



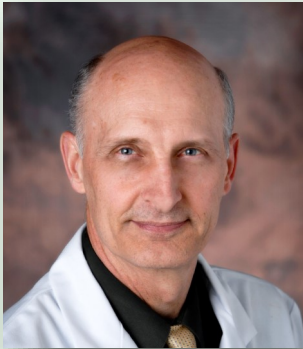
Florida Services  
Chapter

## FL Advocate Newsletter

JUNE 2023



George D. Everett, MD MACP, President/Governor ❖ Ankush K. Bansal, MD FACP, Governor



### President's Message

#### Advocacy in Action – ACP Florida on the Hill

A delegation from the Florida Chapter of ACP attended the 2-day Leadership Day event in Washington DC, on May 23-24. The delegation consisted of Governors Ankush Bansal MD FACP, George Everett MD MACP, former Governor and ACP Regent Jason Goldman, MD FACP, Governor-Elect Elisa Sottile MD FACP, Critical Care physician Natalia Solenkova MD FACP, internal medicine residents Landen Burstiner, Zachary Chandler, Shayan Mahapatra, Alex Ruiz, Michelle Yousefzadeh, FL ACP Counsel Chris Nuland and Executive Director Dawn Moerings. Prior to our day on the Hill visiting our Congressional members, the delegation heard presentations from ACP national leadership: Darilyn Moyer MD MACP, CEO/EVP and President Omar Atiq MD FACP, as well as, other leaders. We learned techniques for interacting effectively with congress members and their staff.

On the second day, May 24, we met with multiple members of the Florida Congressional delegation to offer ACP perspectives on multiple issues of interest to the ACP, with an emphasis on building relationships with our Representatives and Senators. We met with staff to Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio. We also met with staff members for Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Jared Moskowitz, Frederica Wilson, Cory Mills,

Mario Diaz-Balart, Maxwell Frost, Brian Mast and Lois Frankel. We had face-to face meetings with Representative Aaron Bean, Representative Neal Dunn MD, and Representative Kathy Castor who received the ACP Joseph F. Boyle Award for Distinguished Public Service.

The major legislation that was emphasized in our discussions with the congressional delegation included (4) issues of interest to Florida ACP members. The first “ask” of our congress members was to support the “Safe Step Act of 2023” which is designed to reduce burdensome tasks and unneeded steps to getting medications authorized for our patients. There was strong bipartisan support for this piece of legislation. Our ACP delegation emphasized the need to bring Medicare reimbursement rates for physicians into better alignment by adjusting payments upward based on the Medicare Economic Index (MEI). We pointed out the need to extend telehealth benefits for physicians and patients, which were so helpful during the COVID epidemic. We asked for support for advancing Medicaid payments for primary care and pediatrics to levels offered by Medicare. This would greatly help Primary Care in Florida. Finally, the delegation discussed the need for supporting our residents by deferring interest payments on their loans until the conclusion of residency and fellowship and for supporting the addition of 14,000 new residency slots paid by Medicare over the next 7 years.

The Florida ACP delegation enjoyed the time with our Congressional members and their staff. For further details, please reach out to Dawn Moerings, or Governors George Everett and Ankush Bansal.

*George D. Everett, MD MS MACP  
President/Governor, ACP Florida*

## 2023 ACP Leadership Day May 23-24, 2023 Florida Delegation

George D. Everett, MD MACP  
FL Chapter President/Governor

Ankush K. Bansal, MD FACP  
FL Chapter Governor

Jason M. Goldman, MD FACP  
FL Chapter Legislative Chair, ACP Regent

Landen Burstiner, DO  
Zachary Chandler, DO  
Shayan Mahapatra, MD  
Alex Ruiz-Castaneda, MD  
Natalia Solenkova, MD FACP  
Michelle Yousefzadeh, MD  
Christopher L. Nuland, Esq.  
Dawn Moerings

### REFLECTIONS ON THE LEADERSHIP DAY EXPERIENCE

I had the opportunity to attend ACP Leadership Day in Washington DC with other members of the Florida Chapter. Prior to spending the day on Capitol Hill, ACP provided a day of activities preparing us for advocacy with discussions on grassroots advocacy, ACP policy, how to become involved in policymaking and to advocate effectively, as well as multiple expert panelist with staff from Key Congressional Committees and/or the Administration. Our day on the Hill we had the opportunity to meet with members of Congress and Congressional staffers to advocate on bills presently in Congress. It was a spectacular experience. I strongly recommend anyone interested in Health Policy/Advocacy to get involved next year. Zachary Chandler, DO, Chair, FL ACP Council of Residents & Fellows; PGY-3, University of Florida College of Medicine Jacksonville

ACP Leadership Day was a terrific experience as a first-year Internal Medicine Resident. Everything was organized which was extremely helpful considering our busy schedules. I had never lobbied, advocated, or done anything like this before, and I left comfortable and confident under the guidance of the Florida ACP veterans. I recommend anyone interested in Advocacy/Health Policy consider attending Leadership Day in the future. Landen Burstiner DO, PGY-1, University of Florida College of Medicine Jacksonville

Leadership Day was a formative experience. As physicians, we are always advocates for our patients, and Leadership Day gave us a platform to do so. It also gave us the opportunity to advocate for ourselves. I was able to take part in the process of creating healthcare policy. We directly discussed legislation with elected officials and their staff. We were able to hear from and provide direct feedback, to the physician led CMS Innovation Center. Sharing my experience with colleagues at home, helped me to materialize the importance of advocacy as it affects patients & physicians' everyday lives & practices. Alex Ruiz-Castaneda MD, PGY-3, Kendall Regional Medical Center

I would like to begin by thanking ACP, FL Chapter for this wonderful opportunity. I wanted to see what Leadership Day is all about and meet with members of Congress to share what we actually feel about patient care. I think Leadership Day is a superb opportunity to translate some of the burning issues I see in the front lines of medicine being a resident. We in medicine are the experts unlike our legislators and we can express our voice for the change necessitated at national level. Brief preparatory sessions by ACP leaders has enabled me to learn how to start a dialogue and continue with it. From the very beginning, it has been my passion to learn the political process behind organized medicine. This helps us to advocate for our patients and for our profession. As a physician, we are so wrapped-up in our care of patients that we may not be aware policies are created in Washington, DC so we have to advocate for our patients and profession and educate those who create policy. Talking with Congressional members allowed me to share my personal experience with patient care and address healthcare issues which is what motivated me the most. I definitely look forward to coming back next year to advocate for my patients and ultimately improving health care across the nation. Shayan Mahapatra, MBBS MD, PGY-3, Cleveland Clinic FL

After meeting with our Florida representatives, it is evident that there is an important gap in how politicians characterize healthcare priorities and the realities of what physicians experience on a daily basis. Understandably, so it would be difficult for any member of Congress or their aids to truly understand what physicians, residents, and other medical staff do on a daily basis and further, which impediments pose the greatest threats to patient care. As such, ACP addresses this void by bringing physicians to the politicians for direct feedback on how potential legislation could help or harm our practices and more importantly, our patients. Overall, it seemed our meetings were well received with enthusiastic questions and eagerness for follow-up. What this signals is that there is a continued need for our direct input to guide future legislation, without, which could be detrimental to the future of our healthcare system. While it may be a tall order for most physicians to lobby in DC every year, I encourage continued ACP membership and support ACP efforts for presence in DC. Michelle Yousefzadeh, DO MPH, PGY-3 Mt Sinai Medical Center



## The Florida Delegation Meets with Legislators



**Florida Delegation L-R; Shayan Mahapatra MBBS MD, Ankush Bansal MD FACP, Chris Nuland, Zachary Chandler DO, Dawn Moerings, George Everett MD MACP, Jason Goldman MD FACP, Natalia Solenkova MD FACP, Elisa Sottile MD FACP, Landen Burstiner DO, Alex Ruiz-Castaneda MD, Michelle Yousefzadeh DO MPH**



**Congressman Aaron Bean meets with the Florida Delegation**



**Congressman Cory Mills meets the Florida Delegation**



## The Florida Delegation at the Capitol



**The Florida Delegation meets with  
Congressman Neal Dunn MD**



**Successful Day on Capitol Hill**



**Florida Delegation congratulates Congresswoman Kathy Castor on receiving the  
ACP Joseph F. Boyle Award for Distinguished Public Service**

## ADVOCATES FOR INTERNAL MEDICINE NETWORK

Join more than 15,000 colleagues in the Advocates for Internal Medicine Network (AIMn) in advocating for the interests of internal medicine in Washington, D.C. The AIMn program is for ACP members interested in participating in federal advocacy. It is designed to help members engage with their federal lawmakers on policy issues important to ACP and internal medicine.

**Enroll now:** <https://www.votervoice.net/ACPONLINE/home>

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

As key issues approach the decision-making stage on Capitol Hill, the College emails or faxes legislative alerts to AIMn members through our Legislative Action Center (LAC). Legislative alerts include all of the necessary information (including sample messages that can be easily personalized) to make informative contacts with members of Congress, and ACP staff is always available to provide support and answer legislative questions.

Once enrolled as an Advocate you can use the College's LAC to respond easily to current ACP legislative alerts, identify your federal legislators, monitor important legislation, and e-mail or call your members of Congress.

**Legislative Action Center:** <https://www.votervoice.net/ACPONLINE/home>

## CAPITOL KEY NEWSLETTER

The Capitol Key is an e-newsletter distributed to AIMn members periodically throughout the year. It features the grassroots advocacy activities of AIMn members and news about key advocacy events.

**The Capitol Key Newsletter:**

<https://www.acponline.org/advocacy/advocates-for-internal-medicine-network/the-capitol-key-newsletter>



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