

Virginia Chapter GOVERNOR'S NEWSLETTER

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

Fall 2006

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Governor, Virginia Chapter

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



The Board of Governors met recently in a snowy Lake Tahoe where a number of resolutions were discussed. The outcome of these is listed below. The College continues to work hard to advocate for equitable reimbursement and a recommendation to increase reimbursement for E&M codes was one of our wins. We continue to press Congress to address the impending Medicare cuts due to the flawed SGR formula. This is becoming an annual occurrence as expanding benefits and more Medicare age patients result in increased expenditures triggering the proposed cuts. We are working to overturn the SGR once and for all to prevent the end of year scrambling.

You can help by encouraging your representatives to support a permanent fix. The ACP's advocacy page has pre-completed letters you can customize if desired and send electronically. The best way to participate is to become a key contact. While the College has an excellent advocacy group, we as members must provide the mass comments that make our voices heard. **Currently we only have 212 key contacts in the state out of 3,169 members.** To sign up, you can go to <http://www.acponline.org/hpp/advocacy/survey.htm>. I appreciate everyone who signed up in the last year and hope that more will sign up this time. If you do not have Internet access, you may send a letter with your name and fax number to **Ann Tennett**, our **Executive Director**, at: **1462 Stevens Rd Barton, VT 05822**. You do not get overwhelmed with emails as it is only a few a year. We particularly need key contacts in Congressmen **Cantor and Boucher's** district as they serve on key committees.



Dr.'s Corley & Rein led the new Fellows at convocation: Maged H Hussein, William M Pandak, Nathaniel G Clark, Robert J Orlino, M Stephen Mandell, Betsy Mason, Daniel L Ridout, III, Sheila Y Garris, Jesus A Henson, Charles A Lisner, William E Fox, Frederick H Kozlowski, Muhiuddin Ahmed, Robert Nee, Glenn C Jones, Alan G Stern, Prem S Parihar, and Rasheed A Balogun -not all shown

We had a number of new Fellows accepted in the past 6 months. They are: **Seki A Balogun, MBBS, Paul R Eason, MD, Thomas J Martin, MD, Jose L Mendoza, MD, Lawrence S Moffatt, Jr MD, Tessie Otero-Truitt, MD, John C Paschold, MD, Christina W Prillaman, MD, Gebremedhin Yohannes, MD.** We look forward to their active participation in chapter activities and hope to see them at Annual Session this year.

RESOLUTIONS

The following final action was taken at the Board of Governor's meeting. The resolutions will be sent to the Board of Regents for further action.

Adopted as Amended:

1-F06. Engaging with CMS to Ensure Medicare Coverage for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening

2-F06. Proposing Modifications to Medicare Part D to Reduce Administrative Burdens on Physician Practices

4-F06. Supporting Modified Versions of the Advanced Medical Home for Small Medical Groups

5-F06. Considering the Impact of ACP Policy Changes on Small and Rural Medical Practices

6-F06. Ascertaining the Economic Impact of ACP Supported Public Policies to Practicing Physicians

9-F06. Developing Alliances that Facilitate a Linkage between Medical Education and Care for the Medically Underserved

11-F06. Developing an ACP Health Literacy Toolkit

12-F06. Affiliating a College Award with the Name of a Woman Who is or was a Prominent ACP Leader

13-F06. Encouraging Chapters to Include Associate Subspecialty Fellows on Councils, Committees, and in Other Activities

Accepted as Reaffirmation:

3-F06. Prohibiting the Release of Physician Prescribing Information to Pharmaceutical Companies, Pharmaceutical Manufacturers or Pharmaceutical Distributors for Sales and/or Marketing Purposes

8-F06. Maintaining CMS Reimbursement for Resident Training through Didactic Learning

ASSOCIATE UPDATE

BY TEMUJIN CHAVEZ, MD

The Associate's Program is currently enjoying a very successful 2006-2007 academic year. This year **Temujin Chavez**, PGY-3 of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, is serving as resident representative for Virginia's five residency programs on the Virginia Governor's Council.

The Annual Virginia ACP Chapter Associates Program will be held January 26-27th at the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel and Waterfront Conference Center. The deadline for abstract submission to National was extended until October 6th. Those persons with abstracts that are selected for presentation will present their work at the Associates Program. The top two winners will be invited to represent the Virginia Chapter and present at the National Conference in San Diego, CA April 19th-21st!

Residents should also be aware that the Medical Knowledge Self Assessment Program ® (MKSAP) 14 is now available for purchase as an 11 book set, CD ROM, and on-line version. This is an excellent resource for remaining up to date in internal medicine and preparing for your ABIM certification.

Please look for other updates on our website to include important event dates and a more focused internship and residency survival guide. I look forward to seeing you in January at the Virginia ACP Chapter Associates Program!

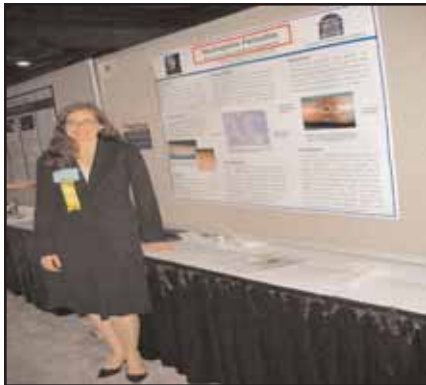
STUDENT UPDATE

BY JOE SIVAK AND SAUMYA NAGARAJAN

ClubMed at the University of Virginia has successfully recruited over half of the incoming class to join our club and we have encouraged a large portion of the class to join ACP. Our first event of the year was a talk lead by our faculty leader, Dr. **Mitchell Rosner**, along with two chief residents, which highlighted the various opportunities available within internal medicine, and they also touched on their personal experiences as physicians. We have a number of events planned for the coming months,

including a bedside manner workshop led by Dr. **Eugene Corbett**, and a talk led by the Chairman of Medicine, Dr. **Robert Strieter**, about career development and balancing work and family. We also hope to have a study session sponsored by our club for the first year students, and also begin a community service or charity project.

The VCU School of Medicine ACP Chapter has been working in conjunction with the Club Med program to promote ACP membership and encourage participation in Abstract Day. The Club Med program at the VCU-INOVA campus hosted a dinner to meet with the Program Directors of Internal Medicine to encourage recruitment of third year students into Internal Medicine and early ACP membership. Incoming third year students at the VCU Richmond and Inova campuses were introduced to the benefits of joining ACP and identifying a patient/mentor for preparation of Abstract day.



University of Virginia Medical Student Parker Ruhl presents her poster at annual session. Her work "Neutrophilic Folliculitis and the Spectrum of Pyoderma Gangrenosum in Inflammatory Bowel Disease" was accepted for publication in *Digestive Diseases and Sciences*.



HEALTH & PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE **By BILL FOX, MD FACP**

Several important legislative events took place at both the state and national level this year, most notably affecting physician immunity and reimbursement.

State Legislative Update

One of the most important legislative battles of the year involved physician immunity in malpractice cases. The legislation stemmed from a Virginia Supreme Court decision in November 2005 in the case of *Oraee v. Breeding*. In this decision, Dr. Oraee was held liable for tests performed on a patient by another doctor, even though Dr. Oraee was unaware of these tests, did not authorize them, and had not receive notification of the results. The decision eliminated a great deal of physician immunity by essentially allowing for the situation in which physicians would be liable for any test or examination ever performed on a patient whether they ordered the test or not. In a contentious legislative battle in which the trial lawyers took an opposing view, HB 1110 was ultimately passed. This bill was supported by the Virginia Chapter of the ACP and successfully restored most of the immunity that had been lost.

HB 1111 and 1112, introduced at the request of physical therapists, were defeated in subcommittee. They would have expanded the scope of practice of PTs, giving patients direct access to them without the referral of a physician. It was the position of medical groups that physical therapists do not have the training to diagnose disease or recommend treatment options and hence physician referral is necessary

In the area of Medicaid reimbursement, the state budget passed this year includes for a 3% increase for all physicians, except obstetrician-gynecologists, beginning July 1, 2007. Ob-Gyns received a 34% increase in 2004. Pediatricians received two 5% increases on May 1 and July 1, 2006 and will get an additional 5% increase (in addition to the 3% increase indicated above) on July 1, 2007.

Federal Legislative Update

One of the more notable events of this past year was a report from the ACP in January 2006 warning of the impending collapse of primary care medicine. This report garnered much national attention and was echoed by other primary care specialty societies. It has been followed up by The College's vigorous effort impress upon lawmakers problems associated with the undervaluation of E/M clinical services that are provided predominately by primary care physicians, overvaluing other services at the expense of such E/M services, and the lack of payment for those services required to allow primary care physicians to provide coordinated, longitudinal care. The College has proposed the concept of the "*Advanced Medical Home*" as a potential solution to these problems.

Another significant development at the national level is the proposed increase in the Relative Value Units for E/M codes. In the 5 year review of the Relative-value scale Update Committee (RUC) held earlier in the year, the ACP was instrumental in pushing the case that E/M codes have been undervalued. The recommendations, which are now working their way through the CMS, propose to increase the RVUs by 26 - 37% for some of the most common E/M codes used by internists. This would increase the actual payment for these codes by 10-15%

No action has yet been taken on the scheduled 5.1% cut in Medicare reimbursement. Hopefully, this will be addressed after the fall recess. MedPAC recommends replacing this cut with a 2.8% increase.

With regard to professional liability reform, The House of Representatives once again passed a tort reform bill (HR 5 - the HEALTH act) this year, modeled after the Texas and California tort reform laws. However, once again, the Senate was not able to pass a companion bill.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the Virginia ACP Governor's Advisory Council are now being accepted. The Council plays a vital role in representing member physicians, generating ideas and plans for Chapter activities as well as having a significant effect on addressing health policy issues. Serving on the Council is the best way to become involved in the state chapters' activities as well as potentially serve on important committees at the national level. The Council is made up of both appointed and elected members who have 3 year staggered terms. Each year 4 regional representatives are elected by the members of their own region (See regions below).

All ACP members are eligible to run or nominate another member to run. Self nominations are also appropriate and highly encouraged.

The nomination deadline is December 15, 2006. Elections will occur in February, 2007 and newly elected Council members will take office at the Virginia Chapter's Scientific Meeting, March 16-17, 2007. The Nominations Committee is chaired by **Randjoh Gill**, MD FACP from Richmond.

Please send nominations including a C.V. and short one paragraph personal bio to Dr. Gill (11705 Aprilbud Dr, Richmond VA 23233) or e-mail to rsgill@mail2.vcu.edu.

Region	First 3 Digits of Zip Code	# of Members
1 - No. Virginia	201, 220, 221, 222, 223	493
2 - Richmond area	224, 225, 230, 231, 232	444
3 - Tidewater, Lynchburg, Danville	233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 245	454
4 - Charlottesville, Roanoke, Winchester	226, 227, 228, 229, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 246	457

ACP COUNCIL OF YOUNG PHYSICIANS ESTABLISHED FOR STATE OF VIRGINIA

The American College of Physicians having always been focused on helping the professional and educational development of its members has developed efforts to assist those physicians who are within sixteen years of completing their training. Initially establishing a National Council of Young Physicians to look at the needs of this unique group the ACP is now encouraging state chapters to develop similar groups. The mission of this new council is to bring together motivated thought leaders to address areas such as practice development, mentoring, advocacy, and course development. At the Summer Governor's Council Meeting a unanimous vote occurred in which your representatives elected to establish a nine member Council of Young Physicians (CYP). Nominations are currently being accepted for two positions from each of our four regions. The ninth position who will serve as the chairman of the newly formed council will be a sitting member of the current Virginia ACP Governor's Council. Dr. **Craig Cheifetz**, the 2005 recipient of the Young Internist of the Year Award for our chapter, will serve as the first chairman of CYP-Virginia. Those interested in nominating an individual or themselves should e-mail Ms. **Ann Tennett** at annethsd@earthlink.net.

HOW TO BILL FOR THE 'WELCOME TO MEDICARE' VISIT

Since its introduction in 2005, the Welcome to Medicare visit has continued to confuse physicians with its requirements and limitations. Medicare will cover one initial preventive exam within the first six months of the effective date of a beneficiary's Part B coverage. The Welcome to Medicare visit is likely different from any other service that a physician would typically perform, so it is important to review the requirements for the service, which are:

- **Comprehensive medical and social history review.** This review should pay particular attention to modifiable disease risk factors. At a minimum, the medical history must include:
 - o Past medical and surgical history, including illnesses, hospital stays, operations, allergies, injuries and treatments.
 - o Current medications and supplements, including calcium and vitamins.
 - o Family history, with a review of medical events in the patient's family, including diseases that may be hereditary or place the individual at risk.
 - o The CMS defines social history to minimally include a history of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use; diet; and social and physical activities.
- **Limited Physical exam.** This must include measuring the patient's height, weight and blood pressure, as well as a visual acuity screen and other factors based on the patient's medical and social history.
- **Potential risk for depression review.** This review must include a patient's past experience with depression or other mood disorders, based on the use of an appropriate screening instrument, for patients without a current diagnosis.
- **Functional ability and level of safety assessment.** This should be based on the use of an appropriate screening instrument.
- **Electrocardiogram (ECG).** The exam covers performance and interpretation of an ECG.
- **Education, counseling and referral.** The exam covers these services as deemed appropriate based on review results and evaluation services.
- **The exam also covers education, counseling and referral-including a written plan,** such as a checklist-to help patients get appropriate screening and other preventive services covered separately under Medicare Part B.

The exam is billed using CMS-specific G codes. A physician will always bill G0344 for the exam itself and an additional code for the component of the ECG completed by the physician. CMS recognizes that not all physicians can perform an ECG in their office. Physicians can make alternative arrangements to make sure an ECG is performed, then include ECG results in the patient's record to complete and bill for the initial preventive exam.

The following are the HCPCS codes to be used:

- G0344: Initial, face-to-face visit service limited to new beneficiary during the first six months of Medicare enrollment.
- G0366: Electrocardiogram, routine ECG with at least 12 leads with interpretation and report, performed as a component of the initial exam. (You must report G0344 and G0366 if you furnish the complete initial exam.)
- G0367: Tracing only, without interpretation and report, performed as an initial exam component.
- G0368: Interpretation and report only, performed as an initial exam component.

DEATHS IN THE PAST YEAR

The following ACP members passed away in the past year, they will be missed: **J. David Markham**, MD FACP, **Robert R Montgomery**, MD FACP, **Paul J Sanazaro**, MD FACP, **Albert J. Wasserman**, MD FACP, **William S Burton**, MD, **Linda A Fisher**, **Christine L Tully**, MD, **Kenneth H. Hyatt**, MD FACP, **Alfonso Lombana**, MD, **Harvey D. Smallwood**, MD, **Jesse W. Cumbia**, MD.

STATE MEETING 2007

We have a wonderful program scheduled for the annual meeting and as usual it will provide 15.5 hours of face to face CME. Stay tuned for more details later.

Internists As Artists

Once again we will be having an "*Internists As Artists*" exhibit at the state chapter meeting. The meeting will be held at the Ritz Carlton Tyson's Corner on March 16th and 17th, 2007. If you have artwork, photos, crafts, writing or poetry you would like to display or a musical or dance performance you would like to showcase, please contact **Paul Florentino**, MD, FACP at Chair, Awards Committee, pflorentino@bethesda.med.navy.mil, Phone: 301-319-8238, Fax: 301-319-8240.

Enjoying Washington, DC after the Meeting

After the meeting is over, we have arranged for group tickets to be available for the Washington Wizards basketball game on the evening of the 17th. The rates are \$35, \$43, \$80; those wanting tickets should e-mail **Ann Tennett** (annethsd@earthlink.net) or call (802/525-3838). We must know before December 15.

We also have reserved a block of tickets Saturday, March 17 at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. They are \$75 each (includes transportation to Kennedy Center from the Ritz Carlton), conducted by **Emmanuel Krivine** with **Julia Fischer** on violin. Reservations can be made with meeting registration. Deadline is February 13.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – 2007 WHITE COAT LOBBYING DAYS

THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA'S "*WHITE COAT DAYS*" IN RICHMOND ARE AS FOLLOWS:

JANUARY 10 - WED., SESSION BEGINS

JANUARY 17 - WED., DISTRICTS 1 AND 9

JANUARY 18 – THURS., DISTRICT 2

JANUARY 22 - MON., DISTRICT 3 AND 4

JANUARY 23 - TUES., DISTRICTS 5 AND 6

JANUARY 24 - WED., DISTRICT 7

JANUARY 25 - THURS., DISTRICT 8

JANUARY 29 - MON., DISTRICT 10

JANUARY 30 - TUES., MSV PHYSICIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE DAY

JANUARY 31 - WED., DISTRICT 2

FEBRUARY 1 - THURS., DISTRICT 1 AND 9

FEBRUARY 5 - MON., DAY BEFORE CROSSOVER

FEBRUARY 6 - TUES., CROSSOVER

FEBRUARY 7 - WED., DISTRICTS 3 AND 4

FEBRUARY 8 - THURS., DISTRICTS 5 AND 6

FEBRUARY 12 - MON., DISTRICT 7

FEBRUARY 13 - TUES., DISTRICT 8

FEBRUARY 14 - WED., DISTRICT 10

**Visit the Chapter Website at:
www.acponline.org/chapters/va**

