



From the Governor.....

Wow! We are in the midst of what will be a historic debate on the reform of our nation's health care system. Many issues are on the table, including the development of a "public health insurance plan" offering by the federal government for those who are currently uninsured or for those who find private health insurance plans to be too expensive, or inaccessible due

to pre-existing conditions. States may expand Medicaid coverage for some of the uninsured. Some would favor tax subsidies or incentives for individuals to make it more financially feasible for them to purchase private health care insurance. Purchasing cooperatives may be formed to make private health insurance more affordable through competition. Some would favor a single payer system in which the federal government expands Medicare and Medicaid systems to cover all Americans. The Obama Administration has made it clear that health care reform is a priority that they will not turn their backs on, and as I write this, the House of Representatives and the Senate are gearing up for what will hopefully be productive sessions, in search of consensus. An underlying theme, and potential reform buster, is how to pay for it all.

What is our role in this political debate, as physicians? More than ever before, it is the prerogative of physicians to reach out to our representatives and senators to express our opinions and provide our much needed ideas, on behalf of ourselves, our patients, and the organized medicine organizations we belong to. There are several ways that we can accomplish this: a phone call, a letter, a fax, or an email. All are easily possible through ACP's Legislative Action Center (LAC), which can be found on the internet at: <http://capwiz.com/acponline/home>

Take a moment this evening to visit the LAC, online. You'll be surprised how easy it is to send a personalized message to Congressman Castle, **Senator Kaufman**, or **Senator Carper**. You can sign up to become a Key Contact of the ACP, and receive regular updates on important health care issues that come up before the House and the Senate, and have the opportunity to provide timely and vital input to your elected representatives in Washington, DC, on these issues.

Recently, along with **Robert Laskowski, MD, FACP**, President and CEO of Christiana Care Health System, and **Charles G. Case, MD**, Medical Director of the Henrietta Johnson Health Care Center in Wilmington, I had the privilege to serve on a Panel Discussion/Listening Session that was sponsored by **Congressman Mike Castle**. I was representing the physicians of the Medical Society of Delaware, and ACP. This event was held on June 1st at the PMRI campus of CCHS in Wilmington. Mr. Castle and his staff are seeking the opinions of Delaware constituents and other stakeholders on ideas for health care reform. He plans to have 2-3 more of these listening sessions in the near future in Kent and Sussex Counties, and probably an additional session in New Castle County, given the standing room only attendance at PMRI. I will forward the dates of the upcoming listening sessions to our DE Chapter membership by email as they become available, and I hope that some of our members will plan to attend and make their voices heard. We received very short notice of the first session.

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Other important sources of information relating to the debate on health care reform include ACP's Advocate eNewsletter, which you receive biweekly as an email from ACP. I encourage you to take a few minutes to drill down into the content of this important newsletter which contains accurate and up-to-date summaries of real-time health care advocacy issues that are important to internists. Also, check out the advocacy page on ACP's website at: <http://www.acponline.org/advocacy/>.

If you want to see what your colleagues are saying about health care reform, check out **Bob Doherty's** health advocacy blog, which can be accessed from the advocacy page. Bob is ACP's Senior Vice President for Health Policy and Advocacy from ACP's Washington Office. We had the privilege to have Bob speak to our Associate Members in the Fall of 2008 at Christiana Hospital for a pre-election briefing on the platforms of the presidential candidates and prospects for health care reform with a new administration. This was well attended and extremely well received by those who were lucky to be there. Bob moderates a vigorous and stimulating discussion on current health care reform and advocacy topics and his blog is gaining attention and popularity from within the membership of ACP, other physicians, and other individuals with an interest in health care.

During the past 6 months, ACP has released several timely and important health policy papers that are thoroughly researched, well-written, and provide insight and leadership in understanding the evidence base for the effectiveness of the primary medical care specialties, and concrete suggestions for payment reform and medical student debt relief that may stimulate solutions to the primary medical care manpower shortage. These papers can be found at <http://www.acponline.org/advocacy/>, as well.

I have asked **Dr. Dan Elliott** to comment on the experience of our Delaware Chapter members who attended this year's ACP Leadership Day events in Washington, DC.

ACP Leadership Day

As I am sure you are aware, health care is front and center on the minds of many in our country, including the politicians! **President Obama** has committed to health care reform IN 2009 so things are slated to move quickly. ACP is working hard to make sure that your voice is heard in the debate. To that end, Five Delaware ACP members joined over 400 others from around the country to advocate for the future of medicine as part of the ACP Leadership Day, on May 19th and 20th in Washington, DC. Our delegation included physicians **Daniel Elliott, Carlos Reyes, and Edmondo Robinson**; resident **Sitta Gombah-Alie**; and **Jennifer Hurd**, a medical student from Jefferson Medical College who will begin her residency in Internal Medicine/Pediatrics at Christiana Care in July.

As part of the events, the delegation was briefed by ACP staff, Congressional leaders and staff, and **Bob Kocher, MD**, the Special Assistant to the President for Healthcare. There was a palpable sense that something is going to happen, but there is undoubtedly a significant road ahead as we as a nation try to iron out the not-so-small details. Our team met with health care staff members at the offices of **Senators Carper, Kaufman, and Congressman Mike Castle**. Specifically, we advocated for health care reform that provides 1) affordable healthcare coverage for all, 2) repeal of the linking of physician payment through medicare to the flawed SGR formula which has physicians scheduled for a deep cut in reimbursement this coming January, and 3) adequately supports primary care medical specialties. Timing could not have been better, as on the day we were in Washington, **Rep. Allyson Schwartz** (D-PA) introduced HR 2350, Preserving Patient Access to Primary Care, which was largely based on ACP positions. Included in the bill are provisions for payment reform including care management reimbursement and real-time claims adjudication, primary care scholarships and student loan forgiveness for medical students who enter primary care medical specialties, and support for the Patient-Centered Medical Home.

Stay tuned over the coming weeks to the ACP Advocacy website <http://www.acponline.org/advocacy>. I also encourage everyone to register as a Key Contact with the ACP, which will make it easier for you to share your voice in this crucial discussion.

Daniel Elliott, MD

Chair, Health and Public Policy Section, Delaware Chapter, ACP

Electronic Health Records and ARRA

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of the Obama Administration has included the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH), in which more than 19 billion dollars has been committed to stimulating investment in health information technology by physicians. Later this year, physicians who plan to implement/have implemented a CCHIT-certified EHR and can demonstrate "meaningful use" (this definition is still being refined) of this EHR in providing care for their patients, will be able to apply for up to \$44,000.00 in subsidies from the government (to be paid over 5 years, starting in 2011). Physicians who implement the proper EHR by 2013 could receive a maximum subsidy of \$27,000.00 over three years. Under HITECH, physicians who aren't using the proper EHR for "meaningful use" by 2015 would be penalized 1% of their MCR fees (2% in 2016 and 3% in 2017!).

The details of the application process for these subsidies under HITECH are pending at this time, as well as details regarding how one would comply with this program, and how reimbursement occurs. The EHR project I spoke of in my Fall '08 Newsletter (Delaware region was chosen as one of 12 regions throughout the country where 100 practices would receive subsidies for implementing and using EMR's over 5 years) has been replaced by HITECH. There are more questions than answers with regard to how ARRA/HITECH will affect us and how physicians get involved. Look for up to date news about this process at www.acponline.org/ and in the ACP Internist, as this story unfolds.

Meanwhile, if you are considering the implementation of an EHR in your practice, check out ACP's EHR Partners program at http://www.acponline.org/running_practice/technology/ehr/partner_program/ for guidance with this process. More than 25 CCHIT EHR vendors have worked with ACP to establish a resource in which access to critical information about these systems is made easily available in an organized format, and guidance regarding the implementation process is provided, as an ACP member benefit.

Health Literacy Project

As you've seen and heard in previous announcements, our chapter was chosen by the ACP Foundation as one of 3 ACP Chapters to receive the first grant awards for the development of a health literacy project. We have developed a tri-fold card for patients that has a 14 space medication list on one side, with columns that allow for the distinction between the brand name and the generic name of their medications and their dosing schedules, to avoid confusion and unintended duplication of their medicines. The card is intended as a tool to help patients and their physicians improve medication reconciliation and adherence, thereby improving their quality of care.

We have produced the 1st 20,000 cards and will be distributing them to interested physicians (internists, family physicians, sub-specialty internists and IM residents), 100 at a time for the 1st round, at no cost to the physician. The other side of the card has spaces to list the names and phone numbers of the other physicians they see, the dates of their last tetanus and pneumovax immunizations, and the web address of an online drug reference they can use, if desired.

If you would like to receive a 100 pack of the cards, along with a simple exam room poster to stimulate interest in patients, please send me a request by email at drjho7@verizon.net. Please include your mailing address and the name of a contact person. We will be making additional cards available to physicians who find them to be useful and request more. We will ultimately produce at least 100,000. We will ask physicians to provide feedback to us by a simple survey, periodically.

Thank you for your interest in this exciting project to improve the care of our patients!

Internal Medicine '09

It was a pleasure to see that 47 of our chapter's members attended Internal Medicine 2009, held in Philadelphia this past April . Within the past 6 months our chapter has had 9 of its members elected to Fellowship. I had the opportunity to march in the convocation, held Thursday evening of the IM '09 week, with 6 of the new Fellows. This was a festive affair, with an inspiring address by outgoing ACP President, **Jeffrey Harris, MD, MACP**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW FELLOWS!

David P Donohue, MD FACP

Terry L Horton, MD FACP

Neeta Milasincic, MD FACP

James E Ruether, MD FACP

Rodrigo C Tanchanco, MD FACP

Marci L Drees, MD FACP

Yvonne M Lyles, MD FACP

Omowumi Olurin, MD FACP

Sarah E Schenck, MD FACP

Our chapter reception was held at the Viet Nam Palace on Friday evening, a unique venue that we shared with the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Chapters. This was attended by 24 of our chapter's members.

The Board of Governors met early in the IM '09 week to consider 29 new resolutions. 3 were adopted and referred to the Board of Regents for implementation, and 20 were referred for study to the Committees of ACP. Of the 3 resolutions that were adopted, one was submitted by the Delaware Chapter, regarding the development of post-graduate courses by ACP to facilitate the training and education needs of hospitalist physicians who have decided to enter office-based internal medicine practice, as we have often seen in our communities over the past decade.

Call for Resolutions

It is possible for your voice to be heard on a national basis. If you have a suggestion for change that would impact patient care or the internal medicine community in a positive way, consider submitting your idea as a resolution. You may send your suggestions to me by email, and we will work together to craft them into a resolution to be presented to the Board of Governors at one of their 2 meetings, held in the Spring and the Fall. The deadline for submission of resolutions for consideration by the BOG is usually at least 2 months prior to their meetings. Here's more information from ACP on resolutions:

Participating in the BOG Resolutions Process gives ACP members a voice and allows them to shape College policy that impacts the practice of internal medicine. Have you ever drafted a chapter-sponsored resolution or provided input on one and wondered about its status? The Electronic Resolutions System (ERS) is a resource available to you as an ACP member -- visit the ERS from the "Advocacy" section of your chapter's website. Proposed resolutions as well as previously submitted resolutions are all tracked with follow-up stored in the ERS for retrieval. View "How to Conduct a Search on the ERS" for simple steps that walk you through the search process.

Did you know ACP also permits members to monitor College committees'/councils' discussion about a resolution as it evolves? The ACP "Committees, Boards, and Councils" webpage provides information about the charge/mission of each group and stores meeting agendas and minutes for your access, too (from ACP's homepage, choose "About ACP" and "Committee & Councils" from the left navigation bar). Catch the recap of critical goings-on at committee meetings where ACP prepares to formalize its policy positions and debates the status of resolutions, too. Visit the ERS or the Committees, Boards, and Councils webpage and find the answer to your burning questions.

Delaware Chapter Annual Scientific Meeting, '09

By Stephanie Lee, MD, Chair, Program Planning Committee, 2009 Meeting

This year's annual chapter meeting was a huge success. More than 100 of our chapter members attended. Held again at the University of Delaware's Clayton Hall, there was a great diversity of attendees, including a record number of medical students, and a foreign exchange medical student from Chile. **Dr. Finucane** from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine gave a talk on "*Cheerleaders, Chihuahuas, and Big Pharma: Blockbuster drugs you can stop*" that got the audience primed for debate. This was followed by a talk by **Dr. Holland** from the NIH on diagnosing common immunological disorders. Our own **Dr. Prayus Taylor** presented a "*Renal Top Ten*" discussion, providing a nice overview of new and important issues in nephrology.

This year, the ACP Planning Committee changed the format of the meeting. Instead of breakout workshop sessions, there was a panel discussion on prostate cancer presented by **Dr's Cozzolino, Grubbs**, and **Donavanik**, and a Multiple Small Feedings of the Mind format presentation covering the topics of Psychiatric medicine and Sleep medicine respectively presented by **Dr. Kaye** from Jefferson Medical College, and by **Dr. Rosen** from the University of Pennsylvania. The new format was well received, and will likely be considered for future meetings.

This year there were a record number of student abstract posters by medical students from across the country that had rotated through Christiana Care, with topics ranging from Babesiosis to SAPHO syndrome. The first place award for student poster presentation this year was given to **Carol Jean Annino**, from LECOM, for her poster titled "Mental Status Changes in a 46 y/o Hypertensive Male – ischemia vs demyelination."

The winner of the resident abstract competition, **Lionel Malebranche, MD**, gave an oral presentation on "*Segmental Medial Arteriolytic*".

Save the date for the 2010 meeting, which has been set for February 20th!

DE Chapter Awards

Each year, our chapter recognizes outstanding internists that have made significant contributions to patient care, our Delaware medical community, the specialties of internal medicine, and to ACP. These awards are made at the time of our February DE Scientific Meeting. For the first time, this year our chapter chose to recognize an internist who has demonstrated clinical excellence in the emerging specialty of hospital medicine. This award will be given by our chapter every other year. The 2009 DE Chapter award winners are:

Excellence in Hospital Medicine Award: Joanne Brice, MD

Leonard Lang Award: Michael Sweeney, MD, FACP

Delaware Chapter Laureate Award: Virginia Collier, MD, FACP

I'd also like to recognize **Debbi Zarek, MD, FACP**, who has received the LEAD Award Certificate for participating in this important leadership development program of ACP in its first year, 2008-2009. Debbi has been a very active member of our governor's advisory council over the past 5 years and was the program chair for our February Scientific Meetings in 2007 and 2008. In addition, she has been chosen by ACP to serve as member-at-large on the national ACP Council of Young Physicians, for a 3 year term beginning this year.

Also, this year, our DE Chapter was presented with the ACP Chapter Excellence Award for its activities as a chapter during the 2008-2009 year. This award was presented to us by the College's past-president, **David Dale, MD, MACP**, who visited our February meeting as the college representative this year. Congratulations to immediate past-Governor **Mansour Saberi, MD, FACP**, for his leadership in helping our chapter attain this recognition.

Communication/Last Print Issue

Our economic recession has affected most aspects of our lives in some way over the past 2 years, and ACP is not exempted from this. As the College has crafted its 2009-2010 budget, concessions have been made in many areas across the continuum of the College's programs, activities and products. In the era of electronic publication, the College will no longer produce a print version of the Governor's Chapter Newsletter. This important communication will continue to be distributed to ACP members by email, with a link to the Chapter's website where the document is available. More than ever, I urge DE Chapter members who use email/internet to contact ACP customer service at: E-mail: custserv@acponline.org, Toll Free: 800-523-1546, ext. 2600 (M - F, 9 - 5) and provide the College with your email address if you haven't already. This convenient form of communication is a link to many important member benefits including this newsletter, the ACP Internist Weekly, the ACP Advocate Newsletter (biweekly), ACP Journal Club Plus Service, important announcements about our Chapter's activities, and many important announcements from the College about its services and products.

11th Annual DE Chapter Lower Shore Symposium

Please mark your calendars for this year's Lower Shore Symposium, which will be held at a new location: the Boardwalk Plaza Hotel, in Rehoboth Beach, DE, on Saturday, September 12, 2009. Brochures have been mailed to all DE Chapter members, and more information is available about registration on our website at http://www.acponline.org/about_acp/chapters/de/. There will be 5 Category 1 CME credits available for the daytime sessions. Here is a brief summary of the lecture program:

- 8 am: Soft Tissue Infections, *Herbert DuPont, MD, MACP*
- 9am: Coronary and Structural Heart Disease, *Lowel Satler, MD*
- 10:30 am: Celiac Disease, *Anca Safta, MD*
- 12:30 pm: Diabetes Update: 2009, *S. Sethu Reddy, MD, FACP, MACE*
- 1:30 pm: Use of Rifaximin in the Treatment and Prevention of Traveler's Diarrhea, *Herbert DuPont, MD, MACP*
- Evening program (non-CME):
- 6pm: registration and dinner
- 7:30 pm: Recognition and Management of Dyslipidemia in Pediatric and Adolescent Patients, *Peter Kwiterovich, MD*

Please plan to join us for this high quality CME event!

I extend my many thanks to **Mansour Saberi, MD, FACP**, Immediate past-Governor, DE Chapter, ACP, and **Bhaskar Palekar, MD, FACP** for their hard work in continuing this worthwhile and highly anticipated conference.

Finally, I would like to extend my personal thanks to all of the DE Chapter members who have provided their effort, input, and leadership to make my first year as Governor of the Chapter productive and successful. This especially includes the Governor's Advisory Council, and our Chapter's administrative assistant, **Cindy Chuidian**. Additionally, I would like to thank **Dr. Matt Burday**, the chair of our awards committee for his leadership, **Dr. Stephanie Lee** for her outstanding effort as our program planning committee chair for the successful 2009 meeting, and **Kathy Hrycak** and **Gigi Datte** for their behind the scenes efforts to make our 2009 meeting run so smoothly.

John H. O'Neill, Jr., D.O., FACP

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Visiting Chilean medical student Rodrigo Navea, Delaware Chapter 2009 Laureate Virginia Collier, and Chapter Governor John O'Neill pose for a shot at the 2009 Chapter Awards Dinner.

Help Recruit Medical Students and Residents for ACP Membership!

ACP is currently in the midst of two major recruitment programs, one for medical students and one for Associates. The Internal Medicine Interest Group Sponsorship Program (IMIG) and the Recruit-a-Resident Program reward medical schools and residency programs that recruit their students and residents to become ACP members.

Medical schools that participate in the IMIG Sponsorship Program will receive funding from ACP to use toward their club activities. Participating schools will receive \$300 in funding in September, and have the opportunity to earn additional funding based on their ACP membership numbers as of December 31. At the close of the program, schools with less than 30% ACP student member participation receive an additional \$1 per student member. Schools with 30% or greater participation will receive \$2 per student member. Total sponsorship for an individual IMIG cannot exceed \$1,000 (including the \$300 initial funding.) To participate in the program, eligible schools must complete the online application located at <http://www.acponline.org/imig>, by August 1, 2009.

The Recruit-a-Resident (RaR) Program rewards residency programs that recruit 90% or more of their categorical residents for Associate membership. All of the Associates must be members in good standing. Residency programs that reach the 90% goal by December 31, 2009 will receive free educational products from the College. This year's rewards include, 2009 MKSAP® Update for Residents, an interactive product featuring more than 100 multiple-choice questions from MKSAP 14 Self-Assessment Updates. The program will test your knowledge of recent changes and best practices in internal medicine. In addition, each resident will receive handouts from Internal Medicine 2009, which include content from the meeting sessions. For details about the Recruit-a-Resident program, please visit http://www.acponline.org/residents_fellows/resources/recruit_a_resident/.

We would sincerely appreciate your help in encouraging the schools and programs in your chapter to participate in these programs.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact **Katie Buell**, Coordinator, Membership Programs and Services at kbuell@acponline.org or by calling 800-523-1546 ext. 2611.