

10:30 a.m. AAFP Chapter Lecture Series: "Managing Type 2
Diabetes: Old & New Weapons for a Moving Target",
Dion Gallant, M.D., (EB CME)
(This activity is supported by an Educational Grant to the
AAFP from Novo Nordisk)

11:30 a.m. "Adolescent & Adult Immunizations",
Lance Chilton, M.D.

12:30 p.m. Lunch – Exhibit Hall

1:30 p.m. "ECHO Update", Sanjeev Arora, M.D.

2:30 p.m. "ABFM Update", Joe Tollison, M.D.

3:30 p.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

4:00 p.m. "Native American Obesity", Gayle Dine'Chacon, M.D.

6:30-10:30 Awards Dinner & Dance – Ruidoso Convention Center
Special Guest – Dr. Ted Epperly, AAFP President
Entertainment – The Jimmy Stadler Band

SATURDAY, JULY 18

7:30 a.m. Registration, Exhibits Open

7:45 a.m. "Unraveling a Mystery: Evidence-Based Diagnosis
and Treatment of Fibromyalgia",
Robert Moldwin, M.D. (EB CME)

9:00 a.m. "Medical Home", Greg Pawlson, M.D.

10:00 a.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

10:30 a.m. "The ABC's of e-prescribing & How e-prescribing
Works in New Mexico",
Galina Priloutska, Ph.D., CHCA, MBA, NMMRA
Project Manager & Mark Zuliani, Transformation
Grant Project Manager, HSD

11:30 a.m. "Psychosis: Early Warning Signs and the
Importance of Early Intervention",
Steve Adelsheim, M.D.

12:30 p.m. Remainder of Afternoon at Leisure for Attendees
NMAFP Board Meeting – Ruidoso Convention
Center

SUNDAY, JULY 19

7:45 a.m. "Migraine Management", Joanna Katzman, M.D.

9:00 a.m. "Treatment Updates for Parkinson's Disease"
Sarah Pirio Richardson, M.D.

10:00 a.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

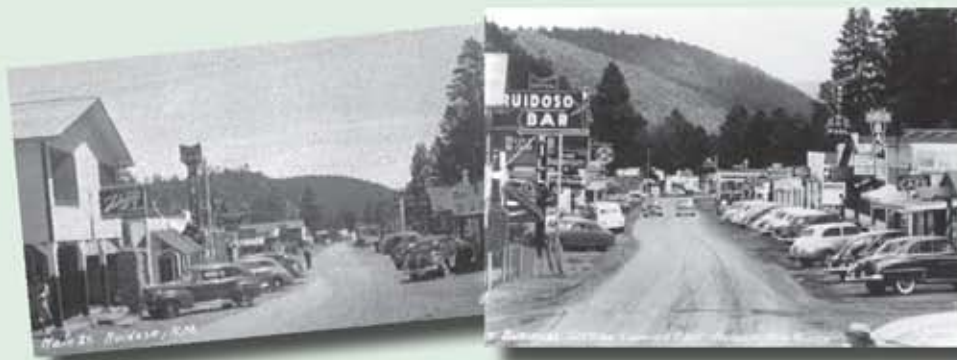
10:30 a.m. "Pain Disorder", Alfredo Vigil, M.D.

11:30 a.m. "Stem Cell Update", Ed Libby, M.D.

12:30 p.m. Drawing for Door Prizes (Must be present to win)

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NMAFP RETURNS TO RUIDOSO IN JULY!

NMAFP is pleased to announce the 52nd Annual Family Medicine Seminar will take place in Ruidoso on July 16-19th at the Ruidoso Convention Center and the Lodge at Sierra Blanca. Scientific Program Chair for this Conference, that will offer an excellent variety of topics worth 23 Prescribed credits, is Dr Alfredo Vigil, current President of NMAFP and Secretary of Health for New Mexico. Make your reservations early at the Lodge at Sierra Blanca: 575-258-5500 or 1-866-211-7727. A room block will be held until June 15th. After this date, rooms will be on a space-available basis. Online registration will be up and running toward the end of April: www.familydoctormn.org. You can view the 3 ½-day program on page 7 of this issue.

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