

The Capitol Key

The ACP Advocacy Newsletter for Key Contacts

American College of Physicians



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LEADERSHIP DAY 2004 SETS NEW ATTENDANCE RECORD

The Washington Office is happy to report that for the second consecutive year Leadership Day participants have set a new record for attendance. As of May 11th, 217 registrants from 39 states and the District of Columbia are scheduled to take part in the largest Leadership Day ever. On May 18-19th, Leadership Day participants will be taking important messages to Congress on access to care, liability reform, patient safety, quality improvement, electronic health records, and physician payment. Stay tuned - a full summary of Leadership Day 2004 will be included in the next edition of Capitol Key.

FLAWED SGR FORMULA NEEDS PERMANENT FIX

Last year, Congress prevented what would have been a damaging 4.5 percent cut in the Medicare fee schedule by including positive updates of at least 1.5 percent in 2004 and 2005 in the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA). Unfortunately, this reprieve is only temporary. The Medicare Trustees are now projecting that the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula will result in 5 percent cuts each year from 2006-2012. Projected cuts in the Medicare fee schedule beginning in 2006 would result in physicians being paid more than 30 percent less for their services in 2012 than in 2005. Cuts of this magnitude cannot be justified.



Because the SGR inappropriately links the Medicare physician fee schedule to the growth in our nation's economy, it ultimately must be modified or replaced. It also penalizes physicians for cost increases that are due to decisions by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Congress to expand Medicare benefits, since the costs of those benefits can trigger cuts under the SGR. While stakeholders work with Congress to fashion an appropriate permanent fix, there are adjustments that can be made by CMS without a change in law.

Please contact your members of Congress and urge them to ask CMS to take the following steps to address the update problem administratively: (1) include the full impact of changes in law and regulation in the SGR, and (2) remove the cost of physician-administered drugs from the SGR.

To read the latest legislative alert and email your members of Congress, please visit the College's **Legislative Action Center (LAC)** at <http://capwiz.com/acp/home/>. A sample letter that you can easily modify has been provided. You also can contact your members of Congress via the ACP **Grassroots Hotline** by dialing 1-888-218-7770.

GRASSROOTS SPOTLIGHT ADVICE FROM THE TRENCHES! SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS



Dr. Debbi Zarek attended Leadership Day for the first time last year as part of the Delaware Chapter's delegation and wanted to share her experience scheduling appointments. Dr. Zarek met with two of her members of Congress and staff for the third Member. She attributes being able to meet personally with two of her legislators to the fact that when she called to schedule appointments, she requested "just five minutes" of their time. In recent years, the Delaware Chapter's Leadership Day delegation has only met with congressional staff, so don't be discouraged if you are unable to meet with your members of Congress. Members typically have a very chaotic schedule (especially since many of them are up for re-election this year) and rely on staff to provide them with substantial advice on issues. If you are unable to meet with your members of Congress during Leadership Day, try to schedule a follow-up meeting with them while they are in their district offices. Dr. Debbi Zarek is pictured above (on the left) with Senator Thomas Carper (D-DE) and Susan Keith, MD, FACP.



OVER 1,000 KEY CONTACTS NEEDED THIS YEAR TO MEET COLLEGE GOAL

In December 2002, the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors (ECBOG) set a goal to increase the number of key contacts from 2,000 to 4,000 by 2004. Currently, about 2,900 ACP members are enrolled in the Key Contact Program. In order to meet the ECBOG's goal by the year's end, each chapter must have roughly 4% of membership enrolled in the program. Even if your chapter has surpassed the target 4%, the College still needs your help recruiting Key Contacts - every new recruit brings us closer to achieving the ECBOG goal. The chart below provides a breakdown of current chapter enrollment in the Key Contact Program and the number of new Key Contacts needed in each Chapter in order to meet the ECBOG target. Chapters are

sorted in descending order starting with the chapters with the greatest percentage of membership enrolled in the Key Contact Program (chapters in the shaded area have met the

ECBOG goal). For further information or assistance recruiting Key Contacts, please contact Kathy Heabel (800-338-2746, ext. 4532 or kheabel@acponline.org).

Chapter	Dec. 2002	May 2004	Percent Change	Total # of members in Chapter	% of Membership in Key Contact Program	# of Key Contacts needed to meet ECBOG Target
AK	7	108	+ 1,443%	151	71.5%	-
DE	16	39	+ 143%	369	10.6%	-
ND	9	21	+ 133%	222	9.5%	-
MT	10	18	+ 80%	244	7.4%	-
SD	11	18	+ 64%	247	7.3%	-
OK	44	54	+ 23%	808	6.7%	-
WY	4	6	+ 50%	98	6.1%	-
NH	18	24	+ 33%	432	5.6%	-
RI	14	32	+ 129%	602	5.3%	-
VT	15	19	+ 27%	358	5.3%	-
NM	19	34	+ 79%	655	5.2%	-
SC	23	54	+ 135 %	1,060	5.1%	-
UT	20	23	+ 15%	486	4.7%	-
OR	32	52	+ 63%	1,171	4.4%	-
MD	54	78	+ 44%	1,825	4.3%	-
AR	21	24	+ 14%	596	4.0%	-
LA	32	69	+ 116%	1,739	4.0%	-
ME	16	20	+ 25%	494	4.0%	-
NV	10	17	+ 70%	451	3.8%	1
VA	74	115	+ 55%	3,090	3.7%	9
ID	5	7	+ 40%	199	3.5%	1
FL	109	184	+ 69%	5,457	3.4%	35
WA	36	59	+ 64%	1,847	3.2%	15
NE	15	26	+ 73%	845	3.1%	8
MS	17	22	+ 29%	717	3.1%	7
CO	28	38	+ 36%	1,278	3.0%	13
IA	22	30	+ 36%	1,002	3.0%	10
WV	15	20	+ 33%	681	2.9%	7
TN	35	55	+ 57%	1,917	2.9%	22
KS	23	26	+ 13%	898	2.9%	10
CT	44	50	+ 14%	1,947	2.6%	27
AL	28	37	+ 32%	1,412	2.6%	20
TX	97	143	+ 47%	5,840	2.4%	93
MA	54	81	+ 50%	3,409	2.4%	55
GA	45	62	+ 36%	2,535	2.4%	40
NJ	67	91	+ 36%	4,041	2.3%	71
CA	181	224	+ 24%	9,626	2.3%	165
OH	55	89	+ 62%	4,048	2.2%	73
NC	43	64	+ 49%	2,891	2.2%	53
PA	103	128	+ 24%	5,948	2.2%	110
NY	174	221	+ 27%	10,388	2.1%	195
WI	36	39	+ 8%	1,929	2.0%	39
KY	16	24	+ 50%	1,208	2.0%	24
IN	28	35	+ 25%	1,804	1.9%	37
IL	71	103	+ 45%	5,322	1.9%	112
MO	36	41	+ 14%	2,226	1.8%	49
MN	26	33	+ 27%	1,884	1.8%	42
AZ	20	28	+ 40%	1,621	1.7%	37
MI	42	60	+ 43%	3,730	1.6%	89
HI	3	8	+ 167%	657	1.2%	18
DC	14	19	+ 36%	1,799	1.1%	53
Total	1,937	2,894	+ 49%	104,204	2.8%	1,274