



Governor's Message

Several years ago, a health care expert declared that he had good news and bad news to the older physicians in the audience that included me. The good news was that because of the impending physician shortage they would be able to work for as long as they wished. The bad news was that if they got sick they would have trouble finding a doctor. This is now a reality. As the health care of the country is being overhauled, we are missing one of the most important pieces. We do not have an adequate number of primary care physicians.

Primary care physicians are underpaid, too much of their time is wasted in paperwork, one third of their earnings spent in interacting with insurance carriers and reimbursement is based more on volume than in value. Clinical judgment has been replaced by practice guidelines and report cards. Doctors spend so much time trying to prove that they are doing a good job that there is little time to be a good doctor. It is easy to understand their frustration and why many are considering early retirement. The problem is compounded by diminished interest in primary care by new medical school graduates. For multiple reasons less than 5%, choose to be primary care practitioners. One of the reasons is that they have a large debt to repay and choose to go into a more lucrative one organ/system specialty.

As the new health care plan is organized, ACP leaders had the opportunity to present our views at the Health Care Summit held this spring at the White House.

On May 20 at the Leadership day ACP Governors along with practicing physicians, trainees and medical students of every state gathered in Washington DC and visited senators and representatives requesting their support for a number of ACP initiatives that included:

1. Affordable health coverage for all
2. Enhanced access to primary care physicians and specialists
3. Legislation to address the crisis in primary care by improving reimbursement, reducing medical Student debt, supporting the Patient Centered Medical Home, simplifying paperwork, an addressing Tort reform.
4. Elimination of the Sustainable Growth Rate plan

Our presentations were well received, and we expect that they will affect future legislation. In any case, I would recommend that each of you contact your local, state and national representatives and make them aware of your concerns.

I met many of you at the recent PriMed program in Pittsburgh. I hope that you enjoyed it. PriMed, sponsored by the ACP, will have another program in Pittsburgh in the fall and others in Philadelphia. You should be

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receiving information about them. I highly recommend their unbiased and high quality presentations.

I want to remind those ACP Members who wish to be considered for advancement to Fellowship, please let me know. If you have any comments, suggestions or recommendations, I would like to hear from you. My email address is alexgon42@msn.com,

Alejandro R. Gonzalez, MD, FACP
Governor, Western Region



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

PA-ACP will be working with legislative leaders and health care organizations to preserve key items in the state budget, including chronic care funding and primary care programs, while seeking to get action that will retire the Mcare fund liability as providers' payments increase to \$1 million in coverage. Prospects are dim for an early state budget, with stagnating revenues and a \$3.2 billion budget deficit. Republicans are publicly opposing any new taxes, while the Governor has now formally called for a 16 percent increase in the state personal income tax for three years, which would only cover half of the deficit.

The House is nearing a final vote on HB 1, which would expand adultBasic to provide comprehensive health care coverage for 130,000 Pennsylvanians. The bill adds prescription medications, chronic disease management, preventive and wellness programs to adultBasic benefits. AdultBasic would be open to low-income adults with an income of less than 200 percent of federal poverty levels. However, the bill would transfer \$362 million from the Health Care Provider Retention Account, which was to help pay down the Mcare fund liability to pay for adultBasic expansion. Amendments that would have addressed the Mcare fund retirement were ruled not germane by Speaker Keith McCall, and so could not be debated - this despite the fact that the HCPRA is being used to fund the adultBasic expansion in HB 1.

During debate on the bill, **Rep. Josh Shapiro** successfully offered an amendment to expand the primary care student loan repayment provisions in the legislation. PA-ACP contacted all members of the House to support the amendment, which passed the House June 10 by a 187-5 vote.

The Senate has already said they see no reason to move major health reform legislation in Pennsylvania until Congress takes up federal health care reform legislation this summer. Even if HB 1 passes the House, there is little expectation that the Senate will take favorable action on the legislation in the next month or two.

On other health care legislation, the Governor has signed four health care related bills, including the expansion of COBRA benefits and increasing the age limit permitted to have parents include a dependent their health plans.

SB 189 allows uninsured single, adult children up to age 29 to be covered by their parents' health insurance plan. Parents must pay the premiums, and coverage hinges on an employer's willingness to offer the benefit to employees with children. The bill takes effect in six months and coverage will be on a rolling basis after that as contracts are renewed, according to the Governor's Office. Forty percent of the state's total uninsured population, or 383,298 residents, are between the ages of 19 and 29.

HB 109 expands federal COBRA law to Pennsylvania businesses with fewer than 20 employees. The bill allows these employees to continue receiving health insurance at the business' expense for up to nine months. Legislators piggybacked on the federal stimulus plan, which permits employees who lose their jobs and qualify for COBRA to receive a government subsidy of 65% for their care.

The other bills signed by Rendell were HB 84, prohibiting health care providers from seeking reimbursements for a serious, preventable medical error, or "never events," and SB 89, reauthorizing the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4).

John Nikoloff

John Nikoloff & Associates

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Pennsylvania Western Region

Afaq Ahmad, MD, Uniontown

Susan Greenspan, MD, Pittsburgh

Christopher J. Passero, MD, Pittsburgh

Nina Ahuja, MD, Pittsburgh

Itamar Levari, MD, Pittsburgh

Anupam Verma, MD, Pittsburgh

CORRECTION

The program affiliation of **Akinwande Akinfolarin, MBBS**, abstract competition runner-up in research for 2008, was listed incorrectly in the March 2009 newsletter.

Dr. Akinfolarin is affiliated with UPMC, McKeesport, not Western Pennsylvania Hospital. The competition was held at Western Penn Hospital. We apologize for the error.

CONGRATULATIONS, HERB DIAMOND



The Pennsylvania Chapter congratulates **Herb Diamond, MD, MACP** who was inducted at the ACP IM 2009 Convocation Ceremony.

Dr. Diamond is the former governor of our Pennsylvania Chapter's Western Region and Professor of Medicine and Chairman of the Department of Medicine.

Candidates who are considered for Mastership must have made a notable contribution to medicine. This includes but is not limited to teaching, outstanding work in clinical medicine (research or practice), contributions to preventive medicine, improvements in the delivery of health care, or contributions to medical literature.

CONGRATULATIONS ACP AWARD WINNERS

Peter C. Nowell, Media, PA

American College of Physicians Award for Outstanding Work in Science as Related to Medicine

Dwight L. Evans, Haverford, PA

William C. Menninger Memorial Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Science of Mental Health

SEVEN WESTERN REGION MEMBERS ELECTED TO FELLOWSHIP



Congratulations! The Chapter recognizes our Pennsylvania Western Region physicians elected to Fellowship in the College since January 2009. We spotted some of you at the Convocation.

Andreas N. Achilleos, MD, FACP, Pittsburgh
Viswanathan S. Iyer, MBBS, FACP, Mechanicsburg
Deepak Pahuja, MBBS, FACP, Erie
Dennis F. Stull, MD, FACP, Pittsburgh

Jack L. DePriest, MD, FACP, Johnstown
Vicent A. Mendez, MD, FACP, Kane
Marwan Refaat, MD, FACP, Pittsburgh

ACP HONORS PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER WITH AN EVERGREEN AWARD



Our Pennsylvania Southeastern Region received an Evergreen Award during IM 09. We were recognized in the Associates/Young Physicians Category for Leadership Development Geared Towards Young Physicians.

We were recognized for developing a multi-year program, which allows interested young physician members to learn how to use their leadership skills more effectively. Components of the program include a series of dinner meetings on leadership development, encouraging young physicians to participate in national and chapter leadership activities, and the establishment of an on-line newsletter with topics focusing on leadership.

At this year's Internal Medicine Meeting, ACP presented Evergreen Awards to ten Chapters. The Evergreen Program provides recognition and visibility to those chapters that have been successful in implementing programs that increase membership, improve communication, increase member involvement, enhance diversity, foster careers in internal medicine, and improve management of the chapter.

WE PROUDLY RECOGNIZE OUR SEVEN PENNSYLVANIA WINNERS

2009 ACP POSTER COMPETITION

Resident Paper Winners - Research

Shweta Gupta, MBBS

Albert Einstein Medical Center Program, Philadelphia, PA

Can Lipophilic Statins Affect Her2/neu Expression in Breast Cancer?

Rajendra P. Palepu, MBBS

Scranton-Temple Residency Program, Scranton, PA

Suboptimal Diagnosis of Obesity in Morbidly Obese Patients.

Clinical Vignette Poster

Jude O. Ediae, MD

Abington Memorial Hospital Program, Abington, PA

Sunitinib Induced Reversible Posterior Leucoencephalopathy Syndrome.

Muhammad R. Sardar, MBBS

Lankenau Hospital, Wynnewood, PA

Recurrent Takotsubo Syndrome in a Postmenopausal Woman with Neurologic Disorders.

Medical Student Paper Winners – Research

Amanda L. Cattoi

Pennsylvania State University, Hershey, PA

Longitudinal Association of Intimate Partner Violence and Depressive Symptoms in the Central Pennsylvania Women's Health Study.

Adaobi Nwaneshiudu

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Gamma-delta (gd) TCR+ T-cells in the Pathogenesis of Systemic Sclerosis.

Rachel Lynn Orler

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Which Physician Characteristics are Associated with Higher Quality of Care?

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Abstract and Medical Jeopardy Competition Set for Western Region

The Pennsylvania Western Region will host the 2009 Abstract and Medical Jeopardy Competition on Saturday, November 7, 2009. The deadline to submit abstracts is Wednesday, August 1, 2009.

The competition is open only to Associate members of the Pennsylvania Western Region.

All abstract submissions will be electronic. You may use the following link to access the submission form. http://www.acponline.org/about_acp/chapters/pa/news_meet.htm

Please remember to use the Western Regional link. The program will reject all submission attempts after 11:59 PM, Wednesday, August 1, 2009 and submissions from non-members.

We highly encourage you to submit early to ensure that your abstract is received.

NEW CHAPTER COUNCIL OF YOUNG PHYSICIANS FORMED IN PA CHAPTER



Brandon Oberweis, Maddie Gregorits, and Levi Benson (left to right) enjoy a recent networking event. They are medical students at Penn State College of Medicine and sit on the PA Chapter's Council.

Lawrence Ward, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Associate Program Director of Temple's internal medicine residency program, recently joined forces with **Charles Cutler, MD**, Governor of the Southeast Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians

(ACP), to create a new local chapter of the ACP Council of Young Physicians. Their aim is to enrich the local ACP resources and encourage physicians who have been out of medical school for 16 years or less to join the ACP.

The **Council of Young Physicians** organizes seminars, networking events, and invites prominent speakers in an effort to reach out to local physicians and better meet their needs as young professionals.

Young physicians interested in joining us for HAPPY HOUR on **July 23 at Standard Tap, 2nd and Poplar, Philadelphia from 6 pm to 8 pm** should contact **Dr. Larry Ward** at lawrenceward@tuhs.temple.edu, or the Pennsylvania chapter at pcim.hq@verizon.net

**Congratulations to Larry Ward, MD, MPH, FACP
Recipient of the LEAD Certificate during IM 2009**

To better prepare young physicians for roles as future leaders of the medical profession, the ACP has developed a program called LEAD (Leadership Enhancement and Development) to recognize those who have taken additional steps to develop leadership skills.

LEAD strives to provide early career internists with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary for effective leadership in medical settings and the community at large.

The Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD) Program targets internists early in their careers and offers a variety of activities designed to provide participants with the skills, resources, and experiences necessary to become effective leaders in any setting.

A LEAD certificate is awarded to any member who has completed at least five out of seven of the leadership development activities within a three-year period.

NEW MODEL OF CARE

Primary Care Practices Celebrate Huge Improvement in Patient Care

The primary care practices in the first learning collaborative of the Pennsylvania Chronic Care Initiative celebrated a 1-year anniversary yesterday with an "Outcomes Congress," where they learned that they had significantly improved certain clinical measures for diabetes and asthma care.

Examples:

- The number of patients with self-management goals increased 195%.
- The number of patients getting eye exams increased 71%.
- The number of patients getting foot exams increased 142%.
- The number of patients with cholesterol below 130 increased 43%.
- The number of patients with blood pressure below 140/90 increased by 25%.
- The number of children with asthma with action plans doubled.

These outstanding results impressed Governor Ed Rendell, health plan medical directors and other policy makers. **Governor Rendell** praised the practices during the celebration for having bought into the initiative "heart and soul." *"I'm so impressed with what you have done, and I'll get this to the President,"* said Rendell.

The Governor's Office of Health Care Reform is leading the PA Chronic Care Initiative, which is rolling out regionally across Pennsylvania this year, with the support of the PA Improving Performance in Practice (IPIP) program, led in Pennsylvania by the PAFP and the PA Chapters of the American College of Physicians and the

American Academy of Pediatrics.

The SE PA Outcomes Congress included a full day of sessions for the 32 practices - all based in southeast PA - during which they shared successes with each other. Highlighted practice changes included new approaches to patient education and self-management support, implementation of patient registries, EMRs systems and templates, expanding the role of medical assistants and other office and clinical staff, and the introduction of practice-based case management. The outstanding success of the past year is great motivation for these practices as they enter year two of their three-year commitment and for practices in other regional learning collaborative that are new or will start sometime this year.

A full story on Pennsylvania's Chronic Care Initiative is available in the latest issue of Keystone Physician magazine, available now at www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/pafp/keystonephysician_2009spring.

PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER HELD DRAWING AT PITTSBURGH PRI-MED



Dr. Vasudevan Rajasean of Elwood City won the special drawing at Pri-Med in Pittsburgh. Presenting Dr. Rajasean with a Starbucks gift card is John Derrickson, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Chapter.

Now More Important Than Ever – Please Support Your Chapter

Your financial support allows us to continue offering local meetings, fund mentoring programs for Pennsylvania's internal medicine residents and medical students, and aggressively advocate on behalf of you and your patients.

Your concerns are heard! We meet regularly with state legislators and our Congressional delegation. Annually, we send a delegation to participate in the ACP Leadership Day on Capitol Hill.

Unpaid volunteer leaders in our chapter coordinate many of these activities. However, local staff support is critical to help manage the day-to-day operation of the chapter, special activities, meetings and advocacy initiatives. Your membership in the ACP and our Pennsylvania Chapter are vital!

If you have not already paid your ACP dues for this new year, please do so now and help reduce those annoying dues reminders.

**Visit the Chapter Website at
www.acponline.org/about_acp/chapters/pa**