

Leadership Day 2008

Over 500 attendees from across the country came to Washington, DC on May 13 and 14 for ACP's 2008 Leadership Day. Attendance increased from 320 last year to over 500 this year, underscoring the importance of this event to the College's advocacy agenda.

The Ohio Chapter of ACP was represented by 11 members, including 1 Medical Student, 4 Associates and 1 Young Physician. It was our largest contingent ever; and by far the best representative of all segments of our Ohio ACP population. Our delegation included **Drs. Carlos Aguilar** (Associate from Cincinnati), **Chris Allen** (Chair-Elect, ACP Council of Associates, from Shaker Heights), **David Bronson** (Chair, ACP Board of Governors, from Moreland Hills), **Barry Brook** (FACP from Cincinnati), **Robert Crook** (Associate from Brooklyn, Ohio), **Alice Faryna** (Ohio ACP Health and Public Policy Committee member, from Columbus), **Lynn Jones** (Council of Young Physicians Leadership Day Essay Winner, from Dayton), **Mark Mayer** (ACP Ohio Governor, from University Heights), **Ali Parand** (Associate from Dayton), **Scott Stienecker** (FACP and Health and Public Policy committee member, from Lima), and Medical Student **Jacqueline Coloe** (Vice-Chair, Council of Student Members, from Columbus).

We advocated for patients and Internal Medicine physicians during our congressional visitations. The preparatory meeting 5/13/08 included discussion of advocacy skills for first-time attendees, an update on the Washington landscape by **ACP Public Policy VP Bob Doherty**, and briefings on health issues by congressional staffers. ACP's priority issues this year include seeking an 18-month reprieve from looming Medicare SGR cuts; support for our multifaceted effort to shore up primary care (including primary care IM; the bill under development includes student debt relief and new payment models); and expansion of Patient Centered Medical Home demonstrations in Medicare, set to begin in 2009. We also advocated (the ACP Ohio chapter notably more vigorously than many other chapters) for universal access to health care, as we have made this a long-term priority; support for medical education, especially in Internal Medicine; adequate funding for medical research, especially in areas that affect Internists' practices; and federal support for the adoption by medical practices of Health Information Technology.

Several awards were given at dinner May 13, including the Top Ten Key Contacts of the Year; one of these was given to **Dr. Murli Manohar**, who has visited with our delegation for the past 3 years. The Joseph Boyle award for public service was given to **Marcy Kaptur**, D-Toledo, for her efforts to support access to care. Her efforts in this regard began after our visit at Leadership Day in 2003.

Our contingent from the Ohio ACP visited both of our Senators and 16 Ohio Representatives on May 14, 2008. **Marcy Kaptur** and **Steven LaTourette**, who have co-introduced ACP-supported Health Care Access legislation in the last 3 congressional sessions, won our inaugural Legislator of the Year awards last fall. As they could not make it to our Chapter Meeting in Columbus, we presented their awards during our visits to their offices during Leadership Day visits May 14.

I have witnessed a growing trend of our congress members being more receptive to our messages over the time that I have been visiting in DC (this is my 12th time in 14 years). The ACP is increasingly recognized for advocacy for universal access and patient-centered care.

At the end of our Capitol Hill visits, there was a "*white coat*" rally to demonstrate how important ACP views our access and workforce crises (driven by student debt burden and dysfunctional payment system). Overall, it was an excellent meeting. Members of the Ohio Chapter advocated well for Internists and our patients. This is one concrete example of the Chapter working for its members.

Mark Mayer, MD, FACP
Governor, Ohio Chapter of ACP