Hinman’s stars come out

By John Hoffman
News Editor

This year’s Thomas P. Hinman Dental Meeting is packed with lectures and seminars aimed at helping dentists upgrade their practices and keep abreast of advances that are revolutionizing dentistry.

The theme of the meeting is to put dentistry’s technological advances in a historical context, providing an understanding of dentistry’s past, insights into dentistry today and a vision for its future, explains Dr. Dan Dunwody, the meeting’s general chairman.

“New technologies in medicine and the biological sciences are converging, and this will lead to huge advances for dentistry within the next decade or so,” Dunwody says. “The meeting will show how dentistry is evolving and what advances are on the horizon. It will also be packed with presentations to enable clinicians to upgrade their skills and take evidence-based knowledge back to their practices.”

One of the meeting’s feature talks will be by Dr. Harold Slavkin, dean of the University of Southern California School of Dentistry. He will lecture on tissue nanobiotechnology, an example of what Dunwody cites as an emerging technology that could revolutionize dentistry in the next few years.

Health care, dental costs projected to grow

The American Dental Association (ADA) reports that the government expects dental spending to surpass $100 billion this year and climb to almost $170 billion by 2017.

Like health care expenditures, dental costs are projected to continue to outpace economic growth.

The ADA’s survey center, using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, reports that general prices rose by 2.8 percent in 2007 but costs for dental services climbed 5.1 percent.

As reported earlier by the ADA, data show dental spending rose by 5.7 percent during the previous year, from $86.6 billion in 2005 to $91.5 billion in 2006.

The government estimates the United States spent $96.9 billion on dental services in 2007 and will spend $102.4 billion this year. Per capita dental spending rose by 2.8 percent in 2007.

From 2008 to 2011, dental implant procedures will expand at a CAGR of more than 15 percent. In contrast, non-cosmetic procedures are growing at CAGRs of only less than 5 percent.

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practitioners who can perform dental implant procedures. “Facial aesthetic procedures will grow more than 15 percent over the next five years,” says Jaya Classen, senior analyst at the Millennium Research Group. “While non-cosmetic procedures are typically limited to those that are afflicted with a disease or infirmity, cosmetic procedures face no such demographic barriers to growth — the number of people seeking to improve their looks seems endless.”

Health care spending in the United States is expected to grow more than 15 percent over the projection period, according to a 10-year forecast by CMS published online in the journal Health Affairs. Throughout the 2007-2017 period, annual health spending is expected to grow faster than both the overall economy (4.9 percent) and the rate of general inflation (2.4 percent).

As a percentage of gross domestic product, health care spending was projected to increase to 16.5 percent in 2007 from 16 percent in 2006, the government says. By the end of the projection period, health care spending in the United States is expected to climb to just more than $4.3 trillion and account for 19.5 percent of GDP.

The growth of health spending through public programs is expected to ease to 6.8 percent in 2008 and rise by 8.2 percent in 2009 largely because of implementation of the Medicare Part D drug benefit. Public health spending growth is expected to gradually increase over the next 10 years, the group says. "The local Atlanta-area chapter of Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures, which Dr. Carter heads, raised $750,000 for breast cancer research by recruiting dentists to provide bleaching services to patients," Dunwody notes.