



# SEPPIAN

Spring Issue

The newsletter of the *Society for The Education of Physicians and Patients*

**DARING TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT HEALTH CARE**

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**Seppian**

Spring—2006

## *Lawrence Dunegan Memorial Scholarship Winner Announced*

Dr. Robert Urban, Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, called it close this year, describing many of the 29 applicants for the scholarship as stellar. The winner of this year's first place award is Stefan Sabo, a 17-year-old Charleroi Area High School student, who will be presented with the \$8,000 award (\$2,000 annually) at SEPP's quarterly meeting May 15 at Tambellini's Restaurant along Route 51, Pittsburgh. State representative John Pippy will speak at the meeting which is open to the public as are all SEPP quarterly meetings. Meeting will begin at 7 PM.

Calvin Gruss, of Latrobe, and Kelly Lohr, of Mt. Pleasant, also were named as runners-up. Because of the high quality of the competition for the award this year the scholarship committee elected to honor the runners up with \$1000.

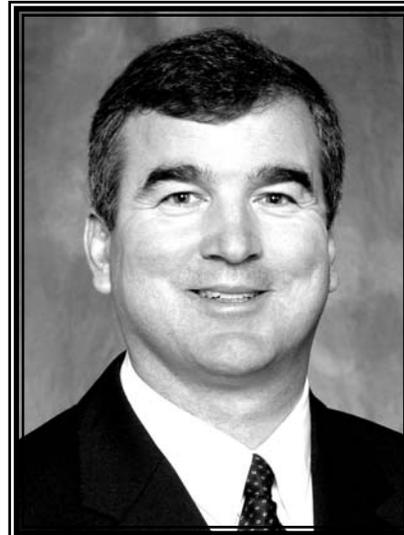
The competition is based on academic performance, extracurricular interests, a written essay, and an interview. The topic for this year's essay was the Federalist Papers. The scholarship committee requires a discussion of critical freedom principles to encourage an increased understanding of the concepts of government envisioned by our Founding Fathers. SEPP considers part of its mission to reinvigorate awareness of those principles as they have been eroded not only in the area of healthcare but in many facets of American life.

Members of the Scholarship committee expressed their great respect for the maturity and accomplishments of so many hard working students. Congratulations Winners!  
(SEE next issue of SEPPIAN for essay and more.)

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## WISHING

*SEPP Member Physician Ready To Fight  
The Freedom Fight*  
By Pete McConnell, MD



My grandma's admonishment "be careful what you wish for," continues to haunt me. All of us recognize and see this as we go about our daily profession of taking care of others. The problem is we did not wish for the things going on around us in the practice of medicine. Feelings of hurt, betrayal, disgust, and anger slowly give way to resentment, lassitude, dismay, and haplessness. There

seems to be many to blame; malpractice attorneys, insurance companies, patient expectations, and naturally us too. Perhaps in some way, it is easier to fault others but I suspect the root cause is more simple yet insidious – our government. Actually, all of us in our country are involved either directly or indirectly in this problem because we allowed the government access into the most personal of professional relationships, the relationship between a doctor and a patient.

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## *State Senator John Pippy to Speak at SEPP Meeting*

John R. Pippy (R) - Will Speak at the quarterly SEPP meeting on Monday, May 15, 2006 at Tambellini's Restaurant on Route 51 South at 7PM He represents District 37 - Allegheny and Washington Counties.

He is a graduate of West Point, 1992, and has served in active duty during the Iraq conflict. Member of House of Representatives 1997 to March 24, 2003; Member of Senate March 24, 2003 to date. State Senator Pippy will be our main speaker as we honor the winner of the Lawrence Dunegan Memorial Scholarship—Stefan Sabo. The dinner meeting at Tambellini's Restaurant on Route 51 South is open to all. Please join us.

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*(Wishing—Continued from page 1)*

My suspicion for this, briefly summarized, is as follows...The King-Anderson Bill initially presented in Congress in 1962 is the origin of much of our present situation. It seems that someone had the brainy idea that there were too many “poor, old” people and they needed health insurance. Hence, Medicare was born two years later. As this effort grew, so did the costs to the point where the government created and funded the upstart HMO businesses of the seventies. Regrettably, that too failed to restrain Medicare's growing fiscal problems so again the government created and funded the establishment of DRG's and RBRVS systems in the eighties. During all of this, both patients and doctors became complacent with the introduction of “others” into the essence of seeking medical care. The impact of this as well as other “innovative improvements” continued unabated and the most fundamental aspect of medical practice changed. Most of us are more familiar with the events of the nineties until present. As medicine became ‘big business’ for the government, everyone else who could put his or her hand in the deep feeding trough of money did just so. This all occurred at the expense of the doctor-patient relationship.

It would seem an almost insurmountable task to reverse any of this, but I would implore you to rethink this position. Elected people still make up our government. Voting is the most basic aspect of our country though many chose not to exercise this privileged right. We, as physicians, along with others involved in the healthcare industry need to be more involved with this process. Most importantly, our opinion, what we say and do in our practice can and does have an impact on others. We cannot remain idle or distant from this process any longer. It is time to begin actively fixing our local community, state, and ultimately the country's difficulties with healthcare. We must do everything in our power to reverse this insidious cancer of complacency with government involvement. Truly, what our Creator provided this great country was an opportunity to glorify Him by our words and deeds. Professionally each of us is intimately knowledgeable of the beauty and marvel at what He created as we go about healing, mending, and consoling our patients. We must work to restore this relationship.

Physician involvement in affairs of this nature is neither uncommon nor unusual. We have a long history of political pursuit well before the inception of our country. During our schooling and long hours of training, we learned to diagnose and treat our patients' problems. More importantly, we developed a unique skill to seek out the truth and correctly answer the problem. We should not approach our current situation any differently. Government is not the answer to society's problems; in fact, it is the cause of most of it. We must involve ourselves because no one else is as uniquely and specifically able to do so. Urge patients to vote. Encourage and persuade their ballot choice in directions that will help restore the patient-physician relationship. Ardently and openly, oppose choices that undermine and erode away at those things that destroy the foundations of our practice. Do not just protest for a day or a week. Actively pursue with renewed purpose those ideals that attracted us to medicine. Do this everyday and with every patient as circumstances allow.

All of us involved in the healthcare industry must realize that the current direction of government interventions in medicine is not sustainable. I realize the system is too big and so full of bureaucracy that no one can stop it, yet its collapse is as inevitable as is the nature of life itself. We must take part in the process that will redirect and set our society back on track. Our patients, families, neighbors, and other professional colleagues look to us for guidance and direction. Do just that! Actively support people and issues that affect medicine and make a difference. Moreover, do not quit trying. With our God given talents coupled with years of being involved in the lives of others, we must set medicine, our state, and the country back on course. We can and must do everything possible to make this happen. Perhaps then, with all our efforts, we can have exactly what we wish for.

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### ***Pioneer of Patient Empowering Health Care Concept In a Tight Race***

Senator Rick Santorum—a long time advocate for patient freedom and pioneer of the simple and powerful concept of Health Savings Accounts finds himself in a tight race as incumbent. Senator Santorum has spoken on numerous occasions to members of SEPP regarding the need for reform to empower patients with their own health dollars and opposed the Clinton plan of socialized healthcare. He has likewise been a staunch advocate for malpractice liability

reform. His continued involvement in efforts to remove bureaucrats from the privacy of patient’s medical lives while endorsing cost effective methods of financing healthcare has won him national respect. He courageously has challenged the trial lawyer establishment to reduce the burden of frivolous litigation and the excess awards that ultimately have impacted the quality of care and access to physicians.

His legislative updates and educational endeavors as part of SEPP educational efforts have been invaluable in helping patients and physicians understand the need to reestablish sound freedom principles in healthcare.



### ***SEPP Sponsors Successful Update on Liability Crisis***

On April 3, 2006 at Mon Valley Hospital, SEPP sponsored another insightful and detailed analysis of the liability crisis. Dr. Robert Urban organized a prestigious triad of expert presenters. Louis Panza, CEO of Mon

Valley Hospital, Jitrenda Desai, M.D.—past president of Pennsylvania Medical Society and energetic proponent for reform; and Andrew Schlafly, attorney and legal counsel for The Association of Physicians & Surgeons, gave a thorough and provocative view of the ongoing crisis. They noted that the Pennsylvania State legislature let die well written legislation and reform. Resistance once again notable with trial lawyer friendly legislators. Mr. Panza reminded us of the serious impact on cost and quality of care and Andrew Schlafly on how physicians can more effectively engage and defend the profession of medicine.

Please check [www.sepp.net](http://www.sepp.net) for upcoming programs and meetings.



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**SEPP—Schedule for Meetings –2006**  
**All meetings at Tambellini's Restaurant**  
**Route 51 South**  
**Time—6PM for Board of Trustees**  
**7PM General Meeting—Open to all**  
**Dinner Meeting**

**Quarterly Meetings**

*Monday May 15, 2006*  
*Monday August 21, 2006*  
*Monday November 20, 2006*

***www.sepp.net***

***S.E.P.P.-Society for the Education of Physicians & Patients***

***A Health Care Professional and Patient***

***Advocacy Organization***

***Protecting and preserving patients and health care professional's  
Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities***

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**Web Site — *www.sepp.net***

**SOCIETY FOR THE EDUCATION OF PHYSICIANS AND  
PATIENTS**

***The mission of The Society For The Education of Physicians and Patients is to promote the education of patients and health care professionals in order to facilitate unencumbered participation in a healthcare system that respects and nurtures patients' and physicians' freedoms, rights, and responsibilities. The Society focuses on the responsibility of the physician as patient advocate and promotes quality medical care by supporting policies that encourage freedom, choice, enhancement of the patient-physician relationship, and fiscal responsibility.***

Mail to: