



## Governor's Newsletter

Two years ago, when I became your Governor, I was convinced that significant change in the health care system was necessary and imminent. I wrote, "It is becoming increasingly clear that to achieve our goals of a just, quality health care system, in which internists will certainly have a central role, we need to become even more engaged in political/public policy decisions. In a sense, the present system is broken and breaking. While this may continue to have short-term severe consequences it also gives us an opportunity ("tipping point") to make significant permanent changes for the better."

Congress and the president are now negotiating/debating just what universal coverage will entail. (Will this be a government health plan to compete with private insurers?) How will it be financed? (Whose taxes will be raised?) But there is general agreement as to needed changes in the "delivery" system. This is where the College has been actively involved and has had significant input. We were able to meet with our Senators and Representatives during Leadership Day in May and ACP Leadership has been to the White House and regularly on Capitol Hill.

Some of these changes include a rational health "manpower" training program policy, comparative effectiveness research (headed by **Hal Sox, FACP**, former editor of the *Annals*) and a significant change in emphasis for Primary Care. Of course, we don't know what the final package will be but it should include our increase in payments for primary care codes as well as payments for coordinated care management (e.g. Patient-Centered Medical Home) and preservation of the incentives for needed specialty care for those of us whose practices are largely procedure/consultative based.

In New Mexico during the last legislative session, we were able to help pass legislation authorizing establishment of Medical Homes. The New Mexico Medical Society is working with our Health Plans to begin implementation. I have been appointed chairman of an ad hoc committee to help do so. I have and will continue to consult with the College to help in this process.

It is clear that all of this will continue to evolve. Please give me your input/suggestions and I will try to apply them locally as well as pass them on nationally. I encourage all of you to become/remain involved with these changes. We will know much more by the time of our Annual Education Meeting in Albuquerque, October 16-17, 2009, at the Embassy Suites.

We have a terrific program prepared for you highlighting updates in ambulatory medicine, hospital medicine, rheumatology and nephrology, obesity, treating tuberculosis in Indian Country, associates' presentations, Doctor's Dilemma<sup>TM</sup> competition, Thieves' Market, and small group sessions. To register for the NMACP Annual Scientific Meeting go to [http://www.acponline.org/about\\_acp/chapters/nm](http://www.acponline.org/about_acp/chapters/nm) or call 800-523-1546 ex 2600, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET. I look forward to meeting with you all in October.

Regards,  
Mike