



Medical Ethics Newsletter

Catholic Medical Students' Association

Affiliated with the Catholic Medical Association



CMSA Goals:

- To provide guidance and support for medical students.
- To support & nurture spiritual growth and moral leadership.
- To promote education in Catholic physician values.
- To develop community among students entering the medical professions.

Inside this issue:

5th Annual Bioethics Conference Recap	1-2
Protecting Your Conscience	1, 3
A Message from the President of the CMA	4
News and Upcoming Events	4

Protecting Your Conscience

By Matt Bowman

The culture of death is moving aggressively to force participation in its evil practices. Recently the New England Journal of Medicine ran this momentous edict from Dr. Julie Cantor: "Qualms about abortion, sterilization, and birth control? Do not practice women's health."

Ironically, "pro-choice" advocates deny true choice to patients and doctors. A recent poll at Freedom2Care.org shows that nearly 90% of patients believe it is important to be able to choose a doctor who shares their values, and oppose forcing doctors to violate their consciences.

No one knows the pro-choice movement's hostility better than Catholic and other Christian medical students. Students can be vulnerable due to their de-

sire for good grades and the fulfillment of graduation requirements. Moreover, the students can be targeted by the anti-life movement because of the decreasing numbers of providers who are willing to carry out anti-life practices.

Yet medical students who are committed to traditional ethics are not without protection. In fact, now more than ever, there are resources available to help them maintain their integrity and witness. If pro-life medical students unite in their schools, in networks like the Catholic Medical Association, and with pro-life legal organizations like the Alliance Defense Fund, they can learn and strategize to create a medical school environment that protects not only themselves but hundreds of students in years to come.

Several laws protect students who choose
Continued on page 3

5th Annual Regional Bioethics Conference Recap

By Brian J. Burke

Our Lady shined from atop the golden dome of Notre Dame amidst a backdrop of perfect blue as she looked down upon the gathering of Catholics for the 5th Annual Midwest Regional Bioethics Conference held in South Bend, Indiana on May 2nd. This year's gathering was sponsored by a variety of groups from the region, including the Catholic Medical Students Association, and focused on the theme of 'Social Justice and Bioethics', emphasizing the root causes of many societal and health care problems.

The conference opened with an introduc-

tion by Gerald Corcoran, M.D. who emphasized the need for truth in our lives. Without the immutable and transcendent truth, Dr. Corcoran said, we do not have a firm foundation to stand upon when we face difficulties in our lives and our practices. He went on to say that it is this truth that helps us to have a true understanding of love, peace, and justice.

Dr. Corcoran was followed by Eugene Diamond, M.D., who is a past president of the CMA and recently concluded his tenure as editor of the *Linacre Quarterly*. Dr. Diamond spoke on the topic of 'Maternal Deprivation', which is also known in
Continued on page 2



Bioethics Recap: Continued...

psychology as Reactive Attachment Disorder. It was more than simply a representation of the symptoms and etiology, but he also spoke of the natural and supernatural relationship between the mother and child and how each is intrinsically reciprocal to the other, designed to engender a loving relationship. When this relationship is distorted or broken, whether by a mother returning to the work force too early in the child's life or by other external factors, there develops both emotional and behavioral problems that will plague the child in the years to come, and subsequently society. Dr. Diamond emphasized the need to encourage women in their decision to stay home and care for their child and to provide support to those same women. In creating an environment that prevents maternal deprivation, the family can be strengthened, and thus society can benefit.

The afternoon session began with Brian Clowes, Ph.D., who is the director of research and training at Human Life International. His talk focused on the recent controversy concerning the condoms in Africa. This was a very informative and provocative talk as he addressed the racist roots of population control and the ideology behind the current HIV prevention attempts promoted by the international pro-death groups. Dr. Clowes was able to show how the push to use condoms as a preventative for HIV has only resulted in the increase in HIV/AIDS in the developing countries, citing statistics from the U.N. and WHO. One poignant case he presented was the difference between Thailand, which emphasizes condoms, and the Philippines, which emphasizes abstinence and monogamy. The numbers are striking. Both countries only had a little over 100 cases in 1987, and now Thailand has over a million cases of HIV/AIDS and the Philippines only 3000. His talk helped to reiterate that the problems of HIV/AIDS will not go away until the effective methods of prevention are recognized.

Following Dr. Clowes, the participants heard from the experiences of Christopher McIntire, D.O. who spends much of his free time serving the poor in Haiti and Bosnia. It was a powerful talk that stirred the depths of the heart and reminded the listeners that each individual is a missionary, whether in their private practice or in the most remote village. The last talk was given by A. Patrick Schneider M.D., M.P.H., who spoke about the effects of cohabitation on both the individual and society. Dr. Schneider laid out ten concise yet powerful facts about cohabitation. These focused on how cohabitation leads to more unstable relationships that increase the risk of violence for both the woman and any children present in the relationship, as well as the impact on society, including increased poverty and higher rates of incarceration among those who cohabitate.

Rather than speaking about ways to put a band-aid on a gushing wound, this conference brought together speakers who are attempting to address the underlying issues that create the inequality present in our society. It is not about funding more programs but about the strengthening of traditional families. As physicians, there is an obligation to recognize that the health of our patients can be negatively affected by these behaviors. The conference provided a stepping stone for the participants to go forth and be missionaries within their respective professions.

Brian Burke is the VP of Communications for the CMSA and a second year medical student at the University of Toledo College of Medicine.

The Hippocratic Oath is the best summary of medical ethics thus far articulated.

This oath is a tradition which should be exemplified by every physician.



CMSA Protecting Your Conscience: Continued...



not to participate in anti-life practices. Specific federal laws require the respect of conscience rights, and many medical schools must comply because they receive federal fund-

ing. Even though the Obama administration is prepared to remove regulations that helped enforce these laws, the underlying laws will still exist (for now).

At the state level, many laws protect the conscientious practice of medicine, and some of these laws are even more protective than the federal statutes. Wisconsin, for example, prohibits discrimination against anyone, explicitly including students or doctors, for refusing to participate in abortion. Some state courts strongly protect the freedom of religion under their state constitution, so that the consciences of students in public medical schools cannot be violated without very compelling reasons.

The Federal Constitution also protects students at public medical schools. The First Amendment's freedom of speech protects students against being required to affirm or adopt beliefs that violate their religious faith. Although the courts have scaled back on the First Amendment's protection for freedom of religion, there may still be schools that unconstitutionally target religious students for their beliefs. This is why the Alliance Defense Fund has represented several graduate students in social work whose schools required them to affirm the legitimacy of homosexual activity.

How these laws will apply to medical students is going to depend in a large part on specific situations. Medical students may encounter difficulties in an obstetrics clinical rotation or residency, where schools often impose unreasonable abortion opt-out requirements. Some students may even face bad reviews or grades for expressing their beliefs, or not affirming pro-abortion positions. It is possible that some schools may adopt policies that illegally restrict conscientious objection or unlawfully discriminate against Christian or pro-life organizations.

Medical students who find themselves in this situation should contact a pro-life attor-

ney. Alliance Defense Fund attorneys have represented the Catholic Medical Association, the Christian Medical Association, and/or the American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in various court cases, and have also assisted individual health professionals and medical students to help protect their rights. ADF attorneys and other pro-life experts are available to speak to student groups or a student body about life and ethics issues. ADF attorneys can be reached at 1-800-TELL-ADF, or by email at mbowman@telladf.org.

The anti-life movement, though it claims to be "pro-choice," is engaging in a war against medical choice. If they have their way, pro-life women will be forced to have their babies delivered by doctors who also perform abortions, because there will not be any other doctors left. But Catholic and other pro-life medical students need to know that they are not alone. There is support and resources from medical and legal organizations that will work to protect and defend the right of medical students to maintain the sanctity of human life in their academic and professional careers.

Matt Bowman is an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund and can be reached at mbowman@telladf.org



Please join our new
Facebook community!



Affiliated with the Catholic Medical Association



Serving God and man

ON THE WEB AT
WWW.CATHMSA.ORG

Catholic Medical Students' Association
 P.O. Box 214
 Oak Park, IL 60302
 Email: info@cathmsa.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

CATHOLIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

78th Annual National Conference:
 "The Theology of Suffering,
 Bringing Faith, Hope, and Love to the Art of
 Healing"

October 22-24, 2009 in *Springfield, IL*
 Scholarships for medical students are available through the
 CMA. For more information or to register online visit:
WWW.CATHMED.ORG

A Message from the President-Elect of the CMA

On Friday afternoon of our conference, October 23, 2009, we will have our Annual Business Meeting from 3:30-5:30 PM. During this two hour period, we have tentatively scheduled a special session for Medical Students:

Friday, October 23, 2009

3:30-5:30 PM Special Session for Medical Students:

3:30-4:15 PM Nicole Shirilla, "Padre Pio and the Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza, San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy"

4:15-5:00 PM Kim Hardey, M.D. "How God Used Suffering to Change a Doctor's Heart"

5:00-5:30 PM Q&A

I think the students will find both presentations to be very timely and stimulating. Nicole Shirilla is a medical student at the University of Pittsburgh who has been to San Giovanni Rotondo, a hospital where Padre Pio was, and Dr. Hardey has a moving story about his personal conversion as a Catholic obstetrician and gynecologist practicing in Louisiana.

In Christ,

Leonard P. Rybak, M.D., Ph.D.
 President-Elect Catholic Medical Association

NEW MEMBERS

We encourage students to join the Catholic Medical Association.
 For Registration & Membership Information,
 Call 1-215-877-9099 or visit WWW.CATHMED.ORG