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Governor's Report

It's been a little over a year since I became your Iowa Governor and I can assure you that being Governor is both rewarding and challenging.

The ACP continues to advocate for internists as generalists and specialists, and especially for our patients who are finding it ever more difficult to find primary care physicians and affordable high quality health care. We in Iowa bear the distinction of practicing medicine of the highest quality by national measures and being rewarded with nearly the lowest nationwide reimbursement rates. A group of your colleagues, including medical students and residents in training, visited Capitol Hill in May to lobby for the interests of Iowa internists and their patients (see Leadership Day on page 4).

To be effective advocates we need to retain and expand our membership. ACP is the largest specialty organization in the U.S. and the second largest medical organization. Through its Washington, D.C. office it has established a reputation for balance, leadership and patient advocacy within the halls of Congress. Its voice is heard by your elected leaders and their legislative staffs, not just on Leadership Day, but throughout the year. ACP guidelines and position statements are a valued source of unbiased information to inform the legislative and regulatory processes.

Chapter Dues: At the request of the ACP Board of Governors, the ACP Board of Regents has agreed to require all ACP members to pay chapter dues beginning in July 2008. The Boards see this decision as an essential step to strengthen ACP Chapters and accomplish a number of important goals for our profession such as ensuring optimal care for patients, securing appropriate payments for internists, providing effective training and supporting life-long learning. Our Iowa chapter dues will continue at \$40 per year, so the effect is only a small addition to the national dues. Please continue your membership in our organization and support of our national advocacy efforts, the excellent ACP educational offerings and your local Iowa Chapter. Your chapter dues support the travel costs for students and associates to present posters at the national meeting (see IM 2008 on page 2) as well as to attend Leadership Day to advocate for patients and the profession (see Leadership Day on page 4). If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

This spring's newsletter contains information on many of our activities over the last few months. I would like to draw your attention particularly to the newly formed Council of Young Physicians headed by **Chris Dyer** from Davenport. If you are interested in getting active with the group, contact Chris.

Last, I wish to personally thank a departing member our Iowa ACP family, **Dr. Christine Reimer**. Christie has been a leader in ACP in Kansas before join-

ing us in Iowa. During her Iowa sojourn she has supported the medical student Club Med at UI, been associate program director of the UI residency program, a member of the national Council of Young Physicians and was the energy behind getting our local CYP off the ground. She is moving to Colorado with her pulmonologist husband and bouncing baby where she will be in private practice. She will be missed. Her energy and professional dedication is a model for us all.

IM 2008

The ACP annual meeting was in Washington, D.C. May 14-17. The late spring date and the Washington D.C. location resulted from the necessity of moving the meeting from New Orleans in April as originally scheduled due to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The educational program was excellent as usual and it was great to see so many Lowans in attendance. We had a reception on Friday evening with the Kansas and Nebraska delegations that was well attended. Washington in the spring is truly inspiring.

Our chapter supported the attendance of two associates, and one student at IM 2008 so that they could present their posters that were selected on the basis of a nationwide competition. **Dr. Farid Moussavi-Harami** (UI R3) presented a case entitled "*Renal Vein Thrombosis Presenting as Late Post-Partum Eclampsia*," **Dr. Sailesh Harwani** (UI R2) presented "*A Yellow Patient*" a case of *primary sclerosing cholangitis*, and Ms. *Elizabeth Coon* presented "*Collapsing Patient, Collapsing Patience*" a case of somatization disorder. **Mr. Ben Robbins'** (UI M3) poster "*Non-Specific Interstitial Pneumonia: Expect the Unexpected*," which was selected as one of the winners for the Medical Student Poster Competition; his mentor was **Dr. Wael El Maraachli**. Congratulations, Ben and Wael; we have had a student poster winner each of the last two years.

For those who are unable to attend the national meeting, I strongly suggest ordering the ACP lectures on one of the audio or audio-visual formats. The selection is comprehensive and brings all the major educational offerings to you in your home or office. The programs are available on audio tapes, CD, and new this year are audio-visual DVDs linked to the slide presentations. I have used the tapes every year for at least a decade. They are perfect for listening while I walk on the treadmill during those cold dark winter evenings. If you have not used this learning tool, give it a try. I think it will also whet your interest in attending IM 2009 April 23-25 in Philadelphia.

FELLOWSHIP

I am delighted to announce that four new fellows were inducted at Convocation in Washington D.C.: **Drs. Bertha Ayi** (Sioux City), **Alan Hilgersen** (Des Moines), **Scott R. Wilson** (Iowa City) and **Gary Hemann** (West Des Moines). Fellowship is an honor within reach of most members. There are several routes to fellowship which are explained on the ACP website. We are happy to assist everyone with advancement to fellowship.

IOWA CHAPTER SCIENTIFIC MEETING, MARCH 28-29, 2008

We had a very successful chapter meeting at the end of March. The weather cooperated so travel was not an issue and over 130 members, associates and students gathered in Iowa City. Our Regent Representative was **Dr. Dennis Schaberg**, Chief of Medicine for the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System. Dr. Schaberg not only gave a report on the activities of the ACP in advocacy at the national level, but presented a case in our new series on "*The Uses of Error*." This is a chance for members to present cases where errors occurring during patient care have stimulated improvements in our systems of care. Sharing these cases with colleagues is valuable to acknowledge our fallibility and to help others, especially our students and associates, learn from our experiences and begin building their own improvement culture.

Our invited speaker this year was **Dr. Jan Hirschmann**, Professor of Internal Medicine, at the University of Washington and the Seattle VAH. Jan is a doctor's doctor, a great teacher and polymath. His talks on "*Plato's Cave: Six Months as a Chest Radiologist*," "*The Skin Manifestations of Diabetes*" and "*Benjamin Franklin and Medicine*" were entertaining, informative and thought provoking. I plan to invite an equally outstanding speaker from outside Iowa for our next Chapter meeting on March 27-28, 2009. In addition to UI faculty, several members gave presentations in either plenary or workshop sessions including **Drs. Michael Ohl** (Des Moines-ID), **Chris Dyer** (Davenport-nephrology) and **John Yost** (Des Moines-GIM).

I encourage members to present cases at the chapter meeting in either the "*Pearls from Practice*" or the "*Uses of Error*"

workshops. If there is a case you have participated in that you found particularly educational (something unusual, important and instructive) then send me a short abstract of the case with the key learning points. I will try to get as many of these on the program next year as possible.

A special treat was the Friday evening reception where we recognize outstanding contributions to the Iowa Chapter and to the citizens of Iowa. This year's Laureate Awards recognizing outstanding dedication to the Iowa ACP and leadership in medical education and practice went to **Drs. Scott R. Wilson** (Iowa City) and **John Yost** (Des Moines). Scott is the director of the UI hospitalist program and John is the program director of the Iowa Methodist Internal Medicine Residency Training Program. The Volunteerism and Community Service Award was given to **Dr. William Galbraith**, MACP for his contributions to the Cedar Rapids Community Health Free Clinic. The Iowa ACP Chapter Excellence Award was given to **Dr. Tom MacIntosh**, MACP for his lifetime of contributions to ACP, his community and to medical education and service in Iowa. Tom and Bill are superb examples of what a lifetime of practice, learning and dedication to the profession and to their community can accomplish. We thank them both.

IOWA CHAPTER BUSINESS MEETING, MARCH 28, 2008

The Business Meeting focused on committee reports including the financial report which showed us to be solvent and able to meet our anticipated obligations for the next year. Four resolutions brought forward by **Dr. Peter Reiter**-each addressing a different part of the challenge facing primary care. They were discussed, amended slightly, and approved by the Council and the membership. The ACP resolution process is how the State Chapters help to make ACP policy which will be advocated to members of Congress. These resolutions will be presented to the Board of Governors in September:

1. **RESOLVED**, that the ACP seek state and federal legislation in addition to the National Health Service Corps to offer loan forgiveness to any physician choosing a primary care specialty (general internal medicine, family medicine or general pediatrics) such that:
 - a) No interest accrues or payment is required during residency training,
 - b) 10% of the total debt be forgiven for each year for up to 10 years, including interest, commencing with entering primary care practice,
 - c) More rapid forgiveness, such as 20% per year be offered for practice located in high need geographic areas such as Health Professions Shortage areas, and
 - d) Payment of the accrued interest on the entire debt plus the unforgiven principal be required if such physician leaves primary care during the period of practice required for loan forgiveness, except for military or public service, illness, disability or death.
2. **RESOLVED**, that the American College of Physicians work with other primary care organizations, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the American Medical Association to rebalance the composition of the Relative Value Scale Update Committee (RUC) such that the proportion of primary care members more closely reflects the 50% of Medicare services provided by primary care physicians.
3. **RESOLVED**, that the American College of Physicians seek federal policy to direct the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to begin immediately, and complete over 8-10 years, rebalancing the disparity between reimbursement for evaluation and management (E & M) codes and procedural codes.
4. **RESOLVED**, that the American College of Physicians seek change in federal Medicare policy such that all geographic modifiers for Medicare reimbursements are completely phased out over no more than 8 years and that the practice expense Geographic Practice Cost Index be immediately given a floor value of 1.0 while this transition is begun.

IOWA ACP COUNCIL OF YOUNG PHYSICIANS

I send you greetings from the newly minted Council of Young Physicians (CYP). The ACP refers to a Young Physician as a practicing physician within 16 years of completing medical school. The CYP, the first of its kind in Iowa, has been appointed by the Governor to increase involvement of younger Iowa internists with the Iowa ACP and to revitalize interest in internal medicine practice in all of its forms for practicing physicians, residents and medical students.

The founding CYP members are: **Chris Dyer, chair**, internist and nephrologist from Davenport; **Christie Reimer**, hospitalist, assistant professor of internal medicine and associate residency program director at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, IA; **Steven Joyce**, internist and pediatrician from Sioux City, IA; **Sadia Sait**, internist from Ottumwa; **Tyler Schwiesow**, hospitalist from Des Moines, IA; and **Brenda Buikema**, hospitalist from Iowa City.

The CYP plans to coordinate small meetings around Iowa to come together with general and subspecialty internists, discuss interesting cases, review ACP resources and activities and share professional collegiality. Groundwork is underway to provide CME for these activities. ACP On the Road will premier in Davenport later this year with further venues to be determined. If you have suggestions for venues or cases, are interested in participating with the CYP, or know of other physicians similarly inclined, please contact any of the members listed above, or our fearless Governor.

Christopher Dyer, MD, medicsinger@hotmail.com, Chair, Iowa Chapter CYP

RFL Editorial Comment: The strikethrough is mine; I am not fearless. My goal is for young internists, the future of Iowa primary care and subspecialist internal medicine, to take the reins of the Iowa ACP with the mentorship from the previous (that is to say my) generation. Our chapter should strive to have dynamic leadership from practicing physicians in their thirties and forties who will build regional and national prominence as leaders of the next generation of internal medicine.

LEADERSHIP DAY

On May 13 and 14 our chapter was represented on Capitol Hill by **Richard LeBlond**, Iowa ACP Governor, **Peter Reiter** (Ottumwa), **Bertha Ayi** (Sioux City), **Christie Reimer** (Iowa City), Methodist Program Associates **Sadia Ashraf-Benson** and **Brian Freeman**, UI Associate Aash Bhatt and medical students members **Emily Haines** (DMU) and **Ben Robbins** (UI). We were able to spend time personally with **Senator Harkin** and **Rep. Latham**, to meet with the Health Policy Counsel for **Senator Grassley** and also with the legislative associates on health issues for the other congressmen. As usual, the most telling stories-and stories and anecdotes are important to legislators-were those of limited access to services, the decline of interest in internal medicine and primary care, and especially the impediments felt by students to pursuing primary care due to intimidating levels of educational debt and the poor levels of primary care reimbursement.

The ACP's primary legislative "Asks"-what you ask your Senator and Congressmen to do for you-are:

1. **Physician payment updates under Medicare should be positive and predictable.** This is the SGR issue we have been facing every year since 1998. All our legislators know the current system is broken and needs to be fixed; the stumbling block is finding the 280 billion dollars to fix it. In the current environment of budget neutrality this money has to come from other programs, which won't happen in an election year. The prospect is good for an 18 month positive update with the long term fix left to the next congress.
2. **Preserve Access to Primary Care.** ACP is advocating for payment reforms to support primary care, retention incentives for practicing primary care physicians and loan forgiveness programs for students and residents choosing primary care specialties and practices in primary care.
3. **Enhance Care Coordination through the Patient Centered Medical Home.** Expansion of the demonstration projects into every state is recommended by ACP. The coalition in support of the PCMH model includes all of the primary care specialty organizations and the concept is gaining traction in Congress.

Please consider joining the ACP PAC which lobbies directly with Congress. Also, you can become a Key Contact through the ACP website. You can use the advocacy material of the ACP and the direct email contact through the ACP to communicate with your Senators and congressman. If you are interested in participating in the next Leadership Day, please let me know.

Photo Gallery



Senator Harkin with the Iowa ACP Leadership Day delegation, from L to R: Ben Robins, Emily Haines, Richard LeBlond, Christie Reimer, Aash Bhatt, Senator Harkin, Bertha Ayi, Sadia Ashraf-Benson, Brian Haines, Peter Reiter.

Drs. LeBlond and Moussavi



Drs. Harwani and LeBlond