

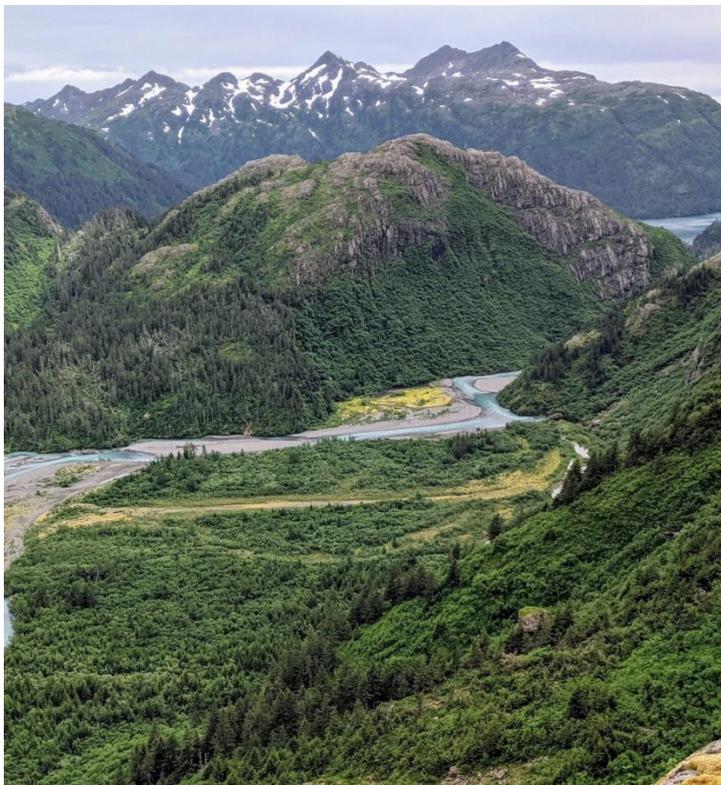


Welcome

As you are all intimately aware, the practice of medicine can be extremely rewarding, as well as challenging and at times overwhelming. I like to get outside to recharge and reconnect with the reasons for doing this work. This summer I had the opportunity to work with a crew maintaining the [Tutka Backdoor Trail](#) - a 32 mile remote and rugged hike from Taylor Bay to Tutka Bay. It left me in awe of the Alaskan wilderness we share with wild creatures and with a renewed respect for all who maintain trails throughout this great land. As I reflect on lessons learned after 14 hour days of hauling heavy pick axes, Travis tools and clearing brush, mud and rock, I recognize that trail work shares key skills with medical work.

- Assessment
- Adaptability
- Creativity
- Teamwork
- Communication

In recognizing that we do hard work and sometimes we just need a break, and that's OK. I hope you all get a chance for renewal this season so you can bring your best selves to the work of Internal Medicine and living your lives.



Congratulations

Dr Gail Pokorney was honored by the Chapter with the 2025 ACP Alaska Laureate award for her many contributions to the medical community, most especially for her tireless work bringing the dream of an Alaska-based internal medicine residency to reality. It's

difficult to overstate what a substantial project this has been; please extend your appreciation to Gail when you see her.

New Chapter Fellows

Please extend your congratulations to these distinguished colleagues, who are recognized for their contributions to medicine, to our chapter, and to the broader community.

- Andrea Caballero, MD FACP
- Brian Jeppeson, MD FACP
- Laurie Montano, MD FACP
- Ursula McVeigh, MD FACP

New Fellows are recognized at the National ACP Meeting - held this year in San Francisco April 16-18, 2026. Please come celebrate them at the Northwest Reception if you are attending the national meeting. More information [HERE](#).

Fall Meeting Recap

We had a great Chapter Meeting in September with enthusiastic attendees and more students and residents present than we have had in recent years. We had informative talks about the development of the rural residency program in Alaska, the POLST, new developments in atrial fibrillation and heart failure, advances in managing addiction and what the internist can manage in dermatology. Attendees got to welcome the first IM residents in the Alaska IM Rural Residency Track and we enjoyed the fall weather with a family friendly walk on the Coastal Trail and an after lunch networking and mentorship walk with students.

Save the Date

Our fall 2026 meeting will be Friday and Saturday **October 9-10, 2026** in Anchorage. We are excited about launching a mentoring breakfast, bringing back an evening social event, and increasing our Resident engagement. Please plan to attend and bring a colleague to the meeting!

Vaccine Corner

It has been challenging to counsel patients about appropriate vaccination with all of the changes at CDC. ACP has been very engaged on a national level advocating for science-

based vaccine policy - more information about the legal action ACP is taking in conjunction with AAP, APHA, IDSA, MPHA and SMFM here: [ACP lawsuit](#)

If you are looking for evidence-based guidance for clinical care, ACP has resources at this link:

[Adult Immunization | ACP Online](#)

Advocacy

ACP nationally is very active in the advocacy space - lobbying Congress, writing evidence-based policy papers, and engaging in legal action - to work towards policy changes to improve patient health and the internist's work environment. Learn more [HERE](#).

If you are interested in increasing your own advocacy work, consider joining the Alaska Chapter Health and Public Policy Committee or come to [Leadership Day](#) with us in Washington DC May 12-13, 2026.

- Scholarship funds are available to help support travel.
- Applications are **due March 1, 2026** - [apply here](#).

I am hearing questions about what ACP is doing related to Immigration. As a parent with an adult child in MSP, this issue is particularly close to home for me. ACP's policy is informed by the code of Ethics including a duty to act in the best interest of the patient, respect for patient autonomy, and stands in opposition to policies and actions that harm or interfere with the delivery of medically appropriate care. More [HERE](#).

Transitions

It is with gratitude that I say goodbye and best wishes to Sarah and Jennifer, who supported our chapter through the past two years, helped my transition to the Governor role, and are consolidating their work geographically. I am also highly appreciative of the search and interview team who helped select a new executive director for our chapter. Thank you to Dr. Emily (Church) Barkay, Dr. Eric Stewart and Dr. Mary DeMers. More about our new executive in the next newsletter.

You will have received a separate email about commenting on ACP resolutions - the resolutions process is the way the grassroots can change policy at ACP. As your Governor, I bring input from the Chapter to the Board of Governor's Meeting where

chapter input makes a difference. Please let me know if you have feedback about any of this Spring's resolutions

Kristin Mitchell, MD, FACP
ACP Governor, Alaska Chapter