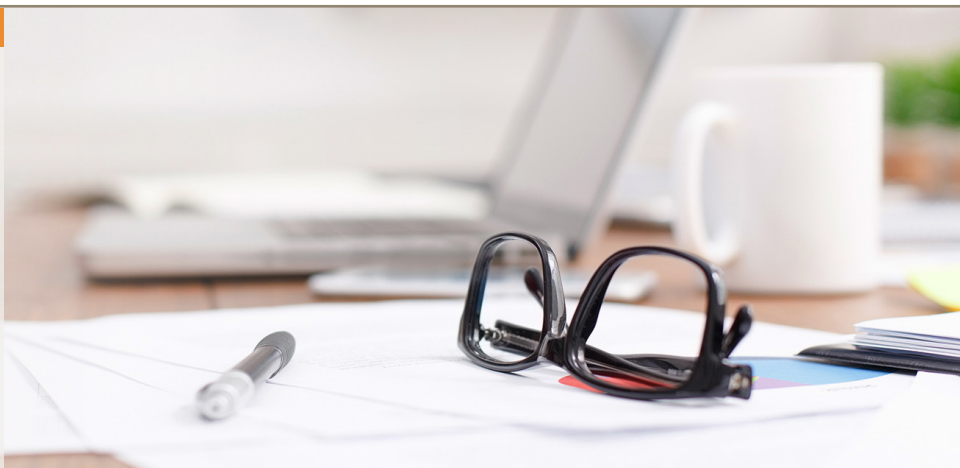




## Stepping Into My New Role as CEO

by Gerald Zarlengo, MD



For those who have worked with me in the past, it probably comes as no surprise that I am using an analogy to describe my preparation for the position of CEO at COPIC. Like other physicians, I remember the day when I received the life-changing news of my acceptance into medical school. There was profound excitement (and some nervous anticipation) about the coming years of intense study and a career of helping patients in their times of need. But, there was also a fear of how much information I needed to learn in short order and if I was capable of succeeding.

My experience since I was honored to be named next CEO in March 2018 has been somewhat similar to my early years in medicine. During that time, I started my “residency” in preparing for the task ahead. As physicians think about their careers, we accumulate knowledge in medical school and we hone a skill set in residency affording us a chance to practice our discipline. Then, we mature to an expertise during our years in practice with the need for continuing education. I see my role as CEO as a parallel process of matriculation that is an ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills over time.

Last year, I had the opportunity to attend the Board of Directors meeting for the MPL Association

(the national trade association for the medical liability insurance industry). I was graciously introduced as Dr. Ted Clarke’s replacement and took the opportunity to point out that no one could replace him and his remarkable career at COPIC. Instead, I view myself as his successor and hope to continue pushing for COPIC’s success by supporting those we insure while also striving to improve health care.

**I embrace this opportunity to work for you in maintaining the excellence COPIC has achieved over the years and under Dr. Clarke’s leadership.**

Returning to my analogy, physicians may recall the beginning of their careers and remember those first days, weeks, and months. I would assume it true that none of us thought to go into our initial workplaces, be it in a small group practice or large system, and try to reinvent the culture. More likely, we each developed our own style by taking the cues of what did and did not work for each of us.

I embrace this opportunity to work for you in maintaining the excellence COPIC has achieved over the years and under Dr. Clarke’s leadership. This is an incredible organization and as I am learning from my peers, it truly stands out as a unique company. COPIC leads by staying focused on our mission of

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IN MEMORIAM:  
K. MASON HOWARD, M.D.  
(1932-2019)



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COPIC RECEIVES THE ENDORSEMENT  
OF FOUR ADDITIONAL STATE  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS

"improving medicine in the communities we serve." This is a result of our culture and how we "walk the walk" when it comes to our mission.

In closing, I think of the wonderful opportunity I had in my OB/GYN practice. I worked with the greatest partners who pushed me to be a better physician. I see this similarity in COPIC. The skilled individuals working for you are consistently raising the bar for improving the services we provide. My promise is that I am committed to continue COPIC's mission and be available to help those we partner with in any way I possibly can. I am humbled to be given this opportunity to serve you, our insureds, as well as the broader health care community.



*Gerald Zarlengo MD*

## Highlights from Dr Zarlengo's Background

- COPIC Board Member since 2009
- Founder/partner of Midtown Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Medical Director of Perinatal Services at Sisters of Charity Leavenworth Health System and Medical Director of Women's and Children's Services at Saint Joseph Hospital; Department Chairman OB/GYN at Rose Medical Center
- Education: University of Colorado Health Science Center, M.D.; Saint Joseph Hospital, Residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Professional Associations: Fellow, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
- Board of Directors: Colorado Physician Health Program and the Zarlengo Foundation
- Teaching: Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Colorado Health Science Center

## IN MEMORIAM: K. MASON HOWARD, MD (1932-2019)

COPIC's first Chairman/CEO, an inspiring physician, and our friend

It is with great sadness that we remember K. Mason Howard, who passed away last month. Dr. Howard was instrumental in the formation of COPIC and his leadership during the company's early years was vital to our success.

Dr. Howard grew up in Denver and attended medical school at the University of Colorado. After two decades in private practice as an orthopaedic surgeon, he became more involved with broader health care issues when he served as a Trustee/Director with the Colorado Medical Society (CMS) from 1976-1979, and then as CMS President from 1980-1981.

During this time, he also formed strong friendships with Robert Brittain, MD, and Roger Johnson, MD/JD. The three of them took an

interest in examining Colorado's medical liability environment and pondered how things could be done differently. "We were the Three Musketeers, or perhaps, the Three Blind Mice. We were dedicated to the theory that physicians needed to have a lot more say about their malpractice coverage," said Dr. Howard.

Discussions with the CMS Executive Committee ultimately led to the formation of COPIC in 1981. Dr. Howard became COPIC's first Chairman/CEO and served in this role until he retired in December 1994. In retirement, he remained involved, working on a study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and COPIC to examine non-adversarial ways to fairly compensate injured patients.

Besides Dr. Howard's commitment to creating positive and lasting change, those who knew him would certainly

agree with this comment from his obituary, "...he loved a good game of golf, a satisfying smoke on his pipe and a fine glass of red wine. Most importantly, he loved his family and making people laugh. He had a perpetual twinkle in his eye and often a sharp-witted comment on the tip of his tongue."



*"Mason was a true entrepreneur who was well-respected. He embraced the leadership positions he held to achieve harmony among his physician colleagues. I was honored to follow in his footsteps and remember the honest advice he gave me, 'don't screw it up Buckley'," said Dr. Jerry Buckley, former CEO of COPIC. "He embodied the difference a physician can make in the lives of many, and I am glad to be one of the people he inspired."*

# COPIC RECEIVES THE ENDORSEMENT OF FOUR ADDITIONAL STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS

We are proud to announce that COPIC will be partnering with the following associations as the endorsed medical liability insurance carrier for their members.



MINNESOTA  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION



SOUTH DAKOTA  
STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
*Values. Ethics. Advocacy.*



## Why does COPIC partner with state medical associations?

- COPIC is able to introduce its services and share its expertise with a new, established network of medical providers and professionals.
- The partnerships allow us to work directly with leaders who understand the specific state-level challenges in health care.
- We are able to expand the reach of our patient safety and risk management efforts via the channels and connections these associations have, and this allows us to integrate new insights into the programs and resources we develop.
- Our goal of “protecting the practice of good medicine” is reinforced as we support the legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts of the associations.

## How do these endorsements come about?

The endorsements are not just given to COPIC. Associations undertake a review process to look at different medical liability insurance carriers and determine which one aligns with the needs of their members. This involves in-depth discussions to look at how a carrier would support an association and how members would benefit through a partnership.

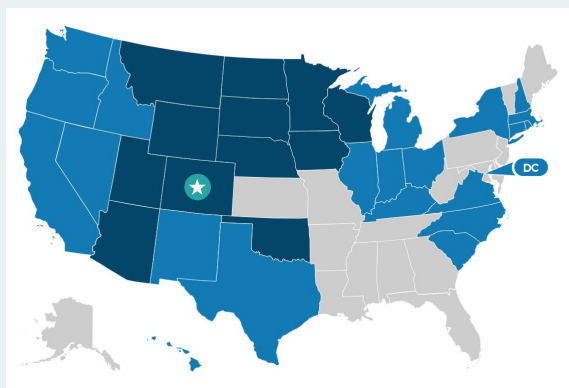
## How do association members benefit?

COPIC works closely with the association to outline member benefits, which include:

- Access to educational activities and COPIC’s experts who often present at association conferences or meetings.
- Contributed articles or content from COPIC that appears in publications and shares our insight and expertise on key medical liability issues.
- Customized support based on the specific needs of the state’s health care community and patients.
- A discount on medical liability insurance.

These organizations join the existing societies that COPIC is endorsed by: Colorado Medical Society, Colorado Hospital Association, Nebraska Medical Association, and Iowa Medical Society.

## COPIC Coverage Area



- COPIC Insurance coverage
- COPIC RRG coverage available

Partnering with medical associations is an integral part of COPIC’s regional expansion. We approach this from a thoughtful, strategic perspective to reach new policyholders while also maintaining our level of commitment to existing insureds. Expansion efforts also align with the changing geographic needs of our insureds, and allows us to introduce COPIC’s programs and resources to a broader population. All of this contributes to our mission of improving medicine in the communities we serve.



Better Medicine • Better Lives

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# COPICNEWS

ISSUE 178 • 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER 2019

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Did you miss a previous edition of COPIC newsletters?  
Don't worry. A full archive of past newsletters  
can be accessed on [callcopic.com](http://callcopic.com).

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## CONTACT US:

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**Switchboard**  
720/858-6000 or 800/421-1834

**Fax**  
877/263-6665

**24/7 Risk Mgmt. Hotline**  
720/858-6270 or 866/274-7511

**To Make an Incident Report**  
720/858-6395

**Legal Department**  
720/858-6035

**Claims Department**  
720/858-6157

**Patient Safety & Risk  
Management Department**  
720/858-6396  
720/858-6003 (fax)

**Sales Department**  
720/858-6186

**Credentialing**  
720/858-6160

**Policyholder Maintenance  
Line**  
720/858-6176

### COPIC Financial Service Group, Ltd.

720/858-6280

**Fax**  
720/858-6281

**Website**  
[www.copicfsg.com](http://www.copicfsg.com)

### COPIC Medical Foundation

720/858-6000

**Fax**  
720/858-6005

**Website**  
[www.copicfoundation.org](http://www.copicfoundation.org)

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Connect with COPIC  





## THE LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE

### KEY ISSUES FOR HEALTH CARE IN 2019

The General Assembly has now convened for 2019 and many new faces have joined the two legislative bodies as well as the Governor's office. These new faces will certainly bring new perspectives and ideas to address the rising cost of health care, one of Governor Polis' platform issues. As we consider the many proposals that will be introduced to make health care more affordable, COPIC will continue to be a voice for maintaining access to safe, quality care. In particular, COPIC will be focusing on three key areas.

#### IMPROVING PATIENT ACCESS TO CARE THROUGH A STABLE TORT ENVIRONMENT

COPIC identified at its inception that a stable tort environment is key to attracting and retaining highly qualified physicians to practice in Colorado. COPIC pursued tort reform to stabilize insurance rates and to allow those savings to be passed onto health care providers. As a result, the Health Care Availability Act (HCAA) was enacted with bipartisan support in 1988. The HCAA places caps on damages in a professional liability case which prevents excessive jury awards and allows stability and predictability in medical liability insurance premiums.

#### USING PROFESSIONAL REVIEW TO IMPROVE PATIENT SAFETY

While access to care is important, access to quality care is critical. One way to assure this is to foster an environment where health care providers are encouraged to review their peers, to report adverse outcomes and near misses and learn from them, and to educate others. The Colorado Professional Review Act (CPRA) helps create such an environment by providing legal protections for the records of a professional review committee as well as the participants.

CPRA allows the review of health care professionals' qualifications and competence, quality and appropriateness of patient care, or professional conduct. These reviews are, with a few exceptions, confidential and privileged, and participants and entities conducting professional review are protected to facilitate open conversations. As long as physicians and health care entities act within the CPRA requirements, they can conduct professional review to provide oversight and education. These peer communications are working. Physicians and hospitals utilize professional review committees to learn and improve care delivery every day. CPRA is up for periodic review by the legislature this session, and COPIC is strongly supporting its renewal.

#### USING CANDOR PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE PATIENT TRANSPARENCY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

As important as peer review is to improving patient safety, there can also be the need for patients to learn what happened when they experience unexpected outcomes. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is promoting programs that do just that. Candor programs create a voluntary alternative to the current tort system that may include an offer of compensation. These programs promote open discussions, so patients and their loved ones can understand what happened and what steps may be taken to prevent similar outcomes, if possible. The invaluable perspectives of patients and their families can then be included when educating students, residents in training, and practicing health care professionals, a key component to learning and improving.

Maintaining a stable tort environment, protecting CPRA and supporting programs like Candor can work collectively to improve access to safe, affordable health care. These are paramount issues for COPIC. All of these may be up for consideration this legislative session. To be successful, COPIC works closely with its health care partners, elected officials, and regulators, but we also need your support. Stay tuned to our email updates and alerts as we may be calling on you to use your voice on these important issues this year.

To learn more about COPIC's legislative and policy engagement efforts, contact Beverly Razon, Vice President of Public Affairs, at (720) 858-6056 or [brazon@copic.com](mailto:brazon@copic.com).

For information on legislation or to find your representative, visit us at [www.callcopic.com](http://www.callcopic.com) and go to the Legislative Action Center link under the Resource Center section.

## PRACTICE ADMINISTRATOR MEETINGS

# 2019

Each year, COPIC hosts meetings designed to let practice staff connect with peers and learn about timely topics. The meetings are held at COPIC's Denver office and run from 11:30am-1pm (MDT) with lunch provided (presentation begins at noon). The schedule for the 2019 meetings will include the following topics:

- **TUESDAY, APRIL 30**

Trending Topics in Risk Management: COPIC Panel: Patient Safety & Risk Management, Human Resources, and Legal Departments

- **WEDNESDAY, JULY 24**

Legislative Update: COPIC Public Affairs Department

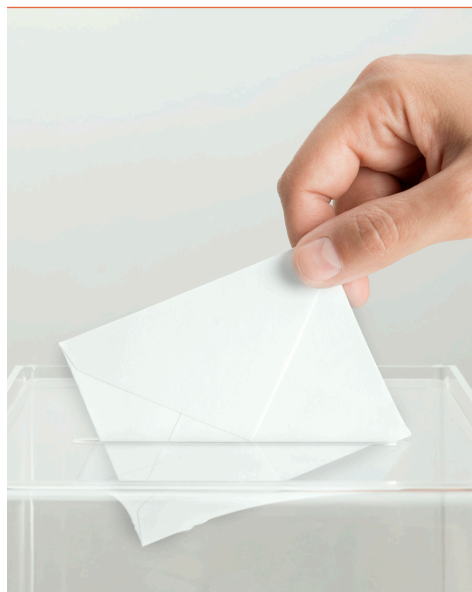
- **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13**

HIPAA Protections: COPIC Legal Department

### Can't make it in person?

Call and connect through our video conferencing services to participate remotely. Please contact Diane Laff at (720) 858-6165 or [dlaff@copic.com](mailto:dlaff@copic.com) for more information.

## NOMINATE A COLORADO PHYSICIAN FOR THE COPIC HUMANITARIAN AWARD



Each year, COPIC honors a Colorado physician for his or her volunteer medical services and contributions to the community outside of their day-to-day work. If you know a worthy candidate, please nominate him or her for this award.

The recipient of the award designates a \$10,000 grant from the COPIC Medical Foundation to be provided to a 501(c)(3) organization of the recipient's choosing (on his or her behalf). The grant is designed to fund ongoing efforts to deliver and/or improve health care. We established this award in remembrance of Harold E. "Hal" Williamson. His encouragement and active participation led to the establishment of the COPIC Medical Foundation.

Nominations are being accepted **May 1 through August 31, 2019**. To nominate a physician, visit [www.callcopic.com](http://www.callcopic.com) and go to the COPIC Medical Foundation section (under About COPIC) and select the COPIC Humanitarian Award link to download a nomination form, or email Kathy Brown at [kbrown@copic.com](mailto:kbrown@copic.com) for more information.



## THE LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE

### KEY ISSUES FOR HEALTH CARE IN 2019

The Unicameral has now convened for 2019 and many new faces have joined the legislative body. These new faces will certainly bring new perspectives and ideas to address the rising cost of health care. As we consider the many proposals that will be introduced to make health care more affordable, COPIC will continue to be a voice for maintaining access to safe, quality care.

#### MAINTAINING ACCESS TO CARE, SAFETY, AND QUALITY

COPIC identified at its inception that patient safety education and a stable tort environment are necessary to ensure access to health care providers, and to support their efforts to continuously improve patient care.

COPIC has become acutely aware of the tools that allow for learning and we vigorously support those tools. Patient safety improvement is possible when there is a culture of reporting adverse outcomes and near misses to learn from them; where health care providers are encouraged to review their peers; and where lessons learned are shared with others. Nebraska's Health Care Quality Improvement Act (HCQIA) allows for such an environment.

HCQIA protects the records of a peer review committee of a licensed health care facility that conducts professional credentialing or quality review activities involving the competence of, professional conduct of, or quality of

care provided by a health care provider, including both an individual who provides health care and an entity that provides health care. Those participating on behalf of a peer review committee are protected from liability for decisions or other conduct within the scope of the functions of the peer review committee unless that person acts with malice (wrongful intentions).

These peer communications work. Licensed health care facilities, and providers with privileges at these facilities, utilize peer review committees to provide oversight and improve care delivery every day. As long as health care facilities are acting within the HCQIA requirements, they can conduct peer review to provide accountability and education. This learning tool, however, should not be limited to licensed health care facilities, but should be available to all professional health care service entities such as physician practices.

Oversight in health care is necessary and COPIC supports programs like peer review where learning and improvement can occur. COPIC is working with our partners at the Nebraska Medical Association to expand peer review to physician practices through the passage of LB 119. COPIC will stay committed to maintaining a stable tort environment while advancing education so that Nebraska citizens have access to safe, quality care. And COPIC understands that to be successful, we must collaborate and build strong relationships with health care partners, elected officials and regulators.

To learn more about COPIC's legislative and policy engagement efforts, contact Beverly Razon, Vice President of Public Affairs, at (720) 858-6056 or [brazon@copic.com](mailto:brazon@copic.com).

For information on legislation or to find your representative, visit us at [www.callcopic.com](http://www.callcopic.com) and go to the Legislative Action Center link under the Resource Center section.



## NOMINATE A NEBRASKA PHYSICIAN FOR THE COPIC HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Do you know a Colorado physician who deserves to be recognized for going beyond the scope of their practice to improve lives in his or her community? If so, please consider nominating him or her for our annual COPIC Humanitarian Award. **Nominations are being accepted March 1 through May 31, 2019.** The award provides a \$10,000 grant to be given to a Colorado health care-related nonprofit organization of the recipient's choice.

To nominate a physician, visit COPIC Medical Foundation at [www.copicfoundation.org](http://www.copicfoundation.org) and select "Harold E. Williamson Award," or email Kathy Brown at [kbrown@copic.com](mailto:kbrown@copic.com).

## WELCOME DALE MAHLMAN TO OUR COPIC TEAM



Dale Mahlman joined COPIC in January as our Director of Market Relations in Nebraska. In this role, he will be responsible for cultivating and maintaining relationships within Nebraska's health care community. Dale is a lifelong Nebraskan who served as the Executive Vice President of the Nebraska Medical Association (NMA) for ten years. Prior to his time with the

NMA, Dale served as Director of Claims for Midlands Choice, a regional managed healthcare company based in Omaha. He is also a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University. We are excited to have Dale onboard and look forward to his contributions in helping COPIC maintain a strong presence in Nebraska.

### Upcoming Program:

## LAWSUIT STRESS SESSION

The Lawsuit Stress Support Session provides a safe and confidential forum for COPIC insureds to share their experiences in dealing with a claim or lawsuit. Attendees learn what to expect from a claim or lawsuit proceedings and are given time to discuss their feelings openly with people who have been "in their shoes."

March 13th, 6-8pm  
Happy Hollow  
Omaha, Nebraska

RSVP by calling Bren Carrico at (800) 421-1834 ext. 6153.



Register now for COPIC's 2019 Patient Safety and Risk Management Symposium. This event provides nationally recognized speakers and informative presentations, as well as opportunities to connect and share insight with your peers.

### WHEN/WHERE:

April 25-26, 2019  
Embassy Suites Lincoln

### WHO CAN ATTEND?

COPIC-insured physicians, practice and office administrators, managers, allied health professionals, and other appropriate staff. There is no cost for COPIC insureds to attend. For details, please visit [www.callcopic.com/symposium](http://www.callcopic.com/symposium)

### HOW DO I REGISTER?

Please contact Stephanie Heronema at [sheronema@copic.com](mailto:sheronema@copic.com) or (800) 421-1834, ext. 6129. The last day to reserve a hotel room with COPIC's group reservation is April 5. Please contact Embassy Suites Lincoln at (402) 474-1111 for room reservations. COPIC will cover the cost of hotel rooms for Symposium attendees, but you need to provide a credit card to hold the reservation.

### DO ATTENDEES EARN COPIC POINTS AND OTHER CREDITS?

COPIC-insured physicians/eligible AHPs receive 1 COPIC point per day and staff members earn 1 COPIC point per day for one physician/eligible AHP in their practice (up to a maximum of 2 points), and a maximum of 4 points that can be earned through physician/staff attendance. The Symposium is also accredited for physician and nursing credits: CME 8.50 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>™</sup> and CNE 8.50 contact hours.