



South Dakota Chapter

Governor's Message

Eric Larson, MD, MACP

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Greetings South Dakota ACP Membership. I hope you're all staying warm as we make our way through the final stretch of winter. Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes the National ACP Meeting, April 16–18 in San Francisco. I'm pleased to announce that the South Dakota Chapter will be teaming up with the North Dakota Chapter for a joint reception on Friday, April 17, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at SPIN. This is always a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, and I encourage you to attend if you'll be at the meeting. Details and RSVP information can be found later in this newsletter.

Leadership Day will take place in May, and our delegation is set to meet with South Dakota's representatives in Washington, DC. This is a critical opportunity to advocate for our patients and our profession, and I'm grateful to everyone involved for their commitment to this vital work.

This year also marks a special milestone for the South Dakota Chapter of the ACP as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of our state meeting. The event will be held October 1–2 in Deadwood, and we're planning an excellent lineup of CME sessions and speakers to commemorate this occasion. Registration will open on May 1, so mark your calendars and join us as we honor 75 years of progress and community in internal medicine.

I'd also like to remind members to consider applying for Fellowship in the American College of Physicians (FACP). Achieving FACP is a recognition of excellence and a commitment to the values of the ACP, and it's a great way to further your professional development. If you'd like more information or assistance with the application process, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for all you do for your patients and for our chapter. I look forward to seeing many of you at these upcoming events.



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Awards Committee

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It is that time of year again when we get to recognize the excellent work of our fellow ACP members! This is a fantastic opportunity to share kindness and joy by nominating a colleague for one of the following awards:

SD Chapter Awards (Prior Chapter Award winners can be viewed [HERE](#).)

- Humanitarian of the Year: This award is given for outstanding contributions to humanism in medicine and recognizes scholarly activities in literature, philosophy, and ethics.
- Award for Volunteerism: This award is bestowed upon a member who has initiated or been involved in volunteer programs or provided exemplary volunteer service. The volunteer activity may include education and teaching endeavors, service to the underprivileged, or work with community service organizations and should be medically related.
- Teacher of the Year: This award honors a member who exemplifies talent, enthusiasm, and professionalism in medical education. The recipient may demonstrate excellence in education at the medical student, graduate, or continuing education level.
- Early Career Physician of the Year: This award honors an internist who is practicing in the state of South Dakota and is within sixteen years of graduation from medical school. The recipient should demonstrate the ideals of the profession and maintain an active role in the activities of the SD ACP.
- Hospitalist of the Year (NEW): This award honors a hospitalist who has demonstrated leadership in quality improvement and education, has consistently delivered high-value and evidence-based care, and maintained the highest standards of professionalism.

National Awards: These awards may be used to recognize ACP members in several different categories. Please review all of the possibilities [HERE](#).

Our chapter is full of internists who contribute greatly to the care of our communities and the development of internal medicine.

Please take just a few minutes to think about who you would like to recognize and send a brief supporting statement to [Cherise Dunn](#) by Friday, March 6, 2026.

If you have any questions about the awards or committee activities, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. We appreciate your time and look forward to reviewing the nominations.

Health and Public Policy

Committee

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Thank you to all our ACP of South Dakota members who participated in advocacy at the local, state, and national levels this year. Your engagement continues to strengthen the voice of internal medicine physicians and the patients we serve.

Our Advocacy Committee remains closely partnered with the South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA) during the South Dakota Legislative Session. We are especially grateful to members who answered calls to contact legislators on issues affecting our profession and patient care. Grassroots outreach continues to make a measurable impact.

In April 2025, Dawood Shehzad, MD (resident), Joshua Schumacher (medical student), Governor Eric Larson, MD, and I traveled to Washington, DC for ACP Leadership Day. We met with aides for each of South Dakota's elected representatives to advocate for:

- Sustainable Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement
- Federal support for graduate medical education
- Policies improving rural healthcare access
- Continued investment in national research institutions and evidence-based guideline development

While in DC, Nancy Pelosi was present at our Leadership Day in 2025 and engaged in a discussion with the ACP President, Jason Goldman, about healthcare advocacy and legislation. Additionally, Representative Dusty Johnson gave us a private evening tour of the Capitol building. He was incredibly knowledgeable about its history, architecture, and the legislative processes that take place there.

We are deeply appreciative of Chapter funding that allows our trainees to participate in this invaluable leadership and advocacy experience. We plan to attend this year's ACP Leadership Day to continue ongoing conversations and advocacy with Senator Rounds, Senator Thune, and Representative Johnson during our visit.

To learn more about ACP's national advocacy initiatives and position papers, visit acponline.org/advocacy. To stay up to date and take action on federal issues, consider enrolling in the Advocates for Internal Medicine Network at [ACP Advocacy](#).





2025 South Dakota Legislative Highlights

Working in coordination with the SDSMA, our advocacy efforts this past year addressed a broad range of issues affecting physicians and patients:

- Protected public health measures by opposing legislation related to vaccine exemptions, blood product labeling based on COVID-19 vaccination status, and repeal of adult seat-belt requirements.
- Supported rural workforce initiatives, including continued funding for physician recruitment assistance and restoration of Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding in the state budget.
- Advocated for responsible scope of practice policy, engaging in significant negotiations regarding physician assistant independent practice to preserve physician-led care and meaningful physician collaboration.
- Supported patient access initiatives, including overdose Good Samaritan protections and programs addressing health-related social needs.
- Monitored parental access and consent legislation to protect the integrity of the patient-physician relationship.
- Opposed policies that could fragment care delivery, including certain telehealth kiosk proposals and broad conscience-based care refusal provisions.

The 2025 session was active and, at times, fast-moving. With a large number of first-time legislators, early relationship-building proved critical to ensuring physician perspectives were heard.

Looking Ahead:

Healthcare leadership requires sustained engagement. Whether through direct legislator outreach, testifying in committee, mentoring trainees in advocacy, or participating in ACP's national initiatives, your involvement matters.

Thank you for your continued commitment to advancing the art and science of medicine in South Dakota. If you are interested in becoming more involved in advocacy efforts, please reach out—we welcome your voice.

Membership Committee

"QUEUE THEM UP"

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As Membership Chair of the South Dakota Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I'm thrilled to reach out to our dedicated community of internists across the state.

Our chapter stands strong as a dynamic and supportive hub for internal medicine physicians—generalists and subspecialists alike—right here in South Dakota. We take genuine pride in creating a true professional home where colleagues connect, grow, and thrive together.

Every year, we champion opportunities for professional growth through engaging events, educational resources, and meaningful networking.

We build lasting collegiality that makes practicing in our state even more rewarding. And perhaps most importantly, we stand united in advocating for our patients and the future of internal medicine—fighting for policies and conditions that let us deliver the highest quality care without unnecessary barriers.

These efforts are powered by you, our members. Your involvement, insights, and passion elevate our chapter to a position of leadership and excellence among ACP chapters nationwide.

Now, let's build on that momentum! The ACP remains the nation's largest medical specialty organization, representing tens of thousands of internal medicine professionals who share our commitment to excellence.

If you have a colleague—whether in general internal medicine or a subspecialty—who isn't yet part of our chapter or the national ACP, this is the perfect moment to extend an invitation.

Our simple mantra says it all: Each one reach one. One personal conversation can make a huge difference, welcoming new voices into our fold and strengthening our collective impact.

To make sharing even easier, we're excited to provide custom QR code cards to all members! These handy cards can be handed out during clinic encounters, at conferences, or over coffee with colleagues.

A quick scan leads directly to the ACP membership registration or renewal page—streamlining the process and helping interested internists join or stay connected without missing a beat.

If you'd like a set of these QR cards to distribute, just let us know—we're happy to send them your way. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and enthusiasm. It's because of members like you that the South Dakota ACP Chapter continues to shine as a beacon of professional pride, collaboration, and advocacy.

Together, we're making a real difference for our patients, our practices, and the future of internal medicine in South Dakota.



Residency Update

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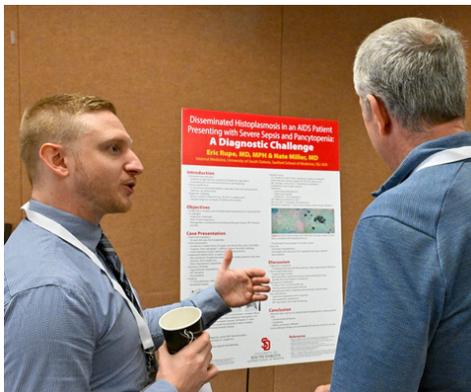
The USD SSOM IM Residency program continues to have ongoing success in the 2025-2026 academic year. The program is excited to announce that for the 10th year in a row the residents' performance on the ACP ITE places the program nationally at the 90th percentile or higher. We also had a 100% pass rate on the ABIM certification exam for the 10th year in a row.

We had 3 residents match into fellowships this year. Two will be staying here for their fellowships: Dr. Hasan in Cardiology and Dr. Kaur in Gastroenterology. Dr. Sekeramayi will be heading to San Francisco for Hematology and Oncology.

Our residents continue to be active in scholarly activities publishing numerous articles and presenting abstracts/posters at national conferences. Our PGY2 residents were excited to participate in the SD ACP meeting this past fall in Keystone. Dr. Eric Rupe won the resident poster session and once again the residents and faculty enjoyed friendly competition during the Doctor's Dilemma challenge.

The program completed another interview season at the end of December. We had another outstanding group of applicants. We are looking forward to the match in March.

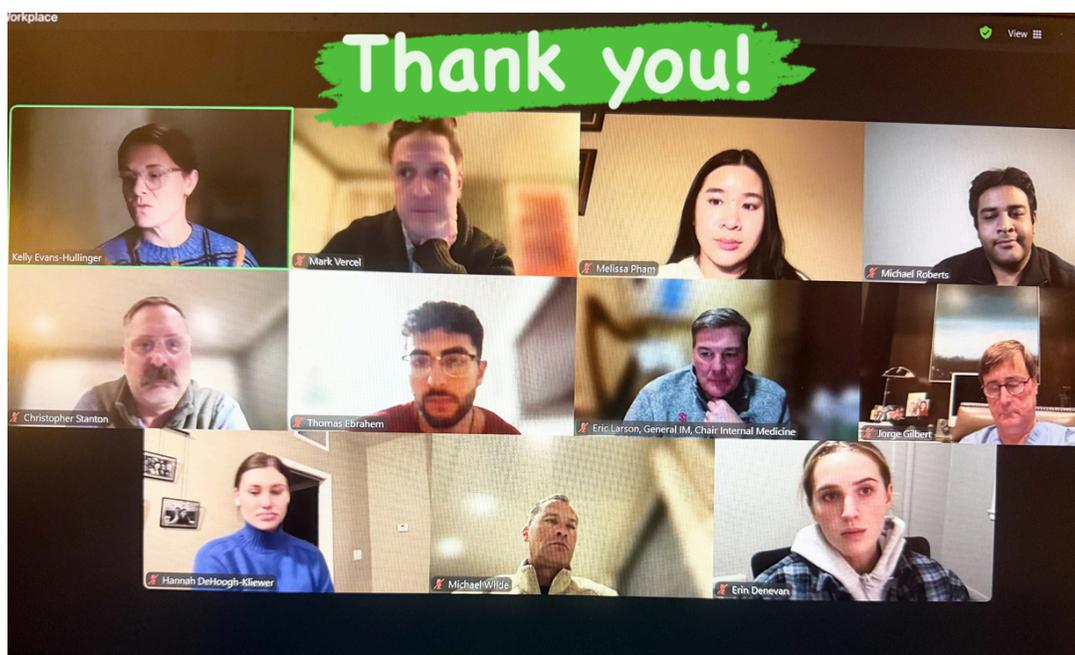
The program would like to thank the Avera and Sanford Health systems, the SD ACP chapter, USD SSOM, and all the many faculty members that support and teach our residents.



Internal Medicine Interest Group

The chapter recently partnered with the USD Internal Medicine Interest Group to host a "Day in the Life of an Internist" panel discussion for medical students. This event provided invaluable insights into the field of internal medicine, showcasing the diverse and rewarding career paths available.

A big THANK YOU to the medical students who attended and engaged with thoughtful questions, as well as to our panelists for generously sharing their time, expertise, and experiences. Your contributions made this event a success!



Congratulations to the newly elected IMIG Leadership team!

President - Collin Melanson

Vice President - David Melanson

Secretary - Erin Denevan

ACP Senior Rep - Thomas Ebrahim

Upcoming SD ACP Events

March 3	Central Council Meeting (Zoom)
April 16-18	National ACP Meeting - San Francisco
May 12-13	Leadership Day - Washington DC



Heading to the National ACP Meeting in April?
Scan the QR code to RSVP as we join the North Dakota Chapter for a special reception, 6:00 pm Friday, April 17! Connect with fellow members, network, and enjoy a great evening together.



**SD ACP Annual Meeting
October 1 & 2
The Lodge at Deadwood, Deadwood, SD
Registration opens May 1**

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Eric Larson - Governor
Michael Wilde - Governor Elect Designee
Tim Ridgway - Treasurer
Rob Allison - Immediate Past Governor
Jennifer Williamson - Membership
Dawn Hill - HPPC
Daryl Goh - Early Career Physician (West)
Mamoon Ahmed - Early Career Physician (East)
Cathy Leadabrand - Hospitalist
Jennifer Hsu - Awards
Nick Thielen - Dean of SSOM Appointee
Randall Lamfers - Residency Assistant Director
Jenna Gassman - Wellness Champion
Kelly Evans-Hullinger - SDSMA Councilor
Anna Myrmoe - IM Program Senior Rep
Areeba Minhaj - IM Program Junior Rep
Thomas Ebrahim - IMIG Rep

As your South Dakota ACP Chapter Council, we are here to support and guide the work of our incredible members. Our shared commitment to advancing internal medicine, fostering professional growth, and advocating for our patients continues to drive us forward. We encourage all members to reach out with ideas, questions, or feedback to help us strengthen our chapter and its impact. Together, we will continue to lead, inspire, and build a brighter future for internal medicine in South Dakota.