



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*

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UPDATE FROM PCIM

Editor's Note: This periodic communication to our members is supplemented by email announcements. If you are not receiving these emails, send your email address to the state office at pcim.hq@verizon.net. Your comments and suggestions are welcome anytime and in any mode.

Annual Meeting Set for Oct. 24 - 26 Coding Workshop Money Back Guarantee

Pennsylvania internists and residents will benefit from a fantastic line-up of scientific programs, an excellent Coding Workshop, and special events at the October 24, 25 and 26, 2003 Annual Meeting in Harrisburg. Many thanks to Program Chair Noel Ballentine and his Program Committee. Their goal was to offer a program that all internists, and especially primary care physicians, would find invaluable.

They succeeded! We are so confident you will receive real "take home" value from the program that PCIM will refund your registration fee if you do not improve your office coding within 30 days of returning home. Guaranteed! No questions asked.

Noel and his Committee recruited an outstanding faculty. They added a new feature to help each of you participate: Interactive Keypad Technology will be incorporated in each of the scientific and educational programs.

Nice job, Noel and the Committee!

A few highlights:

- **End-of- Life Care**
- **Mastering the Art of Coding**
- **Putting the Fun Back into Medicine**
- **Rediscovering Treatment of Diabetes**
- **Dermatology for the Primary Care Physician**
- **Office Diagnosis of Common Orthopaedic Problems**
- **Advocacy Report –What PCIM Is Doing For You**
- **Residents Poster Program and Medical Jeopardy**
- **Two Receptions – meet and catch up with colleagues**
- **Exhibitors**
- **Inaugural PCIM Golf Tournament**
- **13 category 1CMEs for \$195 – a bargain from PCIM**

Register Now!

PCIM SERVICES – OUR ADVOCATE REPORTS

John Nikoloff, President of Capital Associates, is public affairs consultant and lobbyist for PCIM Services, our advocacy organization. Below is his update on the many issues in state government that directly impact the practice of internal medicine in Pennsylvania.

Remember the medical malpractice crisis?

A major issue that continues to fester outside Harrisburg is the crisis in medical malpractice insurance. Despite proposals from the Governor and passage of legislation to allow the public to decide if the General Assembly can place caps on non-economic damages, the Senate has not yet fully debated the issue, nor passed legislation of its own. Senate GOP leadership and most Senate Democrats have opposed the Constitutional amendment to permit caps.

For short term relief, then-Governor Schweiker extended the time for physicians to make payments into the Mcare Fund until July 1. Governor Rendell has promised that the state will "forgive" from 50 to 100% of physicians' required payments into the fund for 2003. Recently Governor Rendell extended the payment deadline until September 15. Now, with no budget or funding in place to provide for physician payments into the fund, that deadline looms large for physicians. The Governor originally said he would fund the \$220 million in payments with money from the reserves of the state's Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans, but last month he changed his tune, and said the funding would be part of the budget negotiations. With those negotiations in limbo, so is payment of the Mcare fund liability.

And the Senate is in no hurry to take up this issue, preferring to take the summer to hold stakeholder meetings. They plan to review the med mal crisis in the fall session.

ELECTIONS FOR COUNCIL SEAT SCHEDULED

Two members, **Pete Decker** from Wilkes-Barre and **Ben Lloyd** from Reading, are candidates of the PCIM Council from the Eastern Chapter. Their bios are on page 3. The ballot is on page 4. Only Members, Fellows and Masters of ACP may vote in the Council elections.

PCIM thanks Nominating Committee Chair **David George** from Reading and his committee, **Zubina Mawji** from Lehigh Valley and **Bob Wright** from Scranton, for recruiting these excellent candidates.

From the Governor

This is my first letter as the Governor for the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians and the Pennsylvania College of Internal Medicine. As I believe you know, Herbert Reynolds, who was the Governor, stepped down when he took a position at the National Institute of Health, and Dr. Bob Aber, as the prior Governor, filled in until I could take over in April of this year. Usually the Governor-elect has one year to get up to speed about the operations of the organization and I ask your indulgence as I try to understand the responsibilities as Governor. As you know, in the past year the American College of Physicians/American Society of Internal Medicine has changed its name to the American College of Physicians. Having been a member of both organizations before they merged, I believe they both served an extremely important function for Internal Medicine and I hope that the emphasis that the American Society of Internal Medicine had on the social and economic issues that face Internal Medicine continues to be fostered in the combined organization. Although there are many factors impacting on Internal Medicine today, there is no question that the political and economic problems that face us undermines all the positive aspects of Internal Medicine and its specialties as fields of practice.

At the State level, the major issue that faces us is the malpractice crisis. As this letter is being written, the legislature still has not finalized a budget and although the Governor has come up with a stopgap measure to decrease the cost of physicians for MCare coverage, the ongoing funding for this has not been identified. Furthermore, the Governor's plan does not really address the underlying problems leading to the malpractice crisis and, until we get real reform, the struggle will continue. As you know, many who have looked at the problem have identified caps on pain and suffering as one mechanism to begin to control costs and I believe the data supports this. However, we must remember that there are a number of other actions that need to be taken before we truly have reformed the current system. It does not protect patients, or improve the quality of health care in the Commonwealth and is a factor in increasing the costs of health care.

Being an active participant in the political process is truly important if we are to solve these problems. Physicians have not historically been active in voicing their views and positions on important matters that impact health care delivery. I want to strongly encourage you to become an active member of the VoterVOICE Network. The Pennsylvania College of Internal Medicine has invested in this e-mail based system for you to communicate with your federal and state legislators. I have used it a few times and found it extremely easy to use and actually have gotten replies from legislators.

I want to strongly encourage you to save the dates of October 24 through 26 for the Pennsylvania College of Internal Medicine's annual meeting to be held at the Hilton Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Dr. Noel Ballentine from Hershey has taken on the responsibility for running this year's meeting and is committed to making it valuable for those who participate. Among other topics to be included are Coding for Optimal Reimbursement, State of the Art Insulin Treatments, End of Life Issues and Pain Management, Common Orthopedic Diagnoses. Common Dermatologic Diagnoses. The sessions will be available for CME credits. There will also be State Legislative updates and other planned activities. There is a lot of enthusiasm for this year's meeting and hope that we will have excellent attendance.

It is truly a distinct honor to me to have been chosen by you to be the Governor for the Eastern Chapter. I realize that being elected to the Governorship brings with it a responsibility to represent the membership and try, to the best of my ability, to improve the field of Internal Medicine.

John Fitzgibbons, MD, FACP

Congratulations to Our New Fellows

Joseph Baar - Pittsburgh
R. Hal Baker - York
Denis M. Bane - Orwigsburg
John W. Blotzer - York
Julia B. Brody - Philadelphia
William W. Cady - Athens
Kofi Clarke - Pittsburgh
Alicia M. Conill - Ambler
Frederick B. Doerfler, Jr - Kittanning
Michael C. Dresser - Glassport
Richard E. Friedenheim - Maple Glen
Richard A. Gambescia - Philadelphia
Margarita R. Gareis - Camp Hill
Michael Gilhooley - Clarks Summit

Robert Gross - Philadelphia
Darby G. Hand - Hershey
K.M. Anwar Hussain - Johnstown
Serge A. Jabbour - Philadelphia
Ronald R. Julia - Bethlehem
Howard S. Klein - Haverford
Mark C. Knouse - Allentown
Paul G. Lacey - Harrisburg
Jeremy Levin - Devon
Harvey M. Licht - Wynnewood
Zubina Mawji - Allentown
James R. Mulinda - Philadelphia
Lazaros A. Nikolaidis -Pittsburgh

Prameela M. Palli - Media
Vincent Pearson -Philadelphia
Mohammad N. Saqib - Breinigsville
E. Joseph Schwiter -Moscow
Rajendra N. Seth -Elkins Park
Surendra Shah - Macungie
Christopher G. Skinner -Meadville
Philippe O. Szapary - Philadelphia
John M. Travaline, Jr. - North Wales
Anthony S. Vitelli - Bethel Park
Eric W. Vogel - Blue Bell
Joel D. Warshaw -Pittsburgh
Ronald J. Williams - Harrisburg

MEET THE EASTERN CHAPTER CANDIDATES

Peter G. Decker, MD, FACP

Pete Decker has been a member of ACP since 1985 and was advanced to Fellow in 1989. He earned a B.S. in Biology, Summa Cum Laude, from King's College in 1977, and an M.D. from The Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in 1981. He completed residency training in Internal Medicine in the Scranton-Temple Residency Program in 1984, and is ABIM certified in Internal Medicine with added qualification in Geriatric Medicine.

Dr. Decker has served as Director of Medical Education (1984-94), Chief of Medicine (1993-97), Trustee (1996-2002) and Chief of Staff (1997-2001) at Mercy Hospital in Wilkes-Barre. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at Penn State's College of Medicine, and serves as a reviewer for ABIM's qualifying examination in Geriatrics. He is a regular participant in PCIM and ACP annual meetings.

Benjamin J. Lloyd, MD, FACP

Ben Lloyd has been a member of ACP since completing his residency in 1992. He is a graduate of Hahnemann University Medical School. He completed his internal medicine residency and was chosen as Chief Medical Resident at the Reading Hospital and Medical Center. After several years in the private practice of internal medicine, Dr. Lloyd joined the internal medicine teaching faculty at Reading Hospital, where he maintains a private practice of general internal medicine. He advanced to fellow in 1999.

A Clinical Assistant Professor in Medicine at Temple University, Dr. Lloyd has providing didactics and mentoring for medical students at all levels of training. He has been honored for his outpatient teaching. He also serves on the Executive Council of the Berks County Medical Society and has represented the County as a delegate to the PMS Young Physicians Section.

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ACP Wants to Help You Put ACASA Into Practice!

The American College of Physicians' Adult Immunization Initiative is seeking general internists in private practice in Pennsylvania for participation in an exciting study aimed at increasing adult vaccination coverage rates. Our program, *Put ACASA Into Practice!* is a team-oriented, practice-based intervention study that will allow physicians and their staff to improve the delivery of immunization services for influenza and pneumococcal disease among their patients. Our approach will address the issues at the practice level that hinder delivery of these crucial preventive services to adults.

What is ACASA? The Adult Clinic Assessment Software Application (ACASA) is a database program developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an assessment tool for immunization providers that is available free on the CDC web site. ACASA has the capability to assess immunization levels, produce a variety of reports to help clinical staff diagnose service delivery problems and improve the quality of patient care.

What are the goals of the study? We plan to measure and report the impact of ACASA on immunization rates among participating physician practices over three years. We expect to see an increase of 25% in the practice's immunization rates as a result of the study. Just as importantly, we hope to create a positive experience wherein immunization of adults becomes the standard of care in practice.

Here's how it works: Two members from participating practices (one physician and a designated "immunization champion") will attend a one-day training session to be held at ACP headquarters in Philadelphia this fall. The cost of travel and lodging will be provided, along with a per diem to cover meals and other expenses. Participants will learn how to use the ACASA program to create a registry to determine immunization rates in the practice for influenza and pneumococcal for patients overall and for patients at high risk. This initial sample will serve as baseline data for comparison during the next two years of the study. The training will also incorporate a systems learning component that will examine the ways in which the practice environment can be tailored to best facilitate implementation and sustained use of the ACASA program in order to achieve immunization goals over the long-term.

To respond to this announcement or for more information, please contact Matt Smith at 215-351-2602, or via e-mail at msmith@acponline.org.

BALLOT

Election for Council Members from Eastern PA Region

In keeping with PCIM Bylaws, only Members, Fellows, or Masters may vote.

Please vote for ONE. Check your selections and fax this ballot to *PCIM (610) 543-6806*, or mail to:

PCIM, Suite 230, 1489 Baltimore Pike, Springfield, PA 19064-3958.

All Ballots must be returned by October 13, 2003

_____ **Peter G. Decker, MD, FACP**

_____ **Benjamin J. Lloyd, MD, FACP**