



The Capitol Key

A newsletter service for the Key Contacts of the American College of Physicians by ACP Services, Inc.

May 2009

2009 Leadership Day on Capitol Hill: May 19-20

Leadership Day is here! This year's Leadership Day is shaping up to be record setting with over 400 registrants. Although we have not surpassed last year's record attendance of over 500 attendees when Leadership Day and IM 2008 were held back-to-back in Washington, DC, we have significantly surpassed the previous attendance record, set in 2007.

There is a lot of excitement and anticipation that Congress will pass comprehensive health care reform legislation. This has undoubtedly had an impact on our record setting attendance. President Obama has made health care reform a top priority in his budget to Congress and key congressional leaders have

announced their intention to move health care reform legislation this year.

This is the 17th year that ACP members have come together in Washington to bring visibility to the issues of greatest importance to internal medicine. In addition, it is an exciting opportunity to build relationships with your federal lawmakers. Participants will receive a comprehensive orientation and briefing on ACP's top legislative priorities on Tuesday, May 19 and then have an opportunity to meet with legislators and their staff on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, May 20.

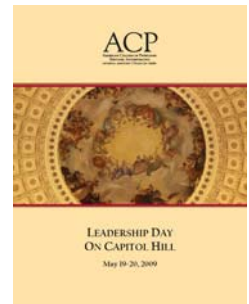
Some of the highlights of this year's Leadership Day are:

From the Obama Administration, we are fortunate to have Robert Kocher, MD, address attendees on the administration's plans and priorities for health care reform. Dr. Kocher is a special assistant to President Obama and is involved in the Administration's health care reform initiative.

Then, we will have two panel discussions of key congressional staff on legislation and proposals being developed to (1) address comprehensive health care reform and (2) improve the primary care workforce.

Our keynote speaker for the Tuesday night Awards Dinner (see box, left) will be Paul Begala. Mr. Begala is a political consultant, a political commentator, and a former advisor to President Clinton and appears frequently on CNN's *The Situation Room*. He will give us some insight on the possibility for health care reform in today's political climate.

We look forward to seeing many of you at Leadership Day! If you have any questions about Leadership Day, please contact Shuan Tomlinson at stomlinson@acponline.org or (800) 338-2746 ext 4547.



Announcing the Key Contact Award Recipients for 2009

KEY CONTACT OF THE YEAR

Jay L. Larson, MD, FACP
Montana

TOP-10 SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

Vincent J. Calamia, MD, FACP, of New York
Dawn E. Clancy, MD, FACP, of South Carolina
Jacqueline W. Fincher, MD, FACP, of Georgia
Robert A. Gluckman, MD, FACP, of Oregon
Jason M. Goldman, MD, FACP, of Florida
Robert M. Greenfield, MD, FACP, of Maryland
Mark E. Mayer, MD, FACP, of Ohio
George W. Meyer, MD, FACP, of California
Viral D. Patel, of Kentucky
Maher A. Roman, MD, FACP, of California

Recipients will be recognized during the
Leadership Day Awards dinner on May 19

December 2008 The President-elect's Health Care Forums



THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE INSPIRATION TO ARRANGE THIS FORUM. ONE STRONG FEELING I HAVE FROM THE FORUM IS THE DESIRE TO SEE SOMETHING COME OF IT.

In December 2008, then Health and Human Services Secretary-nominee Tom Daschle, former Senate Majority Leader, asked Americans to bring their friends, colleagues and community members together to voice their recommendations on health care reform through community forums. The forums served as a venue for ordinary citizens to voice their suggestions and concerns on health care for the incoming Administration. The forums were to give the transition team a chance to

continue developing ideas about how to achieve health care for all that is affordable and of high quality. These forums were convened the latter half of December all

across the country. Key Contacts were immediately notified by ACP and asked to host or participate in these forums, as evidenced below:

Imagine if ACP Key Contacts in every corner of the country—from medical students to Fellows to retired physicians—attend these forums. Internal medicine can have a significant impact in getting our message to the new Administration and sharing with everyday Americans how important the role of internal medicine, and especially primary care internal medicine, is and why it should be a central focus of a reformed health care system.

The response and participation from the College's Key Contacts was phenomenal. Key Contacts from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, District of Columbia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Minnesota, North Carolina, New York, Oklahoma, South

Dakota, Texas, Virginia and Washington, informed ACP staff that they would volunteer to hold forums in their homes, offices, auditoriums and local coffee shops. Those hosting a forum took significant steps to engage their physician colleagues, other health care workers and patients in the forums. All hosts were asked to submit a report of their session to the incoming Administration.

Congratulations go to Bertha S. Ayi, MBChB, FACP, of Sioux City, IA, host of a 14-person forum in their local library, and Norris Vivatrat, MD, and Clifford Wang, MD, hosts of a panel discussion forum in Santa Clara, CA. President Obama's final report captured segments of their sessions. According to a North Carolina host, segments of their submittal also made it into the final report.

MY FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING HAS BEEN VERY DEEP AND VALUABLE. I REALLY HOPE THAT SOMEONE READS IT.

The Administration's culminating report was posted in mid-March. It can be found at:

www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/White_House_Forum_on_Health_Reform_Report.pdf

Another 35 additional Key Contacts attended other forums or submitted online comments. Those who were not able to host a forum often made a concerted effort to find one to attend. Across the country, over 8,500 of these forums were held.

Thank you to the tremendous efforts of all Key Contacts who took the time to share their views, whether hosting, attending or submitting comments. Hundreds, if not thousands, more Americans heard the voice of primary care thanks to these forums. And equally important, the Administration heard those concerns as well.



Forum Hosted by Bertha S. Ayi, MBChB, FACP, Sioux City, Iowa



Forum hosted by Phillip F. Bressoud, MD, FACP, Louisville, Kentucky

A Special Thank You to the Health Care Forum Hosts*

Jay C. Butler, MD, FAAP, FACP	Anchorage, AK
J. Walden Retan, MD, FACP	Mountain Brook, AL
Arizona Chapter	Phoenix, AZ
Jeffrey S. Mason, MD, FACP	LaVerne, CA
Maher A. Roman, MD, FACP	Redlands, CA
Clifford C. Wang, MD	Santa Clara, CA
Christina M. Puchalski, MD, FACP	Washington, DC
Bertha S. Ayi, MBChB, FACP	Sioux City, IA
Annette A. Scheetz, MD, FACP	Chicago, IL
James D. Gardner, MD, FACP	Manhattan, KS
Phillip F. Bressoud, MD, FACP	Louisville, KY
Mark Liebow, MD, MPH, FACP	Rochester, MN
Stuart J. Levin, MD FACP	Raleigh, NC
Daniel Gottovi, MD	Raleigh, NC
Kathleen T. Grimm, MD, FACP	Orchard Park, NY
Inderpal S. Chhabra, MBBS	Queens, NY
S. A. Drooby, MD, FACP	Oklahoma City, OK
Robert D. Suurmeyer, MD, FACP	Aberdeen, SD
Joshua E. Hughes	Sioux Falls, SD
Clifford C. Dasco, MD, FACP	Houston, TX
Kaushal K. Gupta, MD, FACP	Houston, TX
James W. Sawyer, MD, FACP	Longview, TX
Bruce D. Clemons, MD	Charlottesville, VA
William E. Fox, MD, FACP	Charlottesville, VA
Bruce Cameron Smith, MD, FACP	Seattle, WA
Ali M. Thomas, MD	Tacoma, WA

* as reported to ACP staff



Forum hosted by Robert D. Suurmeyer, MD, FACP, Aberdeen, South Dakota

*“If you do nothing
nothing happens”
Clay Shirkey, author*

Frederica E. Smith, MD, FACP as a Regulatory Advocate

Frederica Smith, MD, FACP, from Alamos, NM, serves on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Practicing Physicians Advisory Council (PPAC). She is also a College Key Contact. In that roll, she testified before CMS. Speaking for herself, she asked questions in several areas concerning the Recovery Audit Contractors program (RAC) and made a personal recommendation.

Currently, the RAC may request patient records from physicians (within the program maximums of up to 10 records per 45 days for solo practitioners, up to 20 records for 45 days for groups of 2 to 5 practitioners, and up to 50 records per 45 days for groups of 16 or more practitioners). She wanted to point out that their criteria discriminate heavily against small practices. A group such with 250 physicians would have to provide a maximum of 50 records (or the equivalent of 1/5 record per physician) whereas a solo practitioner could have to provide up to ten records. She recommended that their criteria should be linear and more limited (*i.e.*, up to three records per 45 days per physician) and should not be impacted by how many physicians are in a group.

She also raised the question of how RAC was going to consider differences in CPT coding for evaluation and management services, since a number of studies have shown that even experienced coders can disagree by one level in assigning a code (e.g., 99214 might be coded as 99213 or 99215 depending on the coder).

Another physician introduced a companion recommendation that the RAC should have to pay for the requested medical records to offset the costs an office incurs in sending them.

From her recommendations, the March 16 issue of *Medicare Part B News* stated that the PPAC made the following recommendations to CMS:

- Not allow RACs to perform evaluation and management audits;
- Limit the number of medical record demands to three in a 45-day period for solo practices;
- Implement a provision requiring RACs to reimburse physicians for copies of requested medical records prior to the commencement of audits; and
- Not allow RACs to review claims for consultations because CMS's policies on consults, split/shared billing, and transfer of care are unclear.

As Dr. Smith's actions demonstrate, there are many ways, and in many venues, where a Key Contact can impact how the government ultimately decides any particular course of action. Thank you Dr. Smith.

Talking Local Participating in a Town Hall Meeting

By Robert L. Krippendorf, MD, March 2009

I went to a "Town Hall Meeting" in February and was able to be the last commentator of the session with Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-5th WI). It wasn't the first time I went to a Town Hall meeting, but it was the first time I was able to speak at one. In previous meetings, there were so many speakers and other Town Halls were scheduled so time ran out. Fortunately, there was 90 minutes allotted for this meeting, which enabled me to speak.

I entered the local library and walked up to the table. Staffers had me sign in and write down my address so they could be sure I lived in the district. My address was checked. Congressman Sensenbrenner mentioned that there were three people from outside his district who had signed up to speak (and presumably didn't because the staff only took all of us from the 5th district first) There was also a box to check if you wanted to speak. I also wrote that the topic was health care, universal access.

Rep. Sensenbrenner had with him a representative of the State Assembly district (same party, Republican) so that if a state issue was raised, instead of a federal issue, that individual can answer the constituent's concern. During the meeting, attendees were called on to voice their comment(s) and sometimes ask a question. Rep. Sensenbrenner was good about keeping the meeting on track and not letting anyone monopolize time.

I kept my comment focused primarily on my support for universal access and then gave a few examples of how our "private sector" employer-based health insurance is dysfunctional. The congressman then recounted a personal experience with his college age son in Canada who was denied access to a treatment, which was distressing to his family. He also went on to explain his support for Health Savings Accounts, in the context of this discussion on coverage options. I then stood up again to offer my own examples of private sector problems with access to coverage (e.g., difficulty with the insurance company over coverage of the influenza vaccine for my children).

The meeting concluded and, within a week, I received a note from the congressman thanking me for attending but giving no indication that he had changed his position on health care.

Our members of Congress won't always agree with us, but they can always learn from us. Talking with our members of Congress when they are in town is a convenient way for us to be advocates. I hope you take the time to attend one (or two) this year.

Join the Conversation

Chat weekdays on the
The ACP Advocate Blog
by Bob Doherty

The American College of Physicians, the world's largest medical specialty society, invites you to participate in posting discussions related to policy and advocacy news for internists on The ACP Advocate Blog with Bob Doherty.

The ACP Advocate Blog with Bob Doherty is meant to foster conversation and dialogue about timely advocacy news for internists. We encourage readers to reply to posts, and to each other. We invite reasonable comments from ACP members, policy makers and others regarding ACP issues.

<http://blogs.acponline.org/advocacy/>



The biweekly e-newsletter provided by the College's Washington, DC, governmental affairs division on policy issues affecting internal medicine and patient care.

TheACPAdvocate@acponline.org



Do you Tweet? If not, it may be time for you to join.

“What’s Twitter?,” you ask. It is a social networking site and like most social networking sites, Twitter is a place to dialogue. Twitter asks a simple question. For example, “What are you doing?” A user’s answer is limited to 140 characters. You choose who can read your posts; conversly you can read the post of anyone’s account who allows you to read it.

You can follow as many dialogs as you want. The dialogs you follow are like being at a party, versus having a conversation. There are many voices, but not so many that the action cannot be followed. Twitter allows users to send short messages (“tweets”) by texting via your cellphone, or the Twitter Web site.

Users can learn a lot from the flow of information you choose to follow on Twitter. You can be alerted to recent health-related articles and numerous news posts and presentations you would probably not otherwise find. The short tweets often contain a hyperlink to more detailed information. What makes a Twitter dialogue important to advocates is that many members of Congress are tweeting.

Because many members of Congress have joined Twitter, it has quickly become a convenient and accessible means for constituents to communicate short messages directly to members of Congress (well, at least those who tweet). For example, you can listen or participate in the “conversations” Sen. Boxer (D-CA) or Rep. Terry (R-2nd NE) are having with their followers. While some members of Congress have staff send their “tweets,” many members tweet their own messages.

Do you want to know when Rep. Ellison (D-5th MN) is headed home so you can try to schedule a meeting? Then follow his tweets. Do you want to tell Sen. DeMint (R-SC) to vote “yes” on bill, H.R. 7192? Then send him a tweet. Twitter may be the best new tool for advocates. Why don’t you join today?

Senators who Twitter

(as of 5/12/09)

Barbara Boxer (D-CA)
 Tom Coburn (R-OK)
 Susan Collins (R-ME)
 John Cornyn (R-TX)
 Jim DeMint (R-SC)
 Chris Dodd (D-CT)
 Richard Durbin (D-IL)
 John Ensign (R-NV)
 Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
 Jim Inhofe (R-OK)

Mel Martinez (R-FL)
 John McCain (R-AZ)
 Claire McCaskill (D-MO)
 Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
 Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
 Mark Udall (D-CO)
 Tom Udall (D-NM)
 Mark Warner (D-VA)
 Roger Wicker (R-MS)

Representatives who Twitter

(as of 5/12/09)

Neil Abercrombie (D-HI)
 Michele Bachmann (R-MN)
 Gresham Barrett (R-SC)
 Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)
 Roy Blunt (R-MO)
 John Boehner (R-OH)
 John Boozman (R-AR)
 Michael Burgess (R-TX)
 Dan Burton (R-IN)
 Eric Cantor (R-VA)
 John Carter (R-TX)
 Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)
 Mike Coffman (R-CO)
 John Culberson (R-TX)
 Steven Driehaus (D-OH)
 Keith Ellison (D-MN)
 Jeff Flake (R-AZ)
 Randy Forbes (R-VA)
 Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
 Marcia Fudge (D-OH)
 Pete Hoekstra (R-MI)
 Mike Honda (D-CA)
 Robert Inglis (R-SC)
 Jim Jordan (R-OH)
 Dennis Kucinich (D-OH)
 Randy Kuhl (R-NY)
 Tom Latham (R-IA)
 Bob Latta (R-OH)
 Ben Lujan (D-NM)
 Dan Manzullo (R-IL)
 Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)
 Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI)
 Cathy McMorris (R-WA)
 Kendrick Meek (D-FL)
 Candice Miller (R-MI)
 George Miller (D-CA)
 Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
 Jared Polis (D-CO)
 George Radanovich (R-CA)
 Denny Rehberg (R-MT)
 Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA)
 Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)
 Tim Ryan (D-OH)
 Joe Sestak (D-PA)
 Christopher Shays (R-CT)
 John Shimkus (R-IL)
 Zach Wamp (R-TN)
 Joe Wilson (R-SC)
 Rob Wittman (R-VA)