

Talk to your patients about responsible opioid use.



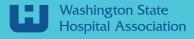
- ✓ **Set expectations:** pain is a normal part of the healing process.
- ✓ Create a pain management plan with your patient.
- ✓ Prescribe the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time.
- √ Talk about safe use of opioids and the importance of following a prescription.
- ✓ Urge patients to lock up their medication.
- ✓ Direct patients to

 MedTakeBackWashington.org

 when they no longer need
 their medications.



Scan to stay informed about opioid prescribing best practices to ensure safe and effective pain management for your patients.







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SCMS Mission

Serving as the guardian of community health and wellness while leading and promoting the professional practice of medicine.

Mark Your Calendar Today for 2026!

JANUARY 23, 2026

Medical-Dental Health & Wellness Business Symposium

MAY 29, 2026 (TENTATIVE)

2026 SCMS Women in Medicine Conference

AUGUST 20, 2026

SCMS GMM & Mixer

SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

SCMS Medicine 2026 CME Conference

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS!

FOLLOW SCMS ON



President's Message



As I near the end of my term as President of the Spokane County Medical Society, I find myself reflecting with pride and gratitude on all that our Society has accomplished over the past year. It has been deeply rewarding to see the growing engagement of our members as we continue to strengthen our community of physicians and physician assistants across Spokane County.

This summer, our SCMS Mixer on the Terrace of the Spokesman-Review Building brought together nearly one hundred attendees in a beautiful setting. The evening provided an excellent opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and to hear directly from state and local legislative representatives from both sides of the aisle. Their shared, nonpartisan commitment to healthcare and to improving quality of life in our communities was truly encouraging. Events like this remind us of the power of collaboration, respectful dialogue, and shared purpose in advancing health for all Washingtonians.

The SCMS House of Delegates Caucus also convened for an in-depth discussion of key resolutions shaping the health of our state. It was especially inspiring to see medical students take an active role in the resolution-writing process, advocating passionately for the causes they care most about. Their engagement offers great hope that, despite the many challenges facing healthcare, the next generation of physician leaders will continue to move our profession forward with integrity and compassion. As the third-largest county delegation at the WSMA Annual House of Delegates meeting in Bellevue, Spokane County once again demonstrated exceptional participation and thoughtful advocacy. I could not be prouder of

how our members continue to represent our region's voice in shaping healthcare policy at the state level.

In October, **SCMS Medicine Conference** featured outstanding speakers covering a wide range of timely topics, from endocrine health to the latest updates in pharmacotherapy. The exchange of ideas and the spirit of camaraderie at this event perfectly reflected the Society's mission to promote education, collegiality, and professional growth.

As I close out my presidency, I encourage you to become more involved by recruiting a colleague, joining the Board of Trustees, or lending your talents to a subcommittee. These groups work tirelessly to deliver exceptional educational and networking opportunities for physicians, PAs, residents, and students. Getting involved is a meaningful way to advance the work of SCMS while connecting with colleagues. If you're interested, please reach out to any member of the Board of Trustees, we'd love to have you join us.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Board of Trustees and to Shelly Bonforti, whose hard work keeps all operations of SCMS running smoothly behind the scenes. Most importantly, thank you to our members, SCMS exists because of you. Together, we will ensure SCMS remains a trusted voice for physicians and a steadfast advocate for promoting the health of our region.



Saima Ahmad, MD 2025 President, SCMS





Membership Recognition for October-December 2025

Thank you to the members listed below.

Their contribution of time and talent has helped to make the Spokane County Medical Society the strong organization it is today.

60 YEARS

Kennard Kapstafer, MD 12/13/19655

20 YEARS

Laura Hotchkiss, MD 12/14/2005

50 YEARS

C. Hollon, MD 10/28/1975 Gerald Olmsted, MD 10/28/1975

10 YEARS

Denise Pounds, MD 10/01/2015 Kristen Senter, PA-C 10/01/2015



<u>Laurence John Wiwatowski, MD</u>

In Memoriam

June – September 2025

(April 1939 - June 2025)

40 YEARS

Marynell Meyer, MD 12/11/1985 George Monkman, MD 11/13/1985 Nanette Smith, MD, MPH 10/17/1985



Thomas Andrew Driscoll, MD

(September 1933 – August 2025)

New Members: July-September 2025

PHYSICIANS

· Claire Brutocao, MD

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

· Jake Loeffler, PA-C

MEDICAL/OFFICE BUILDING FOR LEASE



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MEMBER COLLEGIALITY

The FESTIVAL PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE PA



Works at:

Northside Family Physicians (spokanephysicians.com)

Specialty:

Family practice/internal medicine. I was in neurology for 6 years prior.

Why SCMS:

When I was a new graduate fresh out of PA school, I found this a comfortable and collegial group to gather and learn with. And now at my last stop in medicine decades later I've returned back to a group I know and have comfort with.

Top concern in medicine:

I'm a tad weary of Al. I know for some it's a welcome relief in their work burden but I don't like how it summarizes technical findings as images. But it's early in its infancy in medicine.

Why my specialty:

Well, I started my career in Family practice and then would rotate to cover urgent care with other PA's primarily at that time so I guess I'm coming full circle and back home. Family practice is more holistic and thinking big picture and can assist patients with many aspects of their health psychosocially.

When I'm not at work:

I like to get my steps on a walk and talk with good girlfriends and get coffee or something fun. My husband and I do love outdoor live music concerts, even going to one in Spokane this month, hope the weather holds though.

My go-to activity to unwind:

Walking about Kendall Yards now which is where my husband and I bought to downsize. It's great to be on the Centennial Trail and watch the river. Lots of restaurants and stores about as well to explore and I've taken to biking downtown to do errands in lieu of driving.

What I read:

Well, a lot of prep courses and CME currently. Not as fun but necessary with the fast pace of changes in medicine. But for pleasure, my daughter sent me "Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt. It's fiction but takes place in the Seattle Aquarium and the cleaning lady develops some connection with a sea creature . My daughter purchased the book for me as she knows I'm a fan of the movie, "My Octopus Teacher" documentary.

SCMS Member Highlight

Kristine Wessels, PA

What you might not know about me:

I'm not great with tech but for some reason I could work in neurology doing neuromodulation with pulse width and milli amp easily. That just made sense to me.

Proud moments in medicine:

When my patients give me little notes of thanks or a gift of gratitude as I know for many they are challenged with their own health and social situations and for them to reach out is very endearing. I did like working inpatient at on the neurology/oncology floor and signing out to the neurohospitalists in the evening as my long day would come to an end . That's a tough crew to hang with. I did feel quite a sense of pride when they were satisfied with my notes and calls in the evening at sign off.

Best advice:

I think was from my late mother-in-law who told me at a time of crisis in my life with a dying parent and special needs child and various therapies ongoing daily that ..."maybe I should stop making to do lists." Another I really like is from my sister-in-law is "gentle encouragement." I think we can all apply that in our personal relationships but also with our patients. My first MD I worked with, Jim Shaw, MD, and Jason Aldred, MD, are also very positive with patients.

What's next:

Well, my husband and I are enjoying the benefits of our downsized home and new surroundings in Spokane. It's almost like a reset. Less really does seem to be more in so many ways.







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MEMBER COLLEGIALITY

SCMS GMM & Member Mixer

The Spokane County Medical Society hosted its annual GMM & Member Mixer on August 21, 2025, on the 7th floor terrace of the historic Review Building, erected in 1891 and home of the Spokesman-Review.

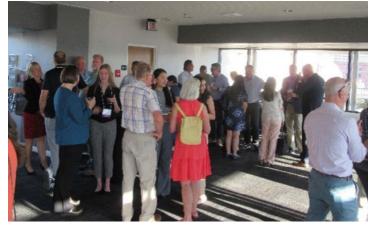
Guests were able to meet WSMA leaders and legislators for Q&A, network with peers, and take in the scenic view of the downtown skyline. With close to 80 in attendance, all enjoyed appetizers and drinks, live music by Kat DeJong, as well as great conversation with colleagues in a relaxed atmosphere. A great time was had by all!

A special thanks to our sponsor for the evening!



Physician Driven, Patient Focused

















River City Youth Ops: River City Youth's Summer Agriculture Internship







This summer, River City Youth brought together twenty remarkable young people for seven weeks of hands-on learning, teamwork, and community impact through our Summer Agriculture Internship. In the heart of Spokane's West Central neighborhood, youth rolled up their sleeves to grow fruits, vegetables, and flowers, care for bees, and build new garden spaces that will continue to nourish our community for years to come. Each week, interns gained valuable skills in teamwork, communication, and leadership while earning a stipend for their dedication and hard work.

The program went far beyond gardening. Youth partnered with local chefs to plan and host community dinners featuring food they harvested themselves, sharing their work and pride with family and neighbors. They also collaborated with partners like Stage Left Theater, 2nd Harvest, and Whitworth University to build garden beds, distribute produce, and connect with Spokane residents across generations. By the end of the season, 19 of the 20 participants had completed the full program, and an impressive 15 immediately applied to continue in our Fall Agriculture Internship.

For many of these teens, this was their first paid job and their first chance to see the tangible results of their effort shaping their own community. They left the program with more than new skills. They left with confidence, friendships, and a sense of belonging. River City Youth is deeply proud of the next generation of leaders growing right here in Spokane's gardens.







For details on the SCMS Foundation, Board Role & Application, and Grant Application, please visit www.spcms.org/spokane-county-medical-society-foundation

Neurodiversity and Neurodivergence: A Review of Emerging Evidence for Current Practices



Katey Treloar, M.Ed – Founder and Coach, Executive Function Coaching

Francisco R. Velázquez, M.D., S.M., FCAP – Health Officer, Spokane Regional Health District



The term "neurodiversity" arose in the 1990s and is generally attributed to the social scientist Judy Singer. Singer, an Australian sociologist and activist, introduced the term "neurodiversity." Her goal was to promote the idea that variations in human brains, particularly those with autism and other conditions, represent natural differences rather than deficits. Singer's concept emerged as part

of her own experience with autism in her family. Rather than treating certain conditions as problems to be corrected, the neurodiversity movement emphasizes the strengths and unique qualities these differences bring to the world. Singer's original intention was to shift the discussion of people who are neurodivergent from deficits and pathology, to one that openly considered different ways of thinking and experiencing the world.

Current literature often uses the terms neurodiversity and neurodivergence interchangeably, leading to an imprecise use of these terms. While neurodiversity refers to neurological variability, neurodivergence indicates differences from suggested norms. A person who is neurodivergent is one whose cognitive functioning differs from what is considered typical. "Neurotypical" refers to individuals whose cognitive development aligns with societal norms. While neurotypical individuals process information in a way considered standard, neurodivergent individuals experience and interact with the world through a different cognitive framework.

Both terms, neurodiversity and neurodivergent, are used to describe a broad variety of conditions such as autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia, and attention deficit disorder (ADHD). Other clinical disorders such as epilepsy, Tourette's syndrome, mania, depression, hallucination, prosopagnosia, migraine, and synesthesia have also been mentioned in the literature.

It is estimated that between 5-30% of the population globally may qualify as neurodivergent. This includes up to 10% of people with dyslexia, 6% with dyspraxia, 5% with ADHD, and 1–2% with autism. Other neurodiverse conditions include dyscalculia and Tourette's syndrome. Often, a person will have more than one type of neurodivergence. For example, about 50-70% of people diagnosed with autism will also have signs of ADHD.

In nearly all cases, the causes are generally unknown and there are no known cures. Neurodivergence is not necessarily a disability, but a difference in how the brain works. It means the person can have different strengths and difficulties compared to those whose brains develop or work more typically.

Challenges can come in the form of reading and writing, social interaction and communication, coordination, motor skills, and learning disabilities. These struggles can cause neurodivergent people to face extraordinary challenges in the workplace. In the worst-case scenario, they can be excluded from society, which can eventually lead to mental health issues. Neurodivergent individuals are at an increased likelihood of poor life outcomes, such as with functional adaptation, poor mental health, and lack of well-being.

But neurodiversity can also bring enhanced capabilities. These may include strong pattern recognition skills, analytical thinking, deep focus, enhanced memory, heightened sensory awareness, creativity pattern recognition, memory, mathematics and visual processing skills.

Providers are likely to be interacting with neurodivergent individuals in a variety of scenarios. Some of these patients can be misdiagnosed with mental health issues due to symptoms overlapping with bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression and/or eating disorder, etc. Medically diagnosed neurodivergent individuals report a high rate of co-occurring psychiatric disorders, such as depression, anxiety, conduct disorder, and substance dependence.

Differences in sensory perception have been reported in some patients which may affect pain management, sleep patterns, and result in routine-change difficulties needed as part of the care plan. Difficulties in independently maintaining organizational routines might affect self-management of medication protocols.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Identifying a condition or conditions, whether it's ADHD, autism, or another neurodivergent condition, is only the beginning. The real work starts after the diagnosis. Simply naming the diagnosis may help a patient but helping them eliminate barriers can help them thrive.

Many advances have been made on what we now refer to as neurodiversity-affirming therapy, which celebrates the differences that make each person unique rather than focusing on how one person differs from what is considered normal. Key attributes of this approach are:

- Respecting individual differences: everyone's brain works differently and there is no right way to think, perceive and process
- •- Self-advocacy: encourage individuals to advocate for their needs
- Strengths-based approach: focus on the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals rather than viewing their challenges and traits as something to be corrected

As providers, you can also play a crucial role in helping patients connect their diagnosis to the real-life challenges that are holding them back. Talk to your patients about how their ADHD or autism may be interfering with their ability to succeed, helping to identify patterns and pain points. Encourage them to name specific struggles, then encourage them to set small, manageable goals. And perhaps the most important message you can offer neurodivergent patients is this: progress is not linear, and transformation doesn't happen overnight. Learning to live well with ADHD or autism takes time, experimentation, and support. As providers, you must hold space for that process, partner with you patients in building a life that truly works for them.





CME Conference, Medicine 2025

The SCMS held their annual all-day CME conference, Medicine 2025, on Friday, October 10, 2025, at Rockwood South Hill Event Center. Attendees joined the meeting to hear from an array of local and regional experts, earning up to 6.5 hours of Category 1 CME credit.

Dr. Laura Fralich and Dr. Kelley Mathia started the morning off, presenting "Sports Medicine Update: Non-surgical Treatment Options for Common Musculoskeletal Injuries" and "Evidence Based Menopause Care – Current Practices" respectively. The morning session concluded with Dr. Grace Lee who lectured on "Gender-Affirming Medical Care for Transgender Adults."

The afternoon session kicked off with "Drug Interactions and Side Effects for 2025" by Dr. Douglas Paauw, followed by "How to Prevent a Mad "T" Party: Application of Recent Clinical Trials of Men with Low Serum Testosterone" from Dr. Brad Anawalt and Dr. Gretchen LaSalle presenting "Navigating the Stormy Seas: Vaccination in our Changing Times."

The conference concluded with "Vitamin D Fallacies" by Dr. Brian Lee. Internal Medicine Resident.

The SCMS thanks all the event supporters for helping make the program a success! ■

















Thank you to our conference supporters!











Reflection on WSMA House of Delegates

By Rebecca Mallo, MD, FACP, FHM 2025 SCMS Secretary-Treasurer

In September, I attended the Washington State Medical Association's (WSMA) annual meeting and House of Delegates (HOD) for the first time. My aim is to share my experience and encourage others to get involved, particularly by joining the Spokane County Medical Society (SCMS).

Until recently, I hadn't fully appreciated the impact of WSMA's and local medical societies' advocacy at both state and federal levels. To be honest, I'd felt I was too busy in my clinical practice to get involved, but serving as Chief Medical Officer for Providence Medical Group, I've now seen firsthand how legislation affects our ability to provide optimal patient care.

My experience at the HOD was enlightening for several reasons. Firstly, it was inspiring to witness the dedication of physicians who craft and evaluate resolutions guiding WSMA's advocacy efforts, as well as see the healthy debate on the resolutions. Secondly, I noticed a significant representation from the west side of the state, which influenced the focus and debate of many resolutions. While some priorities align with our interests, others may adversely affect us. Lastly, I learned that our representation is tied directly to our SCMS membership numbers; a recent decline has reduced our east side voice.



I was proud to see the HOD adopt a resolution to advocate for evidence-based practices rather than strictly following ACIP or CDC guidance, addressing concerns about these groups' composition. Additionally, the resolutions and physician voices committed to protecting vulnerable patient populations and serving communities was encouraging.

I invite you to join the Spokane County Medical Society and consider becoming a delegate next year when the meeting will be in Spokane. You'll find it an inspiring opportunity to unite as a medical community to advocate for our patients.



Creating healthier communities, together.

Thank you for answering the call to care for others. Your steadfast commitment, compassion, and collaboration inspire healthier communities every day.

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Classifieds

MEETINGS/CONFERENCES/EVENTS

SPOKANE PHYSICIAN FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Group support is available for physician family members in Spokane. During times of stress or crisis, whether it involves your spouse, your children or yourself, a listening and confidential ear is often just what physician families need. The group meets in the evening every week. Its members have experience in substance use disorders, behavioral health issues and many other common problems that occur in families. Limited to physician families and their spouses. You are welcome to come to the group as a couple or alone. Contact Carl at (509) 991-3537 or Bill at (509) 710-0636.

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Why SCMS?

"I believe that more than ever, a united physician voice is the most effective method for amplifying and advocating for the needs of our communities and patients."

Rebecca Mallo, MD - Chief Medical Officer,
 Providence Medical Group and
 2025 SCMS Secretary-Treasurer

"It is important to have a strong medical community to support each other professionally and personally and SCMS is helping build relationships between those in the medical field. This is helpful to the individuals but also helps build a robust culture of medical practice and continuing education — which is valuable to the Spokane community."

Michelle Drobny, DO - Program Director
 Spokane Teaching Health Clinic,
 Family Medicine Residency and 2025 SCMS Trustee

"As a physician in Pend Oreille County, our only Medical Society is the SCMS. As a practicing physician there I have appreciated the advocacy and community that the SCMS provides. As a Clinical Dean for the UWSOM, I appreciate the strong advocacy for medical education in Spokane and a creative, collaborative space to develop medical education in our region — both Spokane and in rural areas."

Geoff Jones, MD - Newport Hospital and Health Services;
 University of Washington School of Medicine Clinical Dean; Coulee Medical Center and
 SCMS Medical Education Committee Chair

"I have always valued our medical resources in Spokane, and SCMS does a great job helping to perpetuate these by supporting medical education. I appreciate that SCMS supports our medical community by fostering relationships through education and networking events."

Genevieve Wimberley, PA-C,
 Valley Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Membership Has Meaning and Value

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Join today: members.spcms.org/join

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Email **shelly@spcms.org** for questions or your invoice