

# MD Spirit

Fascinating, Fun and Feel-Good Stuff  
From Life in Medicine

**"First the doctor told me the good news: I was going to have a disease named after me."**

—Steve Martin

## Paying Tribute to Retiring Doctors

Now there's a new benefit for retiring doctors beyond having flexibility to travel and freedom from the pager—it's a unique financial bonus. The Doctors Company, a Napa-based medical malpractice insurance carrier, has introduced the Tribute Plan, a program that rewards retiring physicians for their loyalty to the company and for their commitment to outstanding patient care.

"The Tribute Plan is a significant reward that underscores The Doctors Company's mission to advance and protect the practice of good medicine," says Richard E. Anderson, MD, FACP, chairman and CEO. "As a member-owned, doctor-led organization, we believe that if we work together to promote outstanding patient care and keep claims low, we all win."



The plan uses a loyalty pool to reward members. A portion of the balance is allocated to each physician annually based on that physician's premium. Members receive their Tribute Plan award when they reach age 55 or older, have five or more years of continuous coverage with The Doctors Company, and retire from the practice of medicine. Lump-sum payments can range from \$20,000 to \$360,000, according to the company. Visit [www.thedoctors.com/tribute](http://www.thedoctors.com/tribute).

## Teaching Compassion Virtually

Can physicians learn something about patient care from a computer game? At least one hospital is betting so.

Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C., commissioned the creation of "Anatomy of Care," a Web-based training program designed to improve the way healthcare providers and staff respond to difficult situations. The game demonstrates how staff actions affect patient care and the hospital's image.

Participants choose one of five characters to role play (doctor, nurse, clerical staff, patient transporter and environmental service worker) at a fictional metropolitan hospital. Learners are then presented with stressful slice-of-life scenarios in which they

must make tough decisions and live out the consequences of their actions. According to the hospital, successful navigation of the game requires honest compassion, sensitive interpersonal dealings and clarity of values.

"What 'Anatomy of Care' is really about is being able to see the world through the eyes of one another," says Mark Smith, MD, chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine. The game was created by WILL Interactive Inc., a company that offers virtual experience behavior-modification games.



> Meet Dr. Klinger, the physician character in the Web-based game "Anatomy of Care," which is designed to enhance patient care.

## Medical Humor

Is your funny bone broken? Consult *Placebo Journal* to set the break.

This bimonthly publication includes medical levity ranging from humorous articles to hysterical real-life stories submitted by physicians. It also features laughable graphics, such as a product page offering drug piñatas for sale. "Patientisms" are good for a giggle as well. The journal was founded by Doug Farrago, MD, a family physician in Maine. He writes, "Like a placebo pill, our journal produces a positive effect from something of very little substance." Check out [www.placebojournal.com](http://www.placebojournal.com).



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**46%** of all births in California are paid for by Medi-Cal.

—Medi-Cal Facts and Figures, 2007

## Gotta Wear Shades

Dermatologists have gotten out their message about sunscreen widely. Ophthalmologists now have a similar opportunity. July is UV Safety Month, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology is working to raise awareness about sun damage to eyes. Studies show that exposure to bright sunlight may increase the risk of developing cataracts, age-related macular degeneration and growths on the eye, including cancer. Remind patients to wear sunglasses with UV protection and a hat with a brim whenever they are outside.

IF YOU HAVE AN ITEM OR PHOTO FOR MD SPIRIT, SEND TO:

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