



Topline

Newsletter of the Tennessee Medical Association

Issue
07

Jan./Feb. 2021



**Rapid Test Kits
Available
Through TMA**

Page 4.

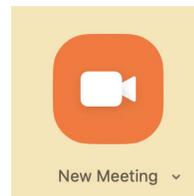
What's Inside



Doctor's Day on the Hill

TMA's annual event will be held virtually this year on March 3.

Page 2.



Recap: Jan. Meeting of the Board of Trustees

A brief overview of the Q1 meeting, which included legislative and advocacy priorities, new member recruitment and more. **Page 6.**



TMA 2021 Leadership Elections

Voting is now open for the 2021-2022 leadership elections. See the candidates. **Page 3.**



TMEF Accepting Scholarship Applications

The nonprofit is now accepting scholarship applications through April 15. **Page 3.**

FROM *the* PRESIDENT

As the Tennessee Medical Association once again conducts our leadership elections in February, my focus as your President turns to our history and our future as the voice of Tennessee physicians.

Organized medicine started in Tennessee two hundred years ago on March 5th, 1821, when seven Nashville physicians met in the log courthouse on the Public Square to form an organization of formally-trained medical doctors which would be called the Nashville Medical Society. Their purpose was to distinguish medical doctors from other practitioners who claimed to have healing skills without a medical school education.

Their first act was to elect Dr. Felix Robertson as President and Dr. James Roane as Secretary; their second act was to adopt a minimum fee schedule that they all agreed to use for services. Nine years later, six of them were charter members of the new Medical Society of Tennessee when it was created in 1830 with Dr. Roane elected the first President; Dr. Robertson was the second elected President in 1834 (after Dr. Roane had died in the Nashville cholera epidemic in 1833).

Every year since, the TMA has met annually (except for the years during the Civil War), first as an annual meeting of all members, and since 1903 as a House of Delegates elected from all the component societies (even during the influenza pandemic of 1918). Last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person session of the House of Delegates had to be cancelled for the first time. Our TMA Bylaws state in Chapter III, Section 2 that “The House of Delegates shall meet annually at the time and place of the annual meeting of the Association” as determined by the Board of Trustees and “any additional House of Delegates meeting other than the annual meeting may be conducted by electronic means.”

This means that the annual meeting of the HOD must be in person at the time and the place set by the Board and

cannot be held electronically. Thus, we cannot hold the annual HOD virtually or at multiple locations connected by electronic means (like Zoom).

Our predecessors purposefully determined that the annual HOD would meet in person while other meetings could be held by electronic means and they likely did this for a very important reason. As an Association we need to gather face-to-face annually to keep our sense of unity and connection and to deliberate together the direction and policies of our organization.

As the COVID pandemic starts to decline and as we are all vaccinated, we look forward to meeting again in person this year and conducting the business of the House. In addition, we need to show our patients and our fellow Tennesseans that, with the vaccine, we can begin a safe return to normalcy and put this pandemic in the books of history.

In January, your TMA Board of Trustees determined that, while virtual attendance will be allowed, only Delegates who attend the HOD will be allowed to vote (consistent with our Bylaws). We will monitor case counts and consider the best month to safely conduct the HOD meeting in person this year to conduct our business and represent our membership.

In the meantime, please get your COVID vaccinations (if you have not already) and encourage all your patients, family, and friends to do the same. Consider serving as a Delegate to the HOD when we meet this year. And, if you can, please identify colleagues who might join their voices with our TMA using our discounted new membership rates this year. Together, we can keep Tennessee a great place to practice medicine and provide optimal care for our patients in the next 200 years.



M. Kevin Smith, MD, PhD | 2020-2021 President



Doctor's Day on the Hill is March 3

It's that busy time of the legislative season when lawmakers, TMA member physicians and staff all wish they could be in two different places at once.

Fortunately, the 2021 edition of Day on the Hill will allow just that.

On Wednesday, March 3, use Zoom video conferencing to ascend Tennessee's Capitol Hill for our annual policy briefing and lobby day in Nashville. Registration is required for the 11:30 am to 12:30 pm CST event; participants can log on beginning at 11:15 am CST.

This year, the General Assembly has declined large, in-person group lobbying events, so TMA will visit with lawmakers via small group breakout discussions on Zoom.

While the online format is different this year, the overall concept remains the same: We will connect member physicians directly with lawmakers, as always. Past Day on the Hill events have involved the better part of a day, but this year's will shrink to a dynamic 60-minutes, with approximately 30 minutes dedicated to the issues most important to TMA members, such as scope of practice, balance billing and GME funding.

Invitations have been extended to all 133 legislators, and hundreds of physicians are expected to participate.

Please visit TNmed.org/dayonthehill to RSVP. A Zoom link, password and login information will be sent by email after you have registered. We hope you enjoy this year's format, and we look forward to hosting in person in 2022.

TMEF Now Accepting 2021-2022 Scholarship Applications

The Tennessee Medical Education Fund (TMEF) is now accepting applications for its 2021-2022 scholarships through April 15.

Thanks to growth of the overall endowment in 2020, the Foundation plans to increase 2021-2022 scholarship awards by \$36,000 to total \$180,000. This means TMEF will be able to award more scholarships to students than prior years. As many as 15 additional scholarships could be approved at the board's April meeting. For the 2020-2021 academic year, 53 medical students received scholarships, totaling \$144,000.

Ultimately, TMEF's goal is to grow the endowment by \$1 million in investments in order to award even more scholarship opportunities in the future.

TMEF is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. Founded in 1963, and was designed to provide scholarships to students enrolled in accredited medical schools in the state of Tennessee.

Scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per year and are awarded based on need, without regard to course of study, academic performance or school year. Funds are restricted for medical school expenses only and are disbursed directly to the school where the applicant is enrolled.

Schools with scholarship beneficiaries include University



TMEF
Tennessee Medical Education Fund

of Tennessee Health Science Center, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, East Tennessee State University James H. Quillen College of Medicine, Meharry Medical College and LMU-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine.

A portion of your TMA membership fee is donated to TMEF to contribute to the scholarship, so we thank you for your contribution. If you'd like to make an additional donation, visit [TNmed.org/tmef](https://tnmed.org/tmef) for more information.

Medical schools have informed students of this opportunity, but if you know if a student who would like to apply, they can go to [TNmed.org/scholarship](https://tnmed.org/scholarship) to view the requirements. To apply, visit [TNmed.org/scholarshipapplication](https://tnmed.org/scholarshipapplication). Scholarship recipients will be notified between May and June via the email address provided on their application.

Contact TMA's Director of Leadership Programs and Education Beth Lentchner at Beth.Lentchner@tnmed.org with any questions.

Member Resources

Professional Services Providers to Benefit TMA Members

You need help in your office and you need someone fast. If only you knew someone who could hit the ground running, and had already earned your trust.

Well, now you do. TMA has partnered with accounting and business consultant **LBMC**, a highly-respected single source provider of services specifically designed with physicians in mind. LBMC's tailored packages support your practice's unique needs. Physicians will find services are customizable yet coordinated and all from a single provider, including:

- Advisory and Business Consulting
- Audit & Assurance
- Human Resources and Recruiting
- Information Security
- Procurement
- Tax
- Technology
- Practice Valuation

TMA members receive a 5% discount on services. Contact LBMC's Director of Growth **Kimberly Mitchell** at (615) 309-2377 or kimberly.mitchell@lbmc.com for more information.

New Cyber Security Partner

With cyber threats on the rise, TMA has partnered with **Sera Brynn**, a cyber security firm, to give members a 50% discount on their program CHECKLIGHT™. CHECKLIGHT™ is an innovative endpoint monitoring service that combines state-of-the-art security technologies, threat intelligence, an insurance-backed cyber threat warranty and Sera-Brynn consulting expertise. TMA members can choose from a variety of subscription license sizes, from one to 64 devices.

Visit sera-brynn.com/checklight/tma for more specifics and for a special discount code. Contact TMA's Director of Member Services **Christy Reeves** at (615) 460-1669 or christy.reeves@tnmed.org with questions or to request more information.

Rapid Test Kits Available through TMA

TMA is making COVID-19 antibody rapid test kits available to members. Interested CLIA-approved practices can order immediately.

The COVID-19 IgG/IgM Rapid Result Test is an FDA EUA approved lateral flow immunochromatographic assay designed to detect SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in human blood, serum or plasma specimens. Results are produced in 10 minutes, and these point-of-care tests are 98% accurate.

TMA has partnered with 11:11 COVID Project to provide members with a discounted price of \$15 per test kit; non-members can purchase kits for \$25 each. Tests come in boxes of 20, with minimum orders of 5 boxes (\$300/\$500).

Each kit contains one COVID-19 IgG/IgM Rapid Test cassette, a disposable pipet, a disinfectant wipe, a sample dilution buffer and instruction manual. Orders are shipped overnight to reach their final destination faster.

To place an order, visit [TNmed.org/RapidTest](https://tnmed.org/RapidTest); for questions, contact Christy Reeves at (615) 460-1669 or Christy.Reeves@tnmed.org.

A Member Perspective

TMA member Dr. James Cates first discovered these tests in fall 2020: “We knew the vaccine was coming out, but it would be a while before everyone could receive it.



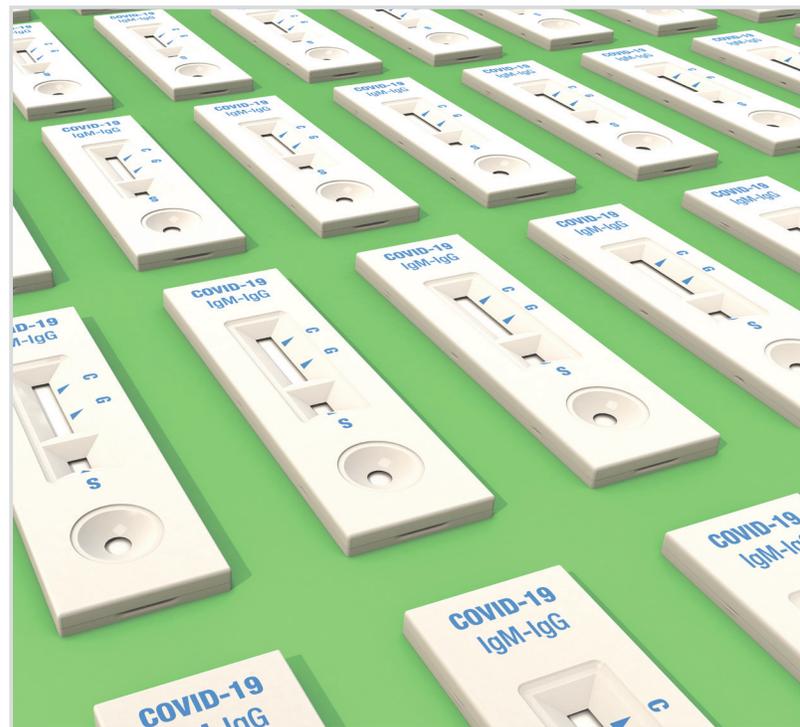
Around mid-September, my staff and I came across this kit. It was the only one we found that was FDA EUA approved due to its specificity and sensitivity. So we acquired the test kits, and even sent some tests that we took to an outside lab to verify the results. We discovered that the test was extremely reliable.”

Dr. Cates believed more physicians needed to know about these reliable kits, and presented them at a TMA Board of Trustees meeting.

“TMA has a leadership role in the community,” Dr. Cates said. “I felt there was an essential avenue that TMA could provide members to strengthen their practices.”

Helping Tennessee Return to Normal

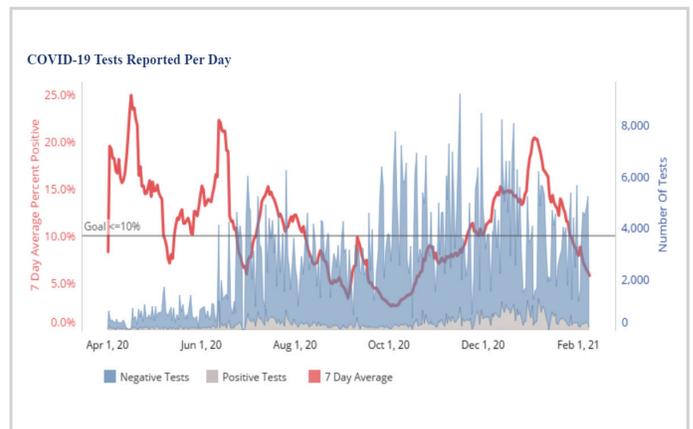
While experts agree that simply having antibodies does not guarantee immunity, tests that distinguish between IgM and IgG can indicate how recent a person was infected with



SARS-CoV-2, and whether they might be less susceptible to infection. Such tests could also help prioritize who should receive vaccinations first, as well as potential donors for convalescent plasma therapy.

“Right now, we know antibodies from the (vaccine) can last at least 3 to 4 months,” Dr. Cates said. “But we’re finding some patients who were COVID positive can have antibodies for almost 6 months or more. I felt like we needed a test to regularly confirm that people have antibodies.”

“The ability to find out your results in minutes gives you peace of mind,” said Dr. Cates.



COVID-19 tests reported per day in Davidson County by the TDOH.

Vote Now for Your Next TMA Leaders

Voting for **TMA's 2021-2022 leadership elections** is ongoing through 5:00 pm Sunday, Feb. 28. All physician members and veteran members in good standing are eligible to vote.

This election will secure your next President-Elect, four seats for the Judicial Council and four more for the Board of Trustees. To vote, visit [TNmed.org/elections](https://tnmed.org/elections).

Your 2021-2022 nominees include:

President-Elect

Edward Capparelli (uncontested).



The President-elect serves as president of the Association during the following year, and as the official spokesperson on important medical issues with the media. This member also meets with state and federal governmental officials regarding medical policy and the position of the TMA. The President-elect serves on the Board of Trustees

for three years, one each as President-elect, President and then Immediate Past-President. This position also serves as chairman of the Board's Executive Committee.

Judicial Council

Dr. Claude Pirtle, Jackson, Region 2

Dr. Robin Williams, Nashville, Region 4

Dr. J. Mack Worthington, Chattanooga, Region 6

Dr. Howard Herrell, Greenville, Region 8

Councilors investigate matters of alleged improper conduct and sit on the Judicial Council, which has the power to censure, expel, suspend or take other action against officers or component medical societies via formal disciplinary action. Regional Councilors also help component medical societies maintain their viability in the region.

Board of Trustees

Dr. Joseph Eugene Huffstutter, Chattanooga, Region 6

Dr. Lee Berkenstock, Cordova, Region 1

Dr. Amy Suppinger, Franklin, Region 3

Dr. Landon Combs, Gray, Region 8

The Board of Trustees determines the policy and details of management of the Association between meetings of the House of Delegates. The Board makes decisions over the expenditure of the funds and carries out the responsibilities and directives given to it by the House of Delegates.

Your IMPACT is Significant

Perhaps the unprecedented fundraising haul in the 2020 Presidential race stole both dollars and attention from local races this year. Maybe it was yet another impact of COVID-19, which sowed uncertainty across the industry throughout the entire last year.

Whatever the reason, TMA's political action committee (called IMPACT), had an uncharacteristically soft year.

IMPACT was established to financially support candidates who understand the challenging issues facing organized medicine and indeed its success in this arena is impressive. Of the 87 political candidates that IMPACT supported in Tennessee last year, 85 won their races—taking its lifetime winning record to 97.7%.



Please take a moment to consider how crucial it is to have elected officials who understand and support our critical issues. If you're inspired to help us find and retain such advocates in Tennessee's General Assembly, we would welcome you into our Capitol Hill Club, Advocate Club or Sustaining Member group as a generous donor this year. Visit [TNmed.org/IMPACT](https://tnmed.org/IMPACT) for more information.

IN MEMORIAM

We offer our prayers and deep gratitude for all passing members. Their positive impact on their patients and profession will last forever.

Walter C. Beahm, MD, age 91, of the Knoxville Academy of Medicine on Dec. 17, 2020.

Charles Abraham Fish, MD, age 78, of the Washington-Unicoi-Johnson County Medical Society on Jan. 26, 2021.

Trustees Approve 2021 Budget, Ongoing COVID-19 Initiatives and New Member Recruitment Efforts at Q1 Board meeting

The Board of Trustees convened its first meeting of 2021 on Jan. 16 to affirm the course of numerous TMA initiatives, including the organizational budget, legislative and advocacy priorities, new member recruitment and our ongoing work involving COVID-19.

The promise of COVID vaccinations factored into a tentative date for the next in-person House of Delegates meeting in May. Plans are to offer a virtual viewing option for those unable or uncomfortable to attend in person. Other highlights of the Jan. 16 meeting include:

- The 2021 annual budget was approved with ongoing appreciation to **Dr. John McCarley** and the **Finance Committee** for guiding our resources so well during the pandemic. Dr. McCarley reported we concluded 2020 roughly even on the year, despite an overall tumultuous fiscal year.
- The Board approved a bylaw amendment to clarify that Resident and Fellow members are not eligible to vote in TMA elections. The clarifying amendment will be submitted to the House of Delegates in May.
- A block grant waiver was passed by the State Legislature

recently, which requires the state to draft a new formula to draw down federal matching funds for GME.

- TMA is offering a free COVID-19 vaccine education CME video. Our collective focus for coming months remains in publicizing and encouraging the vaccine options, and getting patients access they need.
- The 2021 new member recruitment is utilizing new approaches with segmented messaging and a greater reliance on email personalization to increase engagement with non-members.
- **Dr. Michael Baron** of the Tennessee Medical Foundation reported an uptick in referrals for substance abuse, anxiety, etc. since the start of the pandemic. He said their recently launched screening tool is being utilized.
- Julie Griffin, Vice President of Legislative Affairs, reported the 2021 **IMPACT (PAC)** has launched its new fundraising season. She advises that IMPACT will be among the best funded and most powerful PACs on Capitol Hill, challenging every member to contribute \$100. IMPACT will change its name to **TMAPAC** starting in 2022.

RESULTS IN

10 Minutes

ACCURACY

98%



COVID-19

IgG/IgM Rapid Test Kit

- ✓ Easy operation for Medical Professionals
- ✓ Works with whole blood, serum, and plasma
- ✓ Tests for 2 antibodies simultaneously
- ✓ No special equipment
- ✓ Instant field screening

The 11:11 COVID Project offers COVID-19 IgG/IgM Rapid Test kits that provide results 10-minutes. It is an instant point-of-care test device for the qualitative detection of IgG and IgM antibodies specific to 2019-nCoV in human whole blood, serum or plasma specimens. FDA EUA Approved.

www.TNmed.org/RapidTest



Contact

(989) 450-8800
info@1111covidproject.com

Legal Briefs

ABN Form CMS-R-131

Due to COVID-19 concerns, CMS extended the deadline for use of the renewed ABN Form CMS-R-131. The renewed ABN was required to be used beginning Jan. 1, 2021. The ABN form and instructions are located at www.cms.gov.

Collaborating Physician Toolkit

These practice guidelines were developed by TMA for the convenience of its members who collaborate with, or contemplate collaborating with, APRNs, either in a medical office or retail clinic. The guidelines were developed from Tennessee law and the rules promulgated by the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners and the Tennessee Board of Nursing. TMA has made comments and suggestions in italics about some of the rules. These comments should not be considered as official positions of either regulatory board or as legal advice. They are practical suggestions to assist the office in delivering meaningful collaboration and quality care. The toolkit is available at TNmed.org/legal.

Provider Relief Fund Reporting

Any physician receiving a payment of more than \$10,000 from one of the Provider Relief Funds will have to submit a report to the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS). Reports must be filed by Feb. 15, 2021 on expenditures made through Dec. 31, 2020. If you do spend all of the money you received by Dec. 31, a second report must be filed by July 31, 2021. TMA's resource COVID-19 Loans and Financial Information at TNmed.org/coronavirus contains more information regarding the reporting requirements.

ERISA Toolkit

For many providers, the prospect of dealing with health plans subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, or ERISA, is a bleak one. ERISA requirements apply to most employment-sponsored and self-funded group health plans, which means that any patients who receive their health insurance through some type of employer contribution fall under ERISA. The regulations are complex, and many health plan administrators actively try to work around the requirements. However, providers can actually use ERISA requirements to their advantage when trying to get claims paid. The TMA Legal Department has developed a series of resources, including forms and sample letters, for providers to use at TNmed.org/ERISA.

Legal Department

Member physicians or their staff may contact the Legal Department at legal@tnmed.org or (615) 460-1645 to pose questions related to the legal/regulatory side of the

practice of medicine or seek guidance regarding practice management issues. Some recent topics members have asked us to research:

- A review of a practice's informed consent form and provide suggestions on the appropriate content.
- Whether or not the non-custodial parent of a child had the ability to consent to a medical procedure for the parent's minor child.
- What a practice is required to do with money it owes to a deceased patient.

TMA 401(k) Member Retirement Plan

Did you know that as a member of TMA, you, your partners and staff are eligible to participate in TMA's 401(k) Multiple Employer Member Retirement Plan? The program offers a number of key benefits for you and your practice, including:

-  Substantial savings on program administrative fees
-  Elimination of an annual audit requirement and reduce fiduciary responsibility of physicians in the practice
-  Safe harbor provisions to allow greater contribution limits
-  Complete flexibility in plan design and profit sharing
-  Assistance from certified investment specialists

How It Works

The TMA Multiple Employer 401(k) does all the heavy lifting for your practice. You maintain plan flexibility, while professionals manage investments, participant education and due diligence. You practice medicine, we manage your retirement plan.

Contact Kevin Rainwater

866.893.4103
krainwater@acgwealth.com



701 Bradford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Move forward with us at
www.svmic.com

When a problem occurs, you need a proactive partner that can navigate unforeseen challenges and help you solve the tough legal issues that come with practicing medicine. In our collaborative claims process, our in-house attorneys and our roster of local defense attorneys help you – our valued members – to be ready for what lies ahead.

We have your
back,
so you can move
forward.

