



GEORGIA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEORGIA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, INC. INTRODUCES ITS NEW PRESIDENT

Cairo family physician Dr. Linda I. Walden is the new president of the Georgia State Medical Association. Walden was installed during the group's 121st Annual Convention and Scientific Assembly at the Omni Oceanfront Hilton Head Resort June 12.

"We are excited about her reign, although there will be healthcare challenges for physicians, we think we've chosen a great leader," says Dr. Sylvester McRae, an obstetrician/gynecologist from Columbus who sits on the association's board of directors and is a past president of the group.

The Georgia State Medical Association was founded in 1893, and is the second largest African American state medical association in the United States; it is an affiliate of the National Medical Association.

Dr. Gloria Frelix, a radiation oncologist in North Carolina and a region chair for the National Medical Association, was at Walden's installation service in Hilton Head. Frelix says Walden and the state medical association will be in close communication with Georgia legislators about the condition of communities. She says the association encourages mentoring, also, to shore up the frailty of families. "We want to be role models to let kids know they too can become a doctor. A lot of kids feel the quick and easy money is best," Frelix says. She says Dr. Walden and others in the association can help fill in the knowledge gaps for parents and teach them about healthy lifestyles and the importance of education.

Dr. McRae says Walden will serve the association well, because of where she practices, "Typically, physicians who are in rural practices have a passion for taking care of every person. She takes that passion of purpose from her practice to our organization. The result is that when things occur that affect the practice of medicine she will be the voice for all patients not just affluent patients." Dr. Frelix also expresses confidence in Walden, saying, "I think she's a very straightforward, up front person and is very skilled in her field and is highly liked and accepted in her community, and that says a lot for Dr. Walden." Walden will serve a two-year term as association president, and she outlined her agenda during an inaugural address titled, "A Changing Paradigm in Healthcare; With God, Georgia State Medical Association will Make a Difference." She made the speech during an awards dinner, which was preceded by an inaugural reception attended by many guests on hand in honor of the occasion. In her address, Walden stressed "the importance of physicians becoming politically proactive with health policies and helping to bring about access to healthcare to all citizens of Georgia."



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She said, "While the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has made it possible for many to get access to healthcare, the poor are still left out and can't get Obamacare because federal dollars given to the State of Georgia to cover their healthcare has been refused by our state government. So many of the poor will die prematurely. This is America and no State should be doing this to its citizens. When we improve access to healthcare for all citizens, we improve the economy of our state....Georgia State Medical Association is about promoting Health and disease prevention not a political football game."

Dr. Walden said keeping the association vibrant is important, "We must recommit and strengthen our voice by increasing our membership for there is power in numbers and will push for all African American physicians to become actively involved with the GSMA. When we weaken the voice of GSMA, we weaken the voice of our community. More physicians need to become hospital CEO's because we better than anyone else know what needs to be done when it comes to the healthcare in our communities." Of the 35,000 physicians in Georgia, she said only about 1,200 are African Americans, and she said fostering an interest in medical studies among youth is important. Walden said she mentors her pediatric patients and rewards their academic successes with job shadowing opportunities in her office. She voiced concern about dropouts who leave high school, and said success will be found when groups work together and include the church. She said, "the greatest success in life is not about how much we are acquire but our greatest success is our service to God. God uses each of us to make a difference in the world and that is my mission in life!"

Walden, a family physician, is medical director of Cairo Family Medical Center, Inc., in Cairo.

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For additional information or to speak with Dr. Linda Walden, please call 404-752-1564 or go to www.gsmanet.org. Email contact can be made by clicking on the "Contact Us" link.