

Welcome to Our Latest Edition

Our goal is to provide a medium for VA MS professionals to share expertise and improve care for MS patients. We welcome your thoughts, comments, and participation. Please pass this issue along. If you know someone who wishes to be included on the electronic distribution list, forward the email address to the editor.

A Letter from the VA-SIG Chair

Dear VA-SIG Colleague,

The 2008 Annual Conference of Consortium for Multiple Sclerosis Centers will be in Denver, May 28–31. If you have not had the opportunity to attend this meeting before, you should consider attending because the conference is a highly regarded educational event directed to MS health-care providers. Those who have attended in the past have stressed the educational value for clinical care, research support in terms of posters, platforms, and RIGs, and diverse networking opportunities. The conference brochure can be downloaded from the CMSC website, www.mscares.org, for more information.

The financial support from Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and United Spinal Association (USA) to attend the 2008 conference has been reduced from previous years. A joint invitation letter from PVA and USA will be sent to each VAMC director. Please check with your facility pertaining to this letter and your possible nomination. Since there are limited funds available this year, the invitation is on a first-come, first-served basis, open and not restricted to previous attendees. The procedure to secure 2008 funding is as follows:

- 1) With your facility director's concurrence, nominees must submit their name and full contact information to Thomas Stripling, director of Research & Education of Paralyzed Veterans via email at toms@pva.org
- 2) Mr. Stripling will accept and approve nominations on a first-come, first-served basis and respond via email.
- 3) The only exception to this nomination process is that VA-SIG steering committee members (see p. 2) must attend the meeting as their VAMC's representative.
- 4) Once confirmed by return email from Mr. Stripling, the nominee must submit his or her conference registration form and hotel accommodation form to the CMSC. Both forms are contained in the downloadable meeting brochure at www.mscares.org.
- 5) The CMSC will waive the \$250 registration fee for VA nominees approved by Mr. Stripling.

In this Issue:

A Letter from the VA-SIG Chair 1

Continuing Education 3

For this Newsletter:

What would you like to see here?

Please SUBMIT:

- Forum topics
- Clinical questions
- Research topics
- Ongoing MS projects
- QI issues
- Outcome measurements
- Team initiatives
- Announcements

Please contact the VA-SIG*nature* editor, Deborah Downey, NP, at deborah.downey@va.gov.

Continued from page 1

- 6) The CMSC also will provide a two-night hotel voucher for the Hyatt Regency Hotel for VA nominees approved by Mr. Stripling. This non-cash voucher can be picked up at the meeting registration check-in booth in Denver.
- 7) Confirmed nominees will be entitled also to receive conference grant reimbursement of up to \$500. Reimbursement can be applied toward a participant's expenses for only the following items:
 - a. Airfare or auto mileage not to exceed the applicable airfare;
 - b. Hotel room and tax;
 - c. Parking fee only if attendee drove to the conference location.
- 8) Reimbursement request must be submitted to Mr. Stripling on a PVA Business Expense Reimbursement form with receipts no earlier than June 1, 2008. Forms may be obtained from Mr. Stripling.

Nominees can support their conference-related expenses by:

- Booking airline reservations early for a nonrefundable ticket.
- Sharing a room with a colleague.
- Requesting your facility to cover conference expenses.
- Seeking private funds, i.e., local Paralyzed Veterans chapter, local MS chapter.

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For those who wish to attend but are not sponsored by the above grant, a limited number of CMSC scholarships will be available for VA attendees. These scholarships will require submission of an online form to CMSC. The form will be posted on the website in the near future.

On another note, please take a moment to complete a survey pertaining to provider attitudes and knowledge regarding palliative care in MS. The objective is to identify areas for educational interventions. The survey only takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete and your responses provide valuable information. All data will be confidential. The web site is <https://catalysttools.washington.edu/survey/zumsteg/42570>.

Sincerely,

Peggy A. Coffey, MD
VA-SIG Chair
Tampa VAMC

CONTINUING EDUCATION

March is MS Awareness Month. Further info is available on: www.va.gov/ms.

For additional information on CEU conferences, contact angela.young4@va.gov.

MS 2008: MAXIMIZING CARE STRATEGIES

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2008

Hyatt Regency Phoenix

Presented by the National MS Society, Arizona Chapter and Banner Health

An important goal of the National MS Society is to partner with health-care professionals to enhance quality of care for people with MS and promote understanding of such an unpredictable disease. The Arizona Chapter is excited to present for the first time a multi-disciplinary, continuing medical education conference. This one-day conference provides an opportunity to bring together and educate physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, speech language pathologists, and others involved in the search for answers to the complex problems of multiple sclerosis. Six hours of continuing medical education units and continuing education units will be offered.

REGISTRATION FEES:

Physicians: \$150

Allied Health Professionals: \$95

SPECIAL OFFER: If two or more individuals from the same organization register at the same time, their registration fees will be reduced by \$25 per person for physicians or \$10 per person for allied health professional. This offer can only be redeemed by faxing or mailing registration forms together with payment. This offer cannot be redeemed through online registration.

For more information and to register, please visit

<http://nationalMSsociety.org/MS2008> or call 480-968-2488, option 2.