

## Governor's Message

Since my last communication to you, our country has elected a new President and a new year is upon us. I thought it would be useful to reflect back on the accomplishments of our Chapter in 2008 and describe some of the opportunities and challenges that confront us in 2009. Our Eastern Chapter continues to grow with 2,252 members, up from 2,124 one year ago. It is exciting to see the growth in our student members (296 compared to 217 one year ago), which hopefully reflects a renewed interest among medical students in our specialty.

In November, we hosted an Internal Medicine Student Interest Dinner for medical students of Penn State College of Medicine. The event was well-attended with approximately 85 students and several internal medicine faculty from the College of Medicine in attendance. **Richard Baron, M.D., FACP**, a practicing internist in Philadelphia and the current Chair of the American Board of Internal Medicine, was our keynote speaker. He emphasized the immense personal and professional satisfaction Internal Medicine affords us, with the opportunity to develop long-term relationships with patients, and the intellectual challenges of caring for patients with complex problems. He also was very upfront about the current ills of our U.S health care system, and the special challenges for the internist, especially for those practicing general internal medicine. **Dr. Baron's** Internal Medicine practice is one of the few practices in southeastern PA selected to be part of the pilot for **Governor Rendell's** chronic care demonstration project, which has many features of the Patient Centered Medical Home. **Dr. Baron's** practice has a full electronic medical record with e-prescribing, employs a nurse who focuses on care coordination, and utilizes several patient registries for chronic disease management. He also described an initiative in his practice in which email requests for colonoscopies to local gastroenterologists led to a significant increase in patients having the procedure performed compared to the traditional paper-based requests.

The Patient Centered Medical Home continues to be a major ACP-sponsored initiative at both the national and state level. There are a number of Medicare demonstration pilot initiatives underway. **Governor Rendell's** Prescription for Pennsylvania also provides support for additional Patient Centered Medical Home pilot projects. The initial pilot is in Southeastern PA where 32 diverse primary care practices are participating. Financial support is coordinated by the Governor's Office for Healthcare Reform and provided from our IPIP grant and the insurance industry. There are planned roll-outs this spring for South Central PA and South West PA.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the ACP co-sponsored six educational dinners on the Patient Centered Medical Home in September and October throughout the state. We are pleased that several of our members including **Ralph Schmeltz, M.D., FACP, FACE** from Pittsburgh, **Eric Gertner, M.D., FACP** from Allentown and **Robert Gabbay, M.D.** from Hershey serve on **Governor Rendell's** Chronic Care Commission. At our September council meeting, **Ron Barg, M.D., FACP** presented an overview of his practice's experience in the Southeastern PA PCMH pilot. He stressed the necessary infrastructure and resources to support a PCMH practice. The real question will be whether the PCMH will result in improved health care outcomes with a reduction

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in overall health care costs. The Medicare and Pennsylvania PCMH pilots hopefully will provide an answer to this question. I will do my best to provide up-to-date information about the evolution of the PCMH.

On October 2, ACP **Governor Chuck Cutler (Southeastern PA)** and I hosted a dinner in King of Prussia, PA to discuss the process for advancement to Fellowship in the American College of Physicians. Approximately 50 physicians from both regions attended the event and we were assisted by membership staff from the national ACP office. Since that event, I have reviewed 30 proposals for advancement to Fellowship for the Eastern PA Chapter. I look forward to recognizing these physicians during Convocation at Internal Medicine 2009 in Philadelphia. I hope many of you will consider attending the annual ACP session, Internal Medicine 2009, which always is a very well organized and high quality educational experience. **Mark your calendars now for April 23 - 26, 2009 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Chapter will once again host a reception on Friday evening, April 24. The location will be the Vietnam Palace, 222 North 11th St. in Philadelphia, very near the Convention Center.**

The winner of the Medical Jeopardy tournament was Lehigh Valley Hospital, which went on to win the Pennsylvania ACP competition held in Hershey, PA on December 6, 2008. The team from Lehigh Valley Hospital will be competing in the national Jeopardy Tournament in Philadelphia during Internal Medicine 2009. Congratulations to Lehigh Valley Hospital and our winners of the Abstract and Poster competition. A special thanks to **David George, M.D., FACP**, Program Director of Internal Medicine Residency Program, and his colleagues from Reading Hospital for hosting a very well-organized event in their new education center. Next year's event will also be held at The Reading Hospital on November 14, 2009.

Our December council meeting featured **Richard Baron, M.D., FACP**, and Chair of the American Board of Internal Medicine who spoke about "*ABIM and the Future of Maintenance of Certification.*" The secure computerized examination for the MOC is now much more relevant to clinical practice. (I can attest to this as a recent member of the ABIM Test Writing Committee.) The leadership of ABIM and ACP has worked together so that a number of ACP self-evaluation products such as the MKSAP can be used for MOC credit. **Dr. Baron** also spoke about the special role of the Performance Improvement component of MOC. There are a growing number of Practice Improvement Modules (PIM) available, including Clinical Preventive Services, Diabetes, Preventive Cardiology, Asthma, Hypertension, Care of the Vulnerable Elderly, Hospital Care, Care of the Mechanically Ventilated Patient and Communication, just to name a few. The value of physician self-audits should not be overlooked. From a personal perspective, I have recently completed the requirements for the MOC in Geriatrics, including the PIM on communication. I utilized the American Geriatrics Society's Geriatric Review Syllabus to prepare for the exam and attended several ACP sponsored SEP Modules including the one our Chapter sponsored in Hershey last spring. The Communication PIM was very enlightening for me as the patient survey results caused me to reflect on how I could improve in some areas. For example, I learned that too many of my patients perceived that I was interrupting them during office visits and that I needed to be more thorough in communicating my plan of care. I must admit that seeing this data was a humbling experience. However, it was also gratifying to see a marked improvement on a follow-up patient survey on these specific domains of patient communication. Most importantly, I believe my patients are benefitting as a direct result of this Practice Improvement Module. Our chapter will once again sponsor a full day SEP program on Update in Ambulatory and Update in Hospital Medicine on March 14, 2009 in Hershey, PA. Once again, we are pleased to have **Edward Bollard, M.D, FACP** and **Marc Shalaby, M.D, FACP**, two highly respected internists and residency program directors, serve as faculty for this educational program. It will be a highly interactive session utilizing the audience- response system. Please plan to attend. Announcements have been distributed electronically.

Our annual Awards Dinner was held December 6, 2008 at the Hershey Country Club. This event is always a highlight for our council as we recognize outstanding internists in our region. **Mary O'Keefe, M.D., FACP**, ACP Council Member and Internal Medicine Residency Director for the Geisinger Medical Center, provided exceptional leadership for our Awards Committee. Three outstanding internists were recognized: **Robert C. Aber, M.D., MACP**, Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Penn State College of Medicine, received the ACP Laureate Award; **Dan Kimball, M.D., FACP** received the Pressman Award for his outstanding service to organized medicine; and, **Charles S. Sawyer, MD, FACP** from Geisinger received the ACP Clinical Practice Management Award. Despite the unexpected wintery conditions, we had a very good attendance of both council members,

award winners and their guests and enjoyed a delicious dinner and special holiday music.

As I think about the year ahead, it is clear that we face many of the same challenges that we have confronted over the past year: relatively low reimbursement rates; growing patient panels; excessive administrative burdens; and a real need to improve the quality of healthcare for our patients. Our country is now in the midst of a recession which is also having an impact on the entire healthcare industry. Our patients, many of whom face higher out-of-pocket costs for healthcare services, are cutting back on preventive visits, elective procedures and even emergency room visits. There is a glimmer of hope for a major overhaul of the US health care system with a new administration. Our country hopefully will take some meaningful steps toward the goal of achieving universal access to care, which is a major goal of the American College of Physicians. The ACP will continue its advocacy efforts at both the national and state levels. We will continue to lobby for continued support of the Patient Centered Medical Home, debt relief programs for medical students selecting primary care careers, and improved reimbursement payments for physician visits. **ACP Leadership Day 2009 will take place on May 19-20, 2009 at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C.** This is a great opportunity for the College and our members to increase our presence and bring our issues of concern to the attention of U.S. law makers. If you are interested in attending please contact me or one of our council members.

**Dan Kimball, M.D., FACP**, will continue to chair our Health and Public Policy Committee for the Pennsylvania Chapter. We welcome back **John Nikoloff** as our legislative advisor and lobbyist. He succeeds **Ken Lawrence, Jr.** who now serves as the Senior Government Officer for Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. We are grateful for **Ken's** work on our behalf and look forward to expanding vital advocacy initiatives with **John's** help. We will continue to work at the state level on issues such as Mcare abatement, scope of practice for nurse practitioners, and debt relief for primary care physicians who chose to practice in Pennsylvania after residency completion. In response to an editorial on the looming primary care crisis appearing in the November 21st issue of Harrisburg's Patriot News (R. Simons, "*Fading Physicians*"), several of us met with **Representative Josh Shapiro (D-Montgomery)** at his office to discuss strategies to bolster support for his medical student loan forgiveness bill that was passed by the House but stalled in a Senate Committee. We agreed to gather more data from both Pennsylvania medical students and residents in primary care residencies (Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, and Pediatrics) about their perceptions of the practice environment in Pennsylvania. We will update you on further developments on this issue.

Finally, I wish you all continued personal and professional success in the coming year. Again, if you have any specific suggestions of how our chapter can better serve you, please send your comments to me at [rsimons@hmc.psu.edu](mailto:rsimons@hmc.psu.edu).

Yours for the ACP,

**Richard J. Simons, MD**  
**Governor, Eastern Pennsylvania, ACP**



## Lehigh Valley Hospital Medical Jeopardy Team Wins PA State Championship

Congratulations Lehigh Valley Hospital Medical Jeopardy Team! Pictured are the 2008 Medical Jeopardy State Champions (L to R) **Program Director Marc Shalaby, MD, Program Director with team members Pearlle Chong, MD; Tim Coyle, DO; Nasir Shariff, MBBS; and Yehia Mishriki MBBS.** Team coach **Ashish Kabra, MBChB** is on the right.

The Lehigh Valley team will represent Pennsylvania at the ACP's National Jeopardy Competition held during Internal Medicine 2009, April 23rd to 25th in Philadelphia.



## John Nikoloff Returns to Pennsylvania Chapter As Lobbyist and Legislative Advisor

**John Nikoloff** was selected recently to be our lobbyist and legislative advisor. Many of you may remember John. He represented our members for sixteen years, until he decided to go into industry in 2004. Now he is back in Harrisburg, and we are fortunate to retain him.

Let us know if you have any questions or suggestions for John and our Health and Public Policy Committee. **Chairs Dan Kimball** and **Arnie Eiser** welcome you to these monthly conference calls (and strategy sessions.) Let us know if you want to join us.

It must be a coincidence that the IBC/Highmark merger moved off the table, but John Nikoloff's timing could not be better. His contact info is: John Nikoloff & Associates, 200 N. Third Street, Suite 1100, Harrisburg, PA 17101, Phone: (717) 443-2293 - Fax: 717 233-8665 - Email: [JNikoloff@comcast.net](mailto:JNikoloff@comcast.net).

Welcome back, John!

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## Seven Pennsylvania Physicians Honored at Chapter Awards Dinner

### Laureate Award-Eastern Region



**Robert C. ABER, MD, MACP,**  
*Chair of the Department of Medicine, and Physician-in-Chief for Adult Medical Services at Penn State's College of Medicine and Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.*

### Laureate Award-Southeastern Region



**Howard H. Weitz, MD, FACP,**  
*FACC, Chief of Cardiology, Professor of Medicine and Director of Jefferson Heart Institute, and Senior Vice Chair for Academic Affairs, Department of Medicine, Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University*

### Laureate Award-Southeastern Region



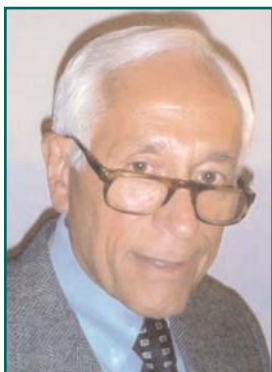
**Arnold R. Eiser, MD, FACP,**  
*Vice President of Medical Education, Mercy Health System, Associate Dean for Mercy Programs at Drexel University College of Medicine and Professor of Medicine, and Internal Medicine Residency Director at Mercy Catholic Medical Center*

### Clinical Practice Management Award Eastern Region



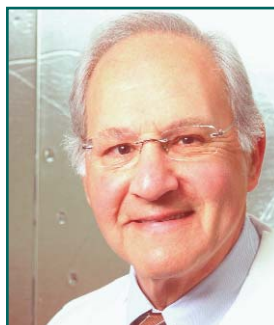
**Charles S. Sawyer, MD, FACP,**  
*Director of Internal Medicine, Vice Chairman, Department of Medicine, Geisinger Wyoming Valley Hospital, Wilkes Barre*

Clinical Practice Management Award  
Southeastern Region



**Roger B. Daniels, MD, FACP,**  
*Private practice in Internal  
Medicine and Associate Clinical  
Professor of Medicine at Thomas  
Jefferson University Hospital.*

Waxman Award-Southeastern Region



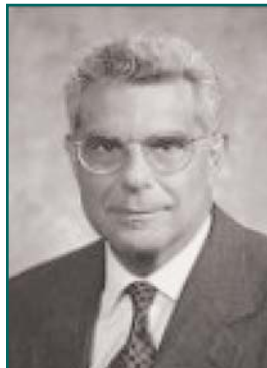
**William Lipshutz, MD, FACP,**  
*Clinical Professor of Medicine at  
the University of Pennsylvania  
and Co-Chief of Gastroenterology  
at Pennsylvania Hospital*

Pressman Award-Eastern Region



**Daniel Kimball, MD, FACP,**  
*Senior Active Staff Physician in  
the Section of Internal Medicine  
at the Reading Hospital and  
Medical Center, Chair of the  
Composite Committee of the  
United States Medical Licensing  
Examination,  
And Host of "Health Talk" a Berks  
County radio show.*

Special Recognition-Western Region



**Herbert S. Diamond, MD,  
MACP,**  
*Recently retired as Chief of  
Medicine at West Pann Hospital  
in Pittsburgh. Dr. Diamond is  
past Governor for the Western  
Region of the Pennsylvania /  
ACP.*

## Congratulations, New Fellows!

The Chapter recognizes and congratulates these Pennsylvania Eastern Region physicians who were elected to Fellowship in the College since July 2008:

**Susan F. Borys, MD, FACP, Lewisburg**  
**Daniel Fischman, MD, FACP, Dallastown**  
**Rebecca B. Masters, MD, FACP, Hershey**  
**Lisa M. Motz, MD, FACP, Reading**  
**Robert I. Pargament, MD, FACP, York**  
**Brian M. Pollak, MD, FACP, York**  
**William B. Reeves, MD, FACP, Hershey**  
**Arjinder Sethi, MD, FACP, Clarks Summit**  
**Stacey J. Smith, MD, FACP, Allentown**

Fellowship is an honor achieved by those recognized by their peers for personal integrity, superior competence in internal medicine, professional accomplishment, and demonstrated scholarship.

## Thank You!

A very special thank you to our regional Chairs who were responsible for three successful Abstract and Medical Jeopardy competitions.

Eastern Region

**David George, MD, FACP**

Southeastern Region

**Greg Kane, MD, FACP**  
**Ashish Rana, MD, FACP**

Western Region

**Andrew Adams, MD**  
**Andreas Achilleos, MD**

We also thank **Martin Evers, MD, FACP** for conducting our state Medical Jeopardy Championships in Hershey. He makes it a learning experience!

**Sign Up Today For A Single Day  
SEP / Maintenance of Certification Event**

**When: March 14, 2009**

**Where: Hershey, Pennsylvania**

**Time: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM**

The PA Chapter of the ACP again is offering a single-day Maintenance of Certification Learning Session designed to help internists to complete two American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) medical knowledge modules that can be used to earn MOC credit.

Using the popular automated audience response system, two expert internists will help the group work through two ABIM Annual Update modules, each worth 10 points, as well as seven hours of Category 1 CME.

Either email [pcim.hq@verizon.net](mailto:pcim.hq@verizon.net) or call 800-846-7746 for more information.