



Belong, Make a Difference and Grow

By Grace Wellman, SDSMA Alliance President

With the holidays over, is there a gift for which you are still longing? As the South Dakota State Alliance President, I invite you to give yourself the gift of Alliance membership. The Alliance is a beautiful gift through which you can belong to the “family of medicine,” make a difference in your community and enrich your life.

Accepting the gift to join, you will become part of one of the largest and most important organizations that represent the family of medicine in the United States. The Alliance consists of a nationwide network of organizations whose mission is to partner with physicians to build healthy communities and support the family of medicine.

As you are untying the bow of this beautiful gift you will learn that AMA Alliance members are men and women who are spouses of physicians, residents and medical students who care about improving the health and safety of their communities. Your level of involvement depends on you! All Alliance members are important, and whatever time, talent or resources they are able to contribute, regardless of their phase in life, are valued and appreciated.

As you open the box of this beautiful gift you will find you belong to the family of medicine where you will develop life-long friendships, build an effective network of co-workers and find a ready-made support system for the unique challenges of life in a medical family. You will make a difference in your community by raising funds for scholarships and grants by participating in health projects that make an impact in your community and by protecting the future of medicine through legislative advocacy.

By getting involved with the Alliance you will grow and enrich your life and contribute to your personal development as an individual.

Looking inside this beautiful box, you will find the Alliance consists of three component levels that work together. The district level provides personal support for members at the grassroots level and is where most of the hands-on work is done for fund raising, health projects and legislative advocacy.

The state level provides ideas for local Alliances, coordinates efforts between district Alliances, provides leadership training for local members and partners with other like-minded organizations and policy makers.

The national Alliance provides national support for both the district and state Alliances, ties together the district and state networks, and serves as a national voice for issues that concern the family of medicine. The national Alliance provides a variety of resources for all Alliance projects, acts as a liaison between state and national legislative activities, and also offers personal-development training.

As you look closer in the box you will learn through membership dollars that the Alliance has launched a toll-free number, 800.430.SAFE, which victims of family violence can access 24 hours a day throughout the state. In addition, the “You Are Gloved” project provides gloves for schoolchildren in our state. Membership dollars also help the SDSMA Alliance support the “South Dakota Tobacco-Free Kids Network,” a state program aimed at educating children of the dangers of tobacco products, and the SD Voices for Children, a coalition committed to improving the basic needs of children in communities in our state.

Now that this beautiful gift has been unwrapped, you may be asking how you can belong. To join and become a member of the Alliance, simply send your dues to your district treasurer, or if you are a member-at-large, please send them to Kristina Zimmerman, State Treasurer, 8989 Highland Hills Road, Rapid City, SD 57702.

Take a moment and make a difference in your district and state in 2008 by giving yourself the gift of joining the Alliance and belonging to the family of medicine.