

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar!

2008 Georgia Chapter Annual Meeting

Dates: March 7-9, 2008

Place: Hyatt Regency Savannah

See you there!

Walter J. Moore, MD, FACP

Program Chair, 2007 Chapter Meeting

Chesley Richards, MD, FACP

Program Co-Chair, 2007 Chapter Meeting

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Governor's Corner



This is the first Governor's Corner written by Governor Vince Nicolais, MD, FACP, who began his governorship at the conclusion of the 2007 national ACP meeting, held in San Diego in April. As a prelude to Vince's comments below, I want to express my sincere thanks to the members of the GA chapter for the privilege of serving as governor for the past 4 years. I have been enriched by the chance to work with many wonderful people and I hope I have done a good job for the chapter. I deeply regret not being able to participate in the 2007 chapter meeting due to my mother's death and truly appreciate the many kindnesses you have shared and the generous recognition at the meeting.

The GA chapter has a very bright future under the leadership of Governor Vince Nicolais and Executive Director Karen Townsend. You will get a "feel" for their vision for the chapter and plans for developing it as you read their columns (Governor's Corner and View from the Loft) in this newsletter.

Again, please accept my sincere thanks for the privilege of serving as Governor of the chapter.

Rhee Fincher, MD, FACP
Past-Governor, GA Chapter, ACP

THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

It is with great pleasure that I have assumed the position of Governor of the GEORGIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSI-

CIANS. My goals will be to serve our membership in all ways possible. My main objectives will be in the realm of:

1. Advocacy
2. Education
3. Patient care
4. Tort Reform
5. Communications
6. Public image

Our biggest challenge will be facing political challenges that are particular to each individual state. In Georgia, your ACP will be addressing reimbursement, scope of practice issues and ensuring patients continue to have access to quality healthcare provided by Georgia's physicians. Patient care issues such as a tax on cigarettes to help discourage smoking and an emphasis on diabetes and obesity in Georgia are to be pursued. In regards to patient care, your GA ACP is urging our legislators to pass a tax on tobacco products. It has been shown that this will decrease consumption and could fund government programs for better healthcare as well as education.

To keep you, our membership, up to date on pertinent topics as related to Internal Medicine and its subspecialties we have already started organizing the 2008 Scientific Meeting program. The meeting will once again take place in Savannah, Georgia, March 7-9, 2008. Chesley Richards, MD, FACP will serve as program chair and our veteran program chair, Walter Moore, MD, FACP will serve as co-chair. We will be hosting another literary retreat under the direction of Evan Weisman, MD, FACP on October 26-28, 2007 at the beautiful

Amicalola Falls State Park. The theme for this year's literature choice is "The Physician and War Novels." Both the scientific meeting and the literary retreat have been very successful over the past years. We will continue to strive to increase participation, practicality and timeliness of every Georgia Chapter ACP educational program.

We intend to increase the number of annual issues of our newsletter from two to three or four. Between mailings we will send short communications pertinent to your everyday practice via e-mail. **Barry Silverman**, MD, FACP has agreed to serve in the newly created position of newsletter editor.

We hope to enhance our Georgia ACP website to apprise you of important updates. We intend to maintain contact with you utilizing short burst e-mails of one or two sentences to advise you of our Chapter's activities. We do not want to overburden you with reading material, and therefore, these "tidbits" of information will be short and to the point. We also plan on instituting an electronic format for our newsletter in conjunction with the hard copy mailing.

Public image is to be enhanced in all ways so that your patients might recognize how we are working for them by educating our membership and reaching out to our legislators to improve overall healthcare in our state.

As we approach the future of our chapter, we have entered a new phase with a full time executive director, **Karen Townsend**, and a part time administrative assistant, **Judy Anderson**. Both are welcome additions to our organization and will enhance the service we are able to provide to you, our members.

My goal and the goal of your ACP is to serve you and the needs of your patients. If you have any suggestions as to how we can do this better, please contact me at vincent.nicolais@crhs.net.

Vincent M. Nicolais, MD, FACP, FCCM
Governor, GA Chapter, ACP

THE GA CHAPTER ACP SPRING MEETING ANNUAL 2007 SCIENTIFIC MEETING

The spring meeting held in Savannah at the Hyatt Regency Riverfront Hotel from March 9-11, 2007 was a resounding success. More than 250 attendees participated in the meeting, which was focused around the theme of "Sustaining Excellence in Internal Medicine."

Participants had the opportunity to share a weekend with other ACP members and our next generation of internists while earning 18.0 hours of CME credit. Savannah was in full bloom and many participants and their families enjoyed walking tours, nightly entertainment, and an array of shopping boutiques.

This year's meeting was chaired by **Walter Moore**, MD, FACP, Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education at the Medical College of Georgia and co-chaired by Chesley Richards, MD, FACP, Deputy Director, Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, National Center for Preparedness, Detection and Control of Infectious Diseases (NCPDCID), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Excerpts from the evaluations confirm the quality and value of the meeting:

This was my first meeting as a member. I was really impressed with how relevant the topics covered were to my practice. I really enjoyed the Women in Medicine breakfast as well.

The discussion by Mr. Todd for Mr. Jordan was so restoring and exciting.

Excellent meeting. Exceptionally high quality lectures and speakers.

This is one of the best meetings that I have ever attended.

Please make Mr. Adams a permanent spot at this meeting. He's excellent.

Board Review...I always look forward to this part of the conference. Please do not stop.

Outstanding educational meeting with superb discussions and presentations by national experts.

Savannah is an excellent site and the Hyatt is a good hotel. Food excellent and plentiful. Like having coffee available all day.

Overall, appreciate the efforts of GA ACP.

Best scientific meeting in 7 years.

The first day was highlighted by the presentation of the ACP GA Chapter's fourth annual Leadership Award to Mr. **Hamilton Jordan, Sr.**

Mr. Jordan was selected to receive the Leadership Award because of his role in founding the Georgia Cancer Coalition (GCC) and his inspirational work and writings as he has coped personally with three types of cancer. He and his wife started a program for children with cancer or leukemia, Camp Sunshine, and a camp for children with juvenile diabetes, Camp Kudzu. Mr. Todd accepted the award for Mr. Jordan and delivered the keynote address. Mr. Jordan was unable to attend the meeting but expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation for this honor on behalf of all who are working to improve the health and lives of Georgians affected by cancer. Mr. Todd's informative, inspiring keynote address was a highlight of the meeting.

Kathleen Weaver, MD, MACP flew from Portland, Oregon to be our College representative (CR). She presented the College update and provided many helpful insights while serving on the panel discussion dealing with health advocacy and public policy. Her knowledge, warm personality and keen intellect

made her a valuable contributor to the program.

The meeting was an effective mix of updates and discussions on practical clinical topics, research advances, Medicare and Medicaid changes, practice management, electronic medical records, advocacy, health and public policy, and medical errors. The three-hour office management seminar focusing on coding rule changes affecting the busy practicing physician was a great success again.

The awards dinner was a highlight of the program and an opportunity to recognize Chapter members who have made outstanding contributions. The prestigious Laureate Award was presented to **Jacqueline Fincher**, MD, FACP for her visionary leadership and support of the chapter, especially in the domain of health and public policy. The Community Service Award was presented to **Jada Bussey-Jones**, MD, the Community-based Teaching Award to **Barry D. Silverman**, MD, FACP, and the J. Willis Hurst Outstanding Bedside Teaching Award to **Chinedu C. Ivonye**, MD.

The program included medical student and Associates activities, including poster abstracts, clinical vignette and research presentations, medical jeopardy for medical students, and an Associates' medical jeopardy competition among the residency training programs. Winners were recognized at the awards dinner.

ORAL CLINICAL VIGNETTE COMPETITION

1ST Place: **Gabriel Wishik**, MD, Emory University School of Medicine

2nd Place Tie: **Martin Sarkar**, MD, Eisenhower Army Medical Center and **Erika Grigg** MD, Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine

ORAL RESEARCH COMPETITION

1ST Place: **Adil Degani**, MD, Mercer University School of Medicine

2nd Place: **Alexander Brown**, MD, Eisenhower Army Medical Center

3rd Place: **Naveen Bandrupalli**, MBBS, Memorial Health University Medical Center, Mercer University School of Medicine, Savannah Campus

RESEARCH POSTER COMPETITION

1ST Place: **Michael Gibson**, MD, Atlanta Medical Center

2nd Place: **Chirag Patel**, MD, Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine

3rd Place: **XiaoLu Wu**, MD, Eisenhower Army Medical Center

CLINICAL VIGNETTE POSTERS COMPETITION

1ST Place: **Amil Patel**, MD, Emory University School of

Medicine

2nd Place: **Titilayo Ilori**, MD, Morehouse School of Medicine

3rd Place: **Kristina Chacko**, MD, Emory University School of Medicine

The meeting marked the completion of **Ruth-Marie E. (Rhee) Fincher**, MD, FACP's tenure as Governor (2003-07) and the start of **Vince Nicolais**, MD, FACP's term as Governor. Rhee was unable to attend the meeting due to the death of her mother. Many attendees expressed condolences verbally and in writing. Rhee and her family were in our thoughts and prayers throughout the meeting.

Appreciation for her outstanding efforts as Governor was on the lips and in the hearts of all of the meeting attendees. Recognition and tokens of appreciation for Rhee's great work as governor were presented to Rhee in absentia with Dr. **Jacqueline Fincher** accepting the honors for her.

Ms. Nancy Brady served as chapter administrator for the past eight years with outstanding service to the chapter. Nancy has been a driving force behind the success of the chapter's annual meetings and the coordinator for the Governor's Advisory Committee meetings. She has been a truly superb administrator and will be dearly missed and fondly remembered. She was recognized with a brief slide show presentation and gifts from the chapter as small tokens of our appreciation for her work and support for the chapter.



Ms. Nancy Brady, our retiring chapter administrator, accepting gifts and well wishes from Drs. Stubbs and Nicolais, thanking Nancy for an incredible job for so many years.



Ms. **Judy Anderson**, who is assuming Nancy's position as chapter administrator, was welcomed heartily.

I want to offer special thanks to the scientific program planning committee. The members of the committee were **Walter Moore**, MD, FACP (Chair), **Chesley Richards**, MD, FACP (Co-chair), **T. Andrew Albritton**, MD, FACP, **Steven Carpenter**, MD, **Glenn Carter**, MD, FACP, **Matthew Diamond**, DO, **Kaveh Ehsanipoor**, MD, FACP, **Stephen Goggans**, MD, **David Guidot**, MD, **Jacqueline W. Fincher**, MD, FACP, **Ruth-Marie Fincher**, MD, FACP, **Michael B. Heisler**, MD, **J. Leonard Lichtenfeld**, MD, FACP, **William Maddox**, MD, **Vincent Nicolais**, MD, FACP, **Jeffrey Stephens**, MD, FACP and **Saloni Tanna**, MD.

The contributions of all of the speakers, the attendees, and the tremendous support of the sponsors of the Georgia Chapter's annual meeting ensured another highly successful chapter meeting.

You are cordially invited to the 2008 annual meeting of the GA Chapter of the American College of Physicians. Details regarding next year's program will be included in subsequent newsletters. Information related to our chapter is always available on the Georgia Chapter website. (www.acponline.org/chapters/ga/)

Associates' Program Update

The annual meeting of the Georgia chapter of the American College of Physicians was an unprecedented success in regards to Associates' participation, involvement, and achievement, in part. To quote Dr. **Walter Moore**: "*This is the most involvement I have seen from our Associates at this meeting since I have been involved with the chapter ACP*". A revitalized focus of resident involvement and participation in the College as a whole was instituted, seeking to spark more resident interest in the profession as a whole.

This year's conference included several plenary sessions featuring Associate-specific topics. **Molly Szerlip**, MD, FACP and **Walter Moore**, MD, FACP presented "*How to Get the Fellowship You Want*" during the Saturday boxed lunch session. This informal discussion expanded the experiences of both an internal medicine resident applying for a fellowship, and a fellowship director selecting candidates, giving Associates insight into how fellowship candidates are selected, strategies that work, and pitfalls to avoid in the application process. **Ed Enoch**, JD, an attorney who specializes in contract negotiation for physicians and medical groups, followed this session with a lecture on contract negotiations. He discussed the basics of employment contracts, explanations of the common legal jargon, and the validity of 'No Compete' clauses. These lectures were very well received.

Medical jeopardy, as always, was a popular event for the Associates and other attendees. This year's competition introduced the 'Daily Double', increasing the competition and strategy for the teams. All seven programs were represented well, with competitive preliminary rounds, and a challenging final round for the top four teams. In the end, Emory University School of Medicine displayed their mettle and prowess for medical knowledge and brought home the champions' plaque. Of note, this is the first time in the history of the competition that the champions' plaque will be displayed outside the city of Augusta, GA since medical jeopardy was introduced to the annual session. Every team was lauded by their programs' participation in a hard-fought contest, as evidenced by the celebrations that occurred later in the evening.

The Associates' abstract competition revealed many inter-

esting cases and innovative research projects. Abstracts for presentation were submitted months prior to the annual meeting and vignettes and projects were selected for presentation by an independent panel of reviewers. This was not an easy task, as over 220 abstracts were submitted. We thank all of the submitters for sharing their work and all of the reviewers for their completing their reviews in a timely and fair manner.

The Associates' Program of the Annual Session was an unparalleled success with record attendance by Associates. The Associates' component of the Chapter meeting can expect further growth and involvement from the hundreds of internal medicine residents and interns around the state. To sum it up, an anonymous resident simply stated: "A good time was had by all".

Matthew Diamond, DO

Saloni Tanna, MD

Medical College of Georgia Chief Residents

Co-chairs, 2007 Associates' Program

Medical Students

The Student section of the Georgia chapter meeting in Savannah was a great success! We had the highest student turnout ever, which included representatives from almost every school in the state. We also had the greatest number of students presenting posters on clinical vignettes and research topics, all of whom did an outstanding job. The students especially enjoyed the panel presentation on applying to residency and other issues especially pertinent to medical students. Special thanks go to **Shilpa Brown**, MD and **Andy Albritton**, MD for their help with poster judging and to Drs. **Albritton**, **Joyce Doyle**, **Donald Brady** and **Harold Szerlip**, MD for their participation on the expert panel.

Congratulations to the students from MCG on winning Medical Student Jeopardy!

We are looking forward to an even better student meeting in 2008!

Lisa Bernstein, MD

IEWS FROM THE LOFT

I can only begin by saying "THANK YOU" to the members of the Georgia Chapter-American College of Physicians. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Executive Director. As most of you know, I am a Registered Nurse and yes, I do still have a current license. What you may not know is

that as an RN, my days (and nights) of patient care were spent



Ms. Karen Townsend, inaugural Executive Director of the GA, ACP Chapter. Members of the chapter expressed a hearty welcome to Karen as she helps raise our chapter to the next level of excellence.

on the Medical Dialysis and ICU/CCU units taking care of seriously ill adults. So now you know, I primarily worked with Internal Medicine physicians and I must say it is wonderful to return "home" to internal medicine.

Many of the greatest challenges in healthcare today can be traced to decisions made by legislators; legislators who are not physicians; legislators who do not have the information required to make such decisions. The 2007 Georgia Legislative session, which ended on April 20th, was no exception to this rule. As you can imagine, your lobbyist (me) and my colleagues from MAG, GAFF, and GCAAP were ready for this session to end. Governor Perdue is expected to announce a special session very soon which should not be a major concern, but there is always a chance for unwanted issues to reach the agenda. Please see the HPPC Report for a review of some of the top issues in the 2007 session.

Due to the many issues at the Capitol this year related to healthcare and in an effort to keep you better informed, we have implemented a communication system using blast e-mail and fax capabilities. If you are not receiving this information, please let me know via e-mail at: gaacped@comcast.net or fax: 770-485-7367. With the session completed, I plan to begin visiting members across the state and hope to schedule informational sessions (town hall meetings) so we can learn what you need out in the trenches. Please let me know if you are interested in hosting an information session at your office or hospital for area internists.

The name of this column, VIEWS FROM THE LOFT, was inspired by the view I have from my office, located in the loft of my home. I spend many hours here and find much inspiration, focus and energy when looking upon the great oaks standing tall in the wind and the rain, burdened with a purpose to provide food and shelter for others and drained from the cycle of life. Those that stand alone and in the distance are battle scarred and weak while those standing close together are strong and withstand the raging winds of life. These oaks are much like healthcare professionals and a question remains only you can answer; which oak are you? Perhaps if we each spend a little more time working with and observing our mentors, peers and patients we can find the inspiration and energy needed to call just one more legislator, become a key contact, recruit a colleague or volunteer to serve on a committee. Don't stand alone, become an active member of a great organization as we work together to make it even greater!

In the future this column will highlight some of the plans, goals, visions, challenges and accomplishments of the Chapter. Additionally, it will host information on collaborative efforts with other organizations and tidbits of information from National ACP and last but not least a summary of what we are doing to increase support and provide information to every member of the Chapter. I am here to help you make your organi-

zation a stronger force in the State of Georgia and I look forward to hearing from each of you with comments, questions or concerns. Please contact me at: 770-693-9973 (O), 404-272-3267 (C), 770-485-7367 (F) or via e-mail:gaacped@comcast.net.

Karen Townsend, Executive Director

Georgia ACP Health and Public Policy Spring 2007 Update

STATE ISSUES

We are thrilled to have our new Executive Director and Lobbyist, **Karen Townsend**, on board with us this year. She is leading our legislative efforts as the face and feet of our Georgia Chapter at the state Capitol. Due to her exceptional efforts she is communicating our messages very effectively to our legislators.

State Legislative Wrap Up - Key Legislation and Regulation

Vaccine funding- 4.3M for HPV vaccine was cut. Prompt pay requirement for all insurers in GA, including organizational self insured plans, stalled in House. Childhood Obesity & Diabetes Study Group passed and Senator **Don Thomas**, MD will be chairman. Peach Care-Nothing happened. Medicaid payments were not increased. Chiropractic expansion was limited to massage, vitamin supplements and subluxation definition. Optometrist Prescribing was limited to short course of systemic antibiotics for EYE ONLY. Psychologist Prescribing-Did not pass. Therapeutic Substitution by Pharmacists-Did NOT pass, but will be back. Pathology billing-Did not pass, but will be back. Seatbelt requirement in pick up trucks -did not pass but will be back. Pre-abortion ultrasound must be offered to woman, but not required and will NOT make it a felony if the doctor does not offer. Cord blood registry did pass and committee appointed. Laser use in "Medi-spas"-put under the State Medical Board rather than Cosmetology Board and must be supervised by a physician within 50 miles.

Legislative Agenda for 2008 - Top issues we would like to address include:

- Increasing the tobacco tax while off setting other taxes
- Work with other health partners to address obesity
- Continue to work with the State Health Dept/ Governor's office on funding for vaccinations and vaccinating the underinsured.
- We will continue to defend tort reform and carefully watch scope of practice issues as always.

State Primary Care Legislative Day, Thursday, February 7, 2008. - Mark your calendar.

Your voice and your presence are needed.

FEDERAL ISSUES

ACP Leadership Day in Washington, DC will be May 15-

16. Six members of our chapter will be attending and lobbying our Congressmen on your behalf regarding these issues:

Repeal and Replacement of the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Formula- While the 5% Medicare physician payment cuts for 2007 were averted at the 11th hour, we will face a 10 % cut unless Congress acts before January 2008. A cut of this magnitude will make it difficult for physicians to continue to see Medicare patients and access problems will likely result. We will be urging Congressmen to fix the SGR and replace it with a reimbursement formula that is permanent, predictable, positive, and places an emphasis on care coordination, prevention, and the use of health information technology.

Proposing a New Model, the Patient Centered Medical Home- We will also be advocating for a new model of reimbursement based on the Patient Centered Home that would direct CMS to design, implement and evaluate this new model of physician-guided, patient-centered management and coordination of care for patients with chronic diseases.

Supporting the Implementation of Health Information Technology by the adoption of standards for HIT and the creation of incentives targeted at health professional in small practices and rural communities to help acquire and use HIT.

Funding Title VII and VIII Health Programs that were gutted by ~50% and are particularly important in GA where we need significantly more primary care physicians in the very large underserved rural areas.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Contact your federal representatives and senators. Go to www.acponline/advocacy and let them know how the practice of internal medicine is going for you. Talk to them about how the 10% SGR cut in Medicare reimbursement will affect your ability to practice medicine. Let them know how it is already severely decreasing the number of medical students going into internal medicine, and medicine residents going into the practice of general internal medicine. Let them know how much electronic medical records will cost you at a time when Medicare reimbursement barely covers (if it does) the cost to see the patient in your office.
2. Contact your state representatives and senators. Go to www.vote-smart.org for their contact information based on your zip code. Let them know that if a person wants to practice medicine, they should go to medical school and that tobacco use is a tax payer issue, because we are all paying dearly for tobacco related illnesses.
3. Join the ACP Services, Inc. - the ACP PAC. There is NO OTHER organization at the federal level that supports you and the practice of internal medicine better in the political arena than our own PAC. www.acpservices.org
4. Join the Medical Association of Georgia. There is no other organization at the state level that supports the practice of medicine in the state of Georgia better than MAG.

www.mag.org.

5. Mark your calendar for Primary Care Physician State Legislative Day on Thursday, February 7, 2008 in the Gold Room of the Sloppy Floyd Building across from the State Capitol. Be there!!
6. Remember the state and federal governments dramatically affect the daily practice of medicine. I hope you will decide it is time to step up and get involved in your government.

Jacqueline W. Fincher, MD, FACP
Chair, HPPC, GA Chapter

Hats Off

All members of the GA Chapter express tremendous thanks and gratitude to **Nancy Brady** for her visionary, untiring, loyal service as chapter administrator from 1999 through 2007. Hats Off and thanks to Nancy Brady, who will be a "hard act to follow"!

Photo Gallery

2007 Georgia Chapter Scientific Meeting





Mr. William J. Todd, President and CEO of the Georgia Cancer Coalition, accepted the award for Mr. Hamilton, which was presented by Vince Nicolais, MD, FACP, Governor-elect, GA ACP Chapter.



Joseph W. Stubbs, MD, FACP, past Governor, Georgia Chapter; member, ACP Foundation Board of Trustees; and ACP Regent.



Special recognition gift to the College Representative, Kathleen Weaver, MD, MACP presented by Dr. Vince Nicolais.



Community-based Teaching Award recognizes a physician who has had a sustained and significant impact as a teacher in the community on medical students, residents and other medical professionals. This year's recipient was Barry D. Silverman, MD, FACP.



The Laureate Award honors Fellows or Masters of the ACP who have demonstrated an abiding commitment to excellence in medical care, education, or research, as well as service to their community, their Chapter, and the American College of Physicians. This year's recipient was Jacqueline Fincher, MD, FACP.



The J.W. Hurst Award was established in 1991 to honor a Georgia member or Fellow in the College for his/her outstanding teaching activities. This year's recipient was Chinedu C. Ivonye, MD.



Presentation of students' awards by Lisa Bernstein, MD and T. Andrew Albritton, MD, FACP

The Community Service-Volunteerism Award recognizes chapter members who have made exemplary contributions through volunteerism and community service, including selfless devotion to the welfare of others. This year's recipient was Jada Bussey-Jones, MD.



Photo Gallery, from page 7



Walter Moore, MD, FACP 2007 Meeting Chair 2007



*Chesley Richards, MD, FACP 2007
Meeting Co-chair*

**Visit the Chapter Website at
www.acponline.org/chapters/ga**