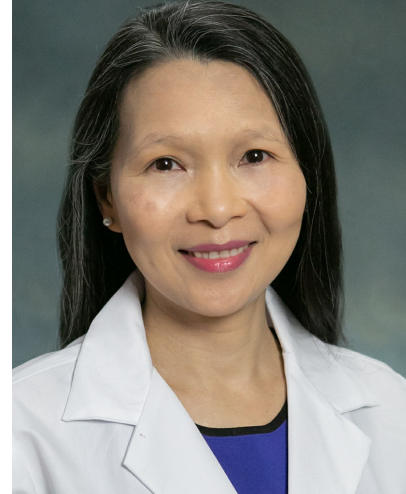


President's Message

Dear Members, Colleagues, and Sponsors,

I hope you and your families are enjoying the summer. It's difficult not to mention the onslaught of heatwaves throughout our state and across different parts of the globe. Some good news, relatively speaking: the gas prices are finally on a downward trend after hitting \$5 per gallon mark. Wheat and grains are finally able to be safely released from Ukraine to countries in need.

Still, we face emerging issues and continued uncertainty in many areas of our lives. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to raise questions, even 2.5 years on: Should we get the second COVID booster vaccine? Or should we wait for the alpha-delta variant newer COVID booster in autumn? Monkeypox has been declared a public safety emergency. Economics gives us pause: Are we in a recession or not? We continue to contend with higher prices for food and gas, and travel. Climate change has brought about seemingly endless wildfires in the West and Northwest. Climate change and weather affects us on all levels. I took a vacation to Peru in June, and I was quite happy traveling internationally again. Our travel plan was disrupted by a rainstorm in Northeast which grounded several airlines and caused 2 days of flight cancellations and delays in almost half the flights on the Eastern seaboard! After finally arriving I climbed Machu Picchu Mountain, what a thrill! I was tachycardic and tachypneic the entire time (even with acetazolamide to prevent altitude sickness), but despite the delays and health challenges, I was happy to get away.



We are looking forward to our 9th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Pennsylvania Rheumatology Society (PRS). The in-person meeting is scheduled for the weekend of September 10-11 at the Hershey' Lodge again. We are most excited with our speaker line up and promise you another exciting, lively, and engaging program this year.

The 2022 ACR meeting is in-person and in Philadelphia, and related to this, I would like to note that again this year, PRS will offer its one-time \$1,000 fellow-in-training (FIT) travel scholarship. The FIT Scholarship is available to member fellows who were nominated by their Program Directors, and who attend the PRS annual meeting. These scholarships may be applied to travel to renown national and international adult and pediatric conferences (ACR, EULAR, PRISM, etc). PRS is proud to support our early-career colleagues as they advance their knowledge and professional experience.

When the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) offers its advanced rheumatology course again, PRS will invite applications for scholarship to nurse practitioners (NP) and other advanced practice providers (APP). More details will follow.

PRS welcomes Dr. Michael Borofsky as Chair of our Advocacy Committee. He has a number of priority issues including prior authorization and pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) to tackle. We continue to expand our Advocacy Committee and welcome interested new and old members to reach out to him and join us.

I thank our staff, the Annual Scientific Meeting Planning Committee, our Advocacy Committee members, the Board, and our corporate partners for

making the program possible. We continued to face challenging staff transitions in the past 6 months which led to recent delay in releasing the previous member newsletter. We thank Annmarie Whalen, our current executive director at PRS for her assistance.

Finally, I want to thank you, our members, for your continued support and engagement in our professional community.

Stay well,

Irene J Tan, MD, FACR

Have you seen?

PRS member Dr. Rebecca Shepherd recently published at Fierce Healthcare: [Meet the new insurer tactic burdening chronic disease patients with higher out-of-pocket costs](#)

Dr. Shepherd wrote: "As prescription drug prices continue to soar, the pharmacy benefit managers that health insurers employ to negotiate prices and process medications are instead pushing costs onto patients who can ill afford to bear them." Dr. Shepherd also notes a possible solution: "a bipartisan bill called the Help Ensure Patient (HELP) Copays Act. Introduced in 2021, the legislation would lower patients' out-of-pocket drug costs and ensure they can afford the necessary."

Rebecca Shepherd, MD, is a practicing rheumatologist at Lancaster General Health in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She is the Chair of the American College of Rheumatology's Insurance Subcommittee

[Continue Reading...](#)



9th ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10-11, 2022 • THE HERSHEY LODGE

Session Spotlights

Saturday, 10:30 am

"Long COVID and the Rheumatologist"
Leonard Calabrese, DO

In a virtual session with live Q&A, Dr. Calabrese will speak to the intersection of long COVID and rheumatology. Dr. Calabrese will speak to the challenges long COVID presents, rheumatology's contributions to long COVID research and therapeutic trials, and the rheumatologist's role in patient care.



Dr. Calabrese is a Professor of Medicine, Vice Chair of the Cleveland Clinic's Department of Rheumatic and Immunologic Diseases and the Co-director of the Centre for Vasculitis Care and Research. He also serves as Director of the RJ Fasenmyer Centre for Clinical Immunology at the Cleveland Clinic. He also holds appointments in the Department of Infectious Diseases and the Wellness Institute.

He has particular clinical and research interests in vascular inflammatory

disease of the central nervous system, primary and secondary immunodeficiency states and the intersection of infections and autoimmunity. He serves as the editor of *Healio Rheumatology* and for over past 20 years has developed innovative programs to teach basic, clinical and translational immunology to care providers of patients with immune mediated inflammatory diseases. Over the course of his academic research career, Professor Calabrese has authored over 450 publications including book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles.



Sunday, 11:45 am

Open Advocacy Meeting and Update *Invited guest, Madelaine Feldman, MD, President, CSRO*

PRS is pleased to have Dr. Madelaine Feldman join us at an open Advocacy Committee meeting for an update and discussion. A powerful rheumatology advocacy voice, Dr Feldman has testified in Congress on rheumatology issues. She has spoken and written on the drug supply channel, particularly the effect that formulary construction and utilization management tools have on pricing and access to drugs).

Dr. Feldman is President of the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO), and will be joining us fresh from CSRO's annual meeting. She will update us with news on topics and issues from that meeting, and other observations.

Dr. Feldman is also Chair of the Alliance for Safe Biologic Medicines and past member of the American College of Rheumatology insurance subcommittee. Dr. Feldman is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine, and lectures extensively. She is a rheumatologist in private practice at The Rheumatology Group in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Thieves' Market Competition

Saturday, 11:30 AM

Did you know that the original Thieves' Market was located off the Sungei Road in Singapore after WWII? Contraband goods were sold there, having been looted from the British Military or stolen from other places... and people would visit in hope of finding lost items.

Similarly, Rheumatologists have been attending "Thieves' Markets" at Rheumatology meetings for decades with the hope of finding lost diagnoses.

The year's Thieves' Market competition promises lively diagnostic acumen... combined with great storytelling! Three finalists will present their cases with hopes of winning the coveted first place:

Alexis Begezda, MD; Penn State Health: "The Teen Who Didn't Want to be Touched"

Pushti Khandwala, MD; Einstein Medical Center: "Pulmonary Nodules: Small Things with Big Differentials"

Nidhi Mody, DO; Temple University Hospital: "A Case of Fever of Unknown Origin and Altered Mental Status"

Good luck to the finalists, and our thanksto Sandra Manocha, MD, for chairing the competition, and to our volunteer judges!

Into the home stretch: rounding the legislative third base, will we score that winning run or are we stranded on base?

From Michael Borofsky, MD, PRS Advocacy Chair and Deborah Ann Shoemaker, PRS lobbyist

The PA legislature has been in recess since late June, after passing the 2022-2023 state budget. We are cautiously optimistic as we look to the return of our state House and Senate members in a few weeks. We are nearly at the end of a two-year legislative session, with a constitutionally-mandated deadline of November 30th for all legislative proposals. Those proposals not passed by both chambers and sent to the governor for enactment will need to be reintroduced in the 2023-2024 legislative session. With fewer than 15 legislative days remaining, it seems likely that many key legislative proposals may not be advanced during this session.

In baseball lingo, 'we are rounding third base, looking toward home plate.' Whether our legislative priorities give us a 'home run' has yet to be seen.

Yet we remain optimistic about legislative success because the Advocacy Committee and PRS leadership have made advocacy a top priority, cultivating relationships with federal and state leadership, and within organized medicine. We have forged strong bonds with our colleagues within ACR, CSRO and the Pennsylvania Medical Society, and we continue to expand our reach to our medical specialty colleagues and our federal and state partners with whom we share legislative priorities.

How to support PRS Advocacy:

- **Join the PRS Advocacy Committee:** *The PRS membership is diverse - comprised of rheumatologists of different areas of specialty, backgrounds, and ages. Each member's unique medical knowledge and experience assists in the success of PRS's advocacy agenda. Deliberating how much time you can commit? The Advocacy Committee welcomes whatever fashion and time commitment your schedule allows.*
- **Educate yourself:** *Check out the advocacy section of our website to review our legislative tracking list and our legislative updates. Take a moment to peruse ACR's and CSRO's websites for mutual topics of concern. The AMA, the Pennsylvania Medical Society website also feature advocacy sections.*
- **Attend our Annual Scientific Meeting:** We strongly encourage all members to participate in our Ninth Annual Scientific Meeting on September 10th and 11th at the Hershey Lodge.
- **Provide input to PRS leadership and PRS Advocacy Committee:** *We need your input into our legislative priorities. As we look ahead to next two-year legislative session, a comprehensive review of our current advocacy agenda – to ensure we are representing your concerns - will maximize the effectiveness of our message.*

and...

- **Be ready to act:** When you receive an Action Alert from us, be ready to act. When we call for volunteers to share our message at state and national level, be ready to act. When we need members to provide input on proposed legislation or policies that impact rheumatology, be ready to act!

Rest assured that this fall will be nothing short of a homerun derby. Know that your leadership and Advocacy Committee members are ready to hit the homerun and are always looking for new team members.

Be ready to act!

[Opt-In to PRS Advocacy Emails](#)

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If you are interested in posting a job, please contact us at (833) 770-1549 or prs@parheumatology.org. Postings are complimentary.



Ideas or suggestions for newsletter articles can be submitted to the PRS staff office, prs@parheumatology.org or by telephone, (833) 770-1549

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