

The Capitol Key

ACP's Advocacy Newsletter for Key Contacts

American College of Physicians



February/March 2005



WHERE WE STAND IN 2005: ACP'S ADVOCACY AGENDA FOCUSES ON PATIENT-PHYSICIAN RELATIONSHIP

In February, the College released its fourth annual report on "The State of the Nation's Health Care." The report concluded that many of the woes of the current health care system—including insufficient attention to quality, rising patient and physician dissatisfaction, higher costs, inefficient use of resources, and fewer physicians choosing to go into primary care—can be attributed to the erosion of the patient-physician relationship. Using the momentum of the new Congress, the College is holding a Hill briefing on March 18th to advocate for a comprehensive new policy framework that would *support and strengthen* the patient-physician relationship by:

- Stabilizing Medicare payments by eliminating cuts caused by the sustainable growth rate formula that would further undervalue the patient-physician relationship and make it impossible for physicians to invest in practice improvement systems.
- Creating targeted upfront and sustained incentives for physicians in small practices to use health information technology to improve care.
- Encouraging use of high-level evidence-based decision support at the point-of-care, so that physicians have easy access to the best and most up-to-date guidelines on care of their patients.
- Allowing for implementation of a new pilot program to evaluate an innovative practice based model to improve care of patients with chronic disease.
- Expanding on demonstration projects to use financial incentives to support use of HIT and performance measurement in small physician practices.
- Reducing the adversarial and unpredictable nature of the medical liability tort system.
- Expanding health insurance coverage to those who are most vulnerable.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.acponline.org/hpp/state_nation05.pdf.



ACP SERVICES PAC UPDATE

With the new

Congress off to a busy start, ACP Services PAC is helping the specialty strengthen its voice on Capitol Hill by educating lawmakers on issues important to internists and their patients. These include potential cuts in the physician fee schedule and

their impact on patient care, passage of meaningful medical liability legislation to address soaring premiums, and the expansion of health insurance coverage for the millions of uninsured Americans.

Membership in the PAC continues to grow, and the Board of Directors has authorized contributions to several candidates who meet the PAC's guidelines for support. The PAC targets its contributions to those candidates who are in a position to play a key role in the formulation of healthcare legislation and who have a track record of support on issues of concern to internal medicine. For more information, visit www.acpservices.org/pac or contact Laura Allendorf, ACP Services PAC Director, at Lauraa@acponline.org.



REP. GONZALEZ INTRODUCES HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT) BILL

On February 10th, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX) and John McHugh (R-NY)

introduced legislation in the U.S. House that encourages the nation's healthcare providers to adopt health information technologies that both improve quality and efficiency and lower costs for the healthcare consumer. This bipartisan legislation is based entirely on ACP policy and will help support the goal set by President Bush of establishing a national network of interoperable health information technology within 10 years. The bill is designed to provide *initial* funding, through grants, tax credits or revolving loans, to support the ability of physicians and other providers in small practices to acquire electronic medical records. It also provides *sustained* funding, through changes in Medicare reimbursement policies to support continued use of such technologies, including authorizing an add-on payment to Medicare office visits when supported by such technologies and separate payment for e-mail consultations that meet defined standards of appropriateness. The bill has a total of nine co-sponsors and has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees. For more information, please visit <http://capwiz.com/acp/issues/bills/> and click-on the "National Health Information Technology Act of 2005."

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS: STATE HEALTH POLICY MEETING, APRIL 13TH

The State Health Policy Networking Session will be held during Annual Session on Wednesday, April 13 from 2:30pm-4:30pm at the Moscone Convention Center, Room 300.



The State Health Policy Networking Session is an annual policy forum for Governors, Governors-elect and chapter Health and Public Policy Committee (HPPC) members to learn about key state issues and to share information and ideas about common concerns.

Incoming Chair of the Board of Governors, J. Fred Ralston, MD, FACP from Tennessee, will moderate the session which includes:

- An overview of medical liability reform in Georgia, Maryland, and Texas and what's happening at the federal level;
- A special session by Catherine Hanson, JD, Vice President and General Counsel, California Medical Association on two topics of interest – prompt pay and pay-for-performance;
- Discussions on state developments on electronic health information and pay-for-performance; and
- An update on public health and Medicaid issues.

Following the discussions, there is an open forum for attendees to discuss other topics of interest.

LEADERSHIP DAY, MAY 17-18TH

In addition, **Leadership Day 2005** will be held on **May 17-18** at the Wyndham City Center in Washington, DC. Highlights for this year's program include:

- Key Note Speaker: David Broder, a national political correspondent for *The Washington Post*
- Meeting room on the Hill for the Wednesday morning briefings from members of Congress
- Advocacy and media training on Tuesday morning

For more information on either of the State Health Policy Networking Session or Leadership Day, please contact Shuan Tomlinson at 1-800-338-2746 ext. 4547 or at stomlinson@acponline.org.



FINAL KEY CONTACT TOTAL SHATTERS GOAL!

The Washington Office received an overwhelming response to the Dec. 16th blast e-mail to ACP members in all US Chapters. The e-mail was sent on behalf of Dr. Francis, ACP President, and asked members to enroll in the Key Contact Program. As a result, the College received over 1,000 responses and has exceeded the ECBOG goal for Key Contact recruitment! The final total number of Key Contacts is **4,433**, which is surpasses the goal by nearly 500 members! To see if your chapter met the 4% goal, please refer to the chart below. Congratulations to all chapters and thanks again for all of your hard work.

	Dec.'02	Feb.'05	% Change	Total # members in Chapter	% Membership in Key Contact Program		Dec.'02	Feb.'05	% Change	Total of members in Chapter	% Membership in Key Contact Program
AL	28	60	114%	1,412	4.2	MT	10	22	120	244	9.0%
AK	7	138	1871%	136	101.5	NE	15	29	93	845	3.4%
AZ	20	55	175%	1,621	3.4	NV	10	21	110	451	4.7%
AR	21	27	29%	596	4.5	NH	18	35	94	432	8.1%
CA	181	344	90%	9,626	3.6	NJ	67	139	107	4,041	3.4%
CO	28	55	96%	1,278	4.3	NM	19	39	105	655	6.0%
CT	44	83	89%	1,947	4.3	NY	174	348	100	10,388	3.4%
DE	16	45	181%	369	12.2	NC	43	101	135	2,891	3.5%
DC	14	32	129%	1,799	1.8	ND	9	22	144	222	10.0%
FL	109	230	111%	5,457	4.2	OH	55	167	204	4,048	4.1%
GA	45	110	144%	2,535	4.3	OK	44	65	48	808	8.0%
HI	3	15	400%	657	2.9	OR	32	76	138	1,171	6.5%
ID	5	7	40%	199	3.5	PA	103	184	79	5,948	3.1%
IL	71	205	189%	5,322	3.9	RI	14	36	157	602	6.0%
IN	28	59	111%	1,804	3.3	SC	23	70	204	1,060	6.6%
IA	22	50	145%	1,002	5.0	SD	11	19	73	247	7.7%
KS	23	32	39%	898	3.6	TN	35	63	80	1,917	3.3%
KY	16	41	156%	1,208	3.4	TX	97	218	125	5,840	3.7%
LA	32	88	175%	1,739	5.1	UT	20	34	70	486	7.0%
ME	16	37	131%	494	7.5	VT	15	18	20	358	5.0%
MD	54	124	130%	1,825	6.8	VA	74	192	159	3,090	6.2%
MA	54	111	106%	3,409	3.3	WA	36	107	197	1,847	5.8%
MI	42	91	117%	3,730	2.4	WV	15	25	67	681	3.7%
MN	26	171	558%	1,884	9.1	WI	36	70	94	1,929	3.6%
MS	17	28	65%	717	3.9	WY	4	7	75	98	7.1%
MO	36	63	75%	2,226	2.8	Total	1,937	4,433	129	104,189	4.3%