

MSSC NEWS

HIGHLIGHTS 2021

A LOOK BACK AT THE 2021 NEWS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF SEDGWICK COUNTY AND ITS PROGRAMS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT STEPHEN GRINDEL, DO.

MSSC meeting reflects on extraordinary year

At MSSC's first large in-person membership meeting of 2021 on Dec. 7, outgoing President Stephen Grindel, DO, praised the medical community's response to the pandemic. "The past two years were not what any of us expected," he said. "But I am especially proud of how our members rose to meet this extraordinary challenge."

Grindel noted that all MSSC members were impacted by COVID-19 no matter where they worked. Many dealt with financial costs related to the shutdown. Many had to make quick transitions to telemedicine.

"We had to obtain PPE and implement social distancing and vaccination policies," he said. "We had the risk of potentially catching COVID from a patient and then maybe transmitting it to family members. We had difficult conversations with patients about masking and getting the vaccine. We lost patients to the disease."

But Grindel noted that some MSSC members faced extraordinary circumstances.

"Those who work in the hospitals have truly



▲ KIMBERLY HARTWELL, MD, VALERIE CRESWELL, MD, AND RICK HARTWELL, MD



▲ MSSC PRESIDENT STEPHEN GRINDEL, DO, PRESENTS CASSIE SCRIPSER, MD, WITH THE 2022 DR. JOE MEEK LEADERSHIP AWARD

PLEASE SEE **ANNUAL MEETING**, PAGE 2

COVID ups and downs dominate 2021

December
2021
Special Edition

Founded in 1903, MSSC today numbers more than 1,700 members, including residents and students, and is considered one of the most active county medical societies in the country.



Stephen J. Grindel, DO December President's Message

After an extremely difficult 2020, the New Year began with hope: Two COVID-19 vaccines were available.

MSSC worked with the Sedgwick County Health Department to organize a mass vaccination clinic. Thousands of health care workers throughout the county were vaccinated at the clinic or through the hospitals.

Many physicians expressed joy and relief in getting the vaccine. It appeared our community might soon put the worst of COVID-19 behind it.

In the first few months, demand for the vaccine outstripped the supply. But by spring,

demand slowed, and the focus soon shifted to outreach. MSSC produced several public service commercials encouraging people to get vaccinated, and physicians discussed the vaccine with their patients.

Vaccine misinformation also flourished. To help combat this, MSSC arranged for physicians to speak to various groups and answer vaccine questions.

By late spring, the rate of community spread dropped so low that the CDC lifted its mask recommendation for vaccinated individuals. It seemed as if the country was emerging from the pandemic and life would start returning to normal.

But by early July the percentage of positive tests began climbing again, as the delta variant took hold. Soon the number of COVID cases surged, placing Ascension Via Christi and Wesley Medical Center at critical status.

PLEASE SEE **2021 COVID**, PAGE 3



▲ LEE NORMAN, MD, LEFT, WITH MSSC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PHILLIP BROWNLEE

been on the front lines, dealing with multiple waves of patients, including children," he said.

Ascension Via Christi, Wesley Healthcare and their staffs have done heroic work under great pressure, including reorganizing their operations to care for more COVID patients.

"For most of this fall, the hospitals' capacity level was listed as 'critical,' yet they continued, day after day, to provide high level of care to our community," Grindel said.

Grindel also singled out the many other physicians who work in and with the hospitals. "They have been at the bedside with COVID patients," he said. "They have been there when our community needed them most."

Lee Norman, MD, was the featured speaker at the meeting. Norman served as Kansas secretary of Health and Environment and led the state's response to COVID-19.

Norman noted the multiple crises and challenges he had to address when he was at KDHE, including the lack of personal protective equipment and testing and the vaccine rollout. He and his team often had to make decisions with incomplete data.

But when he lay awake in bed at night, Norman said, there was one thing that made him rest easier: Sedgwick County.

"Your medical society and the significant influence you demonstrated (was) a spectacular response," Norman said. "For that, I am eternally grateful."

The main focus of the meeting was recognizing Dr. Garold Minns, MD, for his work as Sedgwick County's public health officer.

"Few people would have wanted to be Dr. Minns the past two years," Grindel said. "Health officers had to balance public health threats with economic concerns and an extra-large serving of politics."

Grindel said that Minns has faithfully served our community with integrity and humility.

"He accepted criticism with grace and compassion, recognizing the stress and strain many people are facing," Grindel said.

At the same time Minns was guiding Sedgwick County government through the pandemic, he remained dean of the KU School of Medicine-Wichita, where he oversaw the



▲ GAROLD MINNS, MD, WITH MSSC PRESIDENT STEPHEN GRINDEL, DO, ACCEPTING HONORARY MEMBER AWARD

medical school's quick pivot to remote learning last year.

"That, in itself, is deserving of recognition," Grindel said.

Grindel shared comments from some MSSC members who were in the middle of the COVID battles with Minns.

Maggie Hagan, MD, said Minns had been a mentor to her for the past 30 years and was her inspiration to become an infectious disease physician.

"His leadership has been invaluable during the COVID era," she said. "He has done so much to keep our community safe and to limit the spread of COVID. His calm manner and wisdom have been so important in this time of chaos."

Sam Antonios, MD, chief clinical officer at Ascension Via Christi Health, said: "While Dr. Minns has become more widely known in our community because of the leadership role he has played throughout the pandemic, the medical community has long recognized him as a man of wisdom, courage and commitment to our safety. We are blessed to have someone with his knowledge, integrity and conviction helping advance the medical profession and health care leadership."

The MSSC Board of Directors voted to bestow on Minns the status of honorary MSSC member in recognition and gratitude for his exemplary work in public health and medical education. Members at the annual meeting voted unanimously to approve this honor.

Grindel presented Minns with a plaque and with a framed letter from Gov. Laura Kelly thanking Minns for his service and recognizing his many achievements.

Minns spoke briefly, thanking MSSC for the honor and thanking the medical community for its support and work during the pandemic.

"I'm a little overwhelmed. I know a lot of you made sacrifices and had a very tough time through this whole two years – it's not just me," Minns said. "I want to tell you how much I appreciate the recognition. I always felt the MSSC is one of the most prestigious medical societies in the state of Kansas, if not the Midwest. I'm very respectful of you all."

PHYSICIAN ENGAGEMENT

PHYSICIANS AND THEIR GUESTS GATHERED AT THE HUDSON ON DEC. 7 FOR THE MSSC ANNUAL MEETING. VACCINES AND MASKS WERE REQUIRED.



▲ KIMBERLY KROHN, MD, JENNIFER THUENER, MD, CASSIE SCRIPTER, MD, AND ANNA DAGG, MD



▲ CHIVUKULA SUBBARAO, MD, AND ARUN KUMAR, MD



▲ MAURICE DUGGINS, MD, AND MSSC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PHILLIP BROWNLEE



▲ WHITNEY ROWE, MD, SCOTT MOSER, MD, MRS. SHARON MOSER, AND KYLE ROWE, MD



▲ JOEL DICKERMAN, DO, AND JOHN MCMASTER, MD



▲ FADI JOUDI, MD, THANH VU, DO, AND DIEUHIEN NGUYEN



▲ DAVID HUFFORD, MD, AND MRS. SALLY HUFFORD

2021 COVID CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The politics and emotions of the pandemic also surged, as protests against masking policies intensified. Federal vaccine mandates led to lawsuits and a special legislative session.

The strain of taking care of so many patients for so many months also took a toll on health care workers. Nurses remained in short supply. Physicians who were earlier hailed as heroes now faced mistrust.

MSSC tried to encourage health care workers and build up public support. It provided meals and thank-you notes to hospital COVID units. It dedicated a new Keeper statue at the MSSC offices to commemorate the work and sacrifices of the medical community in combating COVID-19.

The outlook began improving in the fall. Booster shots were approved, as were vaccines for children 5 and older.

The local COVID numbers also started declining. However, hospital status was not lowered to "cautious" until November and was back to "critical" in December. The CDC continued to classify the rate of community spread as "high."

What will 2022 bring? Will the omicron or another variant become dominant? Will COVID-19 burn itself out? Will it become endemic? What 2021 showed is how difficult it is to accurately predict the future of COVID-19.

I wish to thank the members of the Medical Society for their support over the past year. It has been a difficult year for all physicians and medical personnel. I believe times of crisis, such as a global pandemic, are when the Medical Society shines the brightest.

Best wishes for a happy and blessed holiday season.



Newsworthy ▶▶▶

Highlights from 2021

Meek young physician award winners foster leadership

The Dr. Joe Meek Young Physician Leadership Award, named after the former longtime KUSM-Wichita dean, aims to foster leadership among practicing physicians 40 or younger.

Larry Mitnaul, MD, was the recipient for 2021. He is a child and adolescent psychiatrist who has been an advocate for mental health support within Sedgwick County. This past year he has co-hosted a television series on PBS Kansas called "Cause for Hope."



LARRY MITNAUL, MD



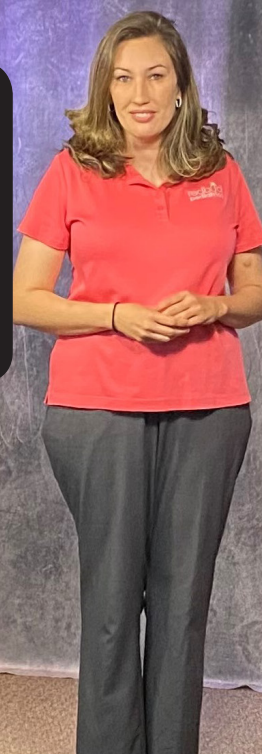
CASSIE SCRIPTER, MD

Cassie Scriptor, MD, a family physician with Hillside Medical Office, is the recipient for 2022. She serves on the KUSM-Wichita Medical Student Education Committee and has served on its CME committee. She is also very involved in the community, serving on a school PTO, coaching at the Y, and serving on the COVID Response and Assessment Team at Andover Public Schools. She hopes this award helps her further develop her leadership skills and capacity for service.

MSSC produced COVID-related PSAs

MSSC led various TV public health campaigns related to COVID-19. Last year, MSSC produced TV public service announcements to promote mask wearing as well as caring for one's mental health and not putting off needed medical care. This year, MSSC physicians did additional PSAs encouraging people to get vaccinated. MSSC also helped organize physicians to speak to various groups about the vaccines, including the WSU men's basketball team.

▶ **VENESSA LOPEZ, MD**, WAS ONE OF FIVE MSSC PHYSICIANS WHO FILMED PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SEDGWICK COUNTY PROMOTING COVID-19 VACCINATIONS. LOPEZ, A PEDIATRICIAN, DID BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH-LANGUAGE PSAs ON HOW THE VACCINE WAS NEWLY AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AGES 12 AND OLDER.



Vaccination also a challenge in medical offices

Many MSSC members struggled this year to determine a COVID-19 vaccination policy for their staffs. Ascension announced in July that it would require associates at all of its facilities to be vaccinated by Nov. 12. The Biden administration released rules in November mandating that all facilities regulated under the Medicare health and safety standards require vaccinations by Jan. 4, 2022. The order, which was challenged in court, does not directly apply to physician offices.

MSSC surveyed practice managers in late August and early September about their vaccination policies. Of the 52 practices that responded, the average staff vaccination rate was 80 percent. Seventeen percent of the practices said 100 percent of their staffs were vaccinated.

2021 Health Care Heroes

Eleven MSSC members were recognized as Health Care Heroes by the Wichita Business Journal for 2021. Garold Minns, MD received the Lifetime Achievement Award.



MAURICE DUGGINS, MD



TRACY WILLIAMS, MD



JANY MOUSSA, MD



GAROLD MINNS, MD



TAYLOR BERTSCHY, DO



JEREMY DEUTSCH, MD



BRIAN GOENTZEL, MD



MAGGIE HAGAN, MD



MAHA ASSI, MD



JON PARKS, MD



CHLOE STEINSHOUE, MD

APRN issue likely to return

The MSSC Legislative Committee, led by **Kevin Hoppock, MD**, worked closely with the Kansas Medical Society to monitor issues before the Kansas Legislature and advocate on behalf of physicians and patient care. Bills allowing APRNs to practice independently without physician oversight and without regulation by the State Board of Healing Arts were not passed by either the House or Senate health committees, yet there was a strong push for their passage. KMS and physicians mobilized against the bills. The issue is likely to return next year, as could an effort by pharmacists to independently initiate therapy with patients. Other issues that are likely to return next session include medical marijuana (cleared the House this year) and Medicaid expansion.



KEVIN HOPPOCK, MD

One med school celebrates 50th; another nears opening



RENDERING OF KANSAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER BY SHELDEN ARCHITECTURE

One Wichita medical school celebrated a major anniversary in 2021, while another took important steps toward opening in 2022. The Kansas Board of Regents approved funding for the KU School of Medicine-Wichita on Sept. 17, 1971, and the first students arrived in January 1974. Since its founding 50 years ago, the school has graduated nearly 2,400 students. Since 1988, about 2,300 residents have completed its residency programs.

The Kansas Health Science Center – Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine received pre-accreditation status this month. This status enables it to begin accepting student applications, with the first class starting next August. Full accreditation occurs after the first class graduates. The school also is completing construction of its downtown campus.



Working to increase the number of Black physicians

MSSC, KUSM-W and two residency programs in November hosted online screenings of the documentary “Black Men in White Coats.” About 130 people watched the film, which was followed by moderated discussions. The film highlights the barriers preventing Black men from becoming physicians.

MSSC is working to increase the number of Black physicians in Wichita as a way to address health disparities. It began offering mentors to residents and is developing plans for encouraging young people from underrepresented populations to pursue careers in medicine. The KU School of Medicine also created a scholarship and an Urban Scholars Program aimed at increasing the number of Black medical students.

Pandemic harming mental health

COVID-19 has taken a toll on not only the public's mental health but also on health care workers. National studies found significant numbers of medical staff quitting because of the strain and moral distress suffered during the pandemic. In a survey last year by the KU School of Medicine-Wichita, half of Kansas family doctors reported experiencing at least one sign of burnout, suffering emotional exhaustion or feeling a higher level of personal stress. This was especially the case for those who treated confirmed or presumed-positive COVID-19 patients. The KUSM-W researchers said the study should serve as a tool for developing wellness interventions and physician-support initiatives.

Young docs and their families went out to the ballgame

The Wichita Docs Under 40 group was able to squeeze in a Wichita Wind Surge baseball game this summer when COVID transmission rates were low. About 100 people, including family members, attended the event.

WD<40
Wichita Docs Under 40



Keeper honors work of medical community amid COVID



WICHITA MAYOR BRANDON WHIPPLE TAKES A SELFIE AT THE KEEPER DEDICATION IN APRIL. BEHIND HIM, FROM LEFT: STEPHEN GRINDEL, DO, PHILLIP BROWNLEE, PATRICIA WYATT-HARRIS, MD, COUNTY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN PETE MEITZNER, AND GAROLD MINNS, MD

MSSC commissioned a Keeper of the Plains statue to honor the work of our health care community in combating COVID-19. The statue, which was dedicated in April at the MSSC offices, features a collage of physicians and nurses in a variety of faces patterned in different skin tones with blue scrub and mask hues.

“Many physicians, nurses and other medical staff have risked their own health to care for our community,” MSSC President Stephen Grindel, DO, said at the dedication ceremony in April. “We hope this Keeper will be a lasting tribute to their dedication and sacrifice.”

MSSC also tried to show appreciation and encouragement to the medical community by delivering small bags of oranges and thank-you notes to MSSC members. It also provided meals to the COVID units in the hospitals and encouraged public support of physicians and nurses through newspaper columns and social media posts.

Affiliates and Initiatives ▶▶▶

Health ICT

Health ICT continued to push forward on making progress on two CDC grants. Notable successes:

- Utilizing funds from the grants, a large employer in Wichita completed a year-long pilot of a virtual Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) in January 2021 with great results.
- Assisting three health care providers in Kansas, two in Wichita and one in Colby, with implementing an in-house Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP).
- Working with KUSM-W on a patient hypertension and depression quality improvement project in which “positive deviance” was identified.

Project Access

Staff remained busy enrolling clients into the program. This year did not bring many changes, except a grant award that has allowed the addition of a Patient Navigator whose job will be helping PA clients and others enroll in the ACA Marketplace. Also, Project Access had a successful fundraising event at Jill Docking’s house in September.

Kansas Business Group on Health

KBGH had a very busy year with the offering of two conferences and monthly virtual webinars focused on myriad of issues such as mental health in the workplace, legal issues relative to health care benefits, and more. A book club examined books specially focused on better understanding of health care costs and tools for reducing cost while improving quality. KBGH was also awarded funding for employer roundtables that focused on how to better serve employees diagnosed with cancer. Eight employers participated, including the state of Kansas.

ProviDRs Care

ProviDRs Care began the year under new leadership with CEO Justin Leitzen. Over the past year, ProviDRs Care launched two new network product offerings and several new services for both employers and providers. ProviDRs Care recently became joint owners of ACO National Network, a new joint venture that will bring Accountable Care Organizations across the country together under one network. ProviDRs Care’s value-based product, NexUS, continues to expand to more counties throughout Kansas.

Medical Provider Resources

MPR finished the year in a strong fiscal position. The projected year end is estimated to be 10 times the budgeted net. This, despite the challenges presented with disruption of the centralized credentialing Wichita has enjoyed since the early 1990s. In April, Wesley Medical Center responded to a corporate mandate to use the HCA Parallon credentialing for all initial appointments and re-appointments. This was followed by similar news in November of Ascension Via Christi to bring credentialing in house. In response, MPR adopted a plan of reducing staff in centralized verification, increasing staff on the provider enrollment team to accommodate demand, and hiring our first business development officer.

TPOPP

The TPOPP program is designed to improve the quality of care

people receive at the end of life by translating their treatment goals and preferences into the patient’s medical orders. The Steering Committee meets at the MSSC offices bi-monthly. A new TPOPP form in 2022 was created by the Center for Practical Bioethics, and forms will be available at the MSSC offices.

Health & Wellness Coalition

The Health & Wellness Coalition continues to collaborate and coordinate to promote physical activity and good nutrition for all generations living in the greater Wichita area. Continuing the work that began in 2020, the Food System Master Plan was completed and presented to the Wichita City Council and the Sedgwick County Commission. In 2022, a publicly appointed Food Council will strategically look at local healthy food issues. The 16th annual Working Well Conference successfully transitioned to an online format in August, providing tangible ways to engage employees, reinforce best practices, and improve the worksite wellness plan.

Maternal Infant Health Coalition (MIHC)

The MIHC – created in partnership with MSSC – is led by the Kansas Infant Death and SIDS (KIDS) Network, KU School of Medicine-Wichita Center for Research for Infant Birth and Survival (CRIBS) and the Sedgwick County Health Department to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in Sedgwick County by assuring quality preconception and perinatal care and using data-driven, evidence-base practices and quality improvement processes. Throughout 2021, the MIHC met virtually to review local data, learn about local programs and resources, and network. More than 20 participating organizations focused on providing and modifying services delivered during the pandemic including virtual prenatal education, home visitation, Safe Sleep Crib Clinics, tobacco cessation services and breastfeeding education.

MSSC Medical Careers Loan Fund

MSSC provides subsidized low-interest student loans to local medical students and others seeking careers in the medical field. A committee reviews and approves the applications. In 2021, the committee approved loans totaling \$24,000 to four students at KU School of Medicine-Wichita. No interest is charged on the loans while the students are in medical school. A small loan repayment begins during residency. MSSC also provides small, short-term emergency loans to students in need. More information about the loan program is available on the MSSC website, mssconline.org.

EMS Physicians Advisory Committee

The EMS Physicians Advisory Committee provided oversight to the county’s EMS system this past year. It approved protocols and recommended changes to improve system efficiency and appropriate use. MSSC member Dr. Kevin Brinker is currently the interim EMS medical director.

Pharmacy Fraud Hotline

MSSC operates a local hotline for fraudulent prescriptions. Physician offices or pharmacies contact MSSC about a fraudulent script, and MSSC faxes an alert to more than 100 area pharmacies. MSSC sent 40-50 faxes in 2021. The program supplements the state K-TRACS monitoring program.

MSSC NEWS

MEDICAL SOCIETY of
SEDGWICK COUNTY

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The MSSC News is published monthly by the Medical Society of Sedgwick County, Kansas. The Society does not necessarily endorse all the views expressed in this publication.

Managing Editor: Phillip Brownlee, Executive Director

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Thank you for your service

The Medical Society of Sedgwick County thanks the following physicians for serving on the MSSC Board of Directors in 2021:

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President-elect: E. Jeanne Kroeker, MD

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Treasurer: David J. Norris, MD

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Chady Sarraf, MD

Megan A. Dingwall, MD

Mark D. Laudenschlager, MD

Jennifer E. Thuener, MD

MSSC is proud of all its members for the skilled and compassionate care they provide. The COVID-19 pandemic showed again their importance and dedication to our community.

