Maine Chapter ACP Participates in Leadership Day 2018

Every spring, ACP members from around the country converge in Washington DC for Leadership Day, a chance for internists to meet with lawmakers, share clinical experiences, and discuss the College's priorities.

Last year's event coincided with a heated debate on Capitol Hill over Obamacare repeal. Not only did the ACP's work help sway three Republicans to join Democrats in defeating Obamacare repeal, we were also successful in our advocacy for:

- Funding the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through 2027
- More funds for primary care -- Increases for Community Health Centers, National Health Services Corps, and Title VII primary care training grants.
- Increasing opioid program funding through the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)
- Reducing barriers to chronic care services -- Expanded coverage of telemedicine services, Medicare Advantage supplemental chronic care services, home-based primary care benefits.

This year, though the Republican attacks on major provisions of the Affordable Care Act persist, no legislation appears to be moving through either house of Congress. So Maine's delegation -- ACP Governor Rebecca Hemphill, Health and Public Policy Chair Hani Jarawan, MMC Internal Medicine resident Brian King, and UNE medical student Cashel O'Brien -- met with our legislators and their staffs to discuss a broader range of problems facing American medicine.

In addition to advocating for legislation to re-stabilize the Obamacare marketplace (after December's tax cut bill repealed the individual mandate), the ACP also asked legislators to support specific bills and funding requests to:
1) Reduce unnecessary administrative tasks on physicians and patients
2) Reduce prescription drug costs
3) Support workforce, medical and health research, and public health initiatives
4) Promote continued action to address the epidemic of opioid use
5) Reduce firearms-related injury and death
6) Expand Graduate Medical Education funding

You can find an ACP fact sheet, executive summary of ACP's Leadership Day key priorities, and more details about each topic on the ACP Advocacy website and pages linked above.

Obamacare Update:
To be sure, attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act are very much still simmering on Capitol Hill; stay tuned for some potential surprises this summer! Republican leadership elected to keep
the Senate in session through August, when legislators typically flee The Swamp's heat and humidity to campaign for re-election back home. Republicans say they will use the reclaimed time to approve judicial nominees stalled by the minority. Democrats are crying foul over this apparent scheme to keep them from campaigning before a critical midterm election, when nearly three-times more Democratic than Republican senators are up for re-election. Seeing their own political opportunity, Democrats plan to dub August "Health Care month," previewing a fight on some ACP priorities including:
- allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices,
- controlling drug price hikes,
- expanding Obamacare subsidies and tax credits,
- establishing re-insurance programs,
- allowing individuals to buy into Medicare before 65, and
- expanding Medicaid

In related news, the Trump Administration is refusing to defend the ACA against a Texas-led lawsuit which claims that Congress' repeal of the individual mandate necessarily invalidates all elements of the law. Put another way, if the individual mandate is gone, the other two legs of the Obamacare stool -- guaranteed issue despite preexisting conditions and federal subsidies -- should not stand.

Call to Action!
A lot can still happen in these last few legislative months before a big election season! Throughout the summer, we will be reaching out to you to support ACP's advocacy by asking you to call or email our legislators. This week's Call to Action is for the subject most likely to move through Congress with bipartisan support: the opioid crisis.

This week is opioid week on Capitol Hill so our advocacy is timely. It's also smart politics for lawmakers to support this legislation!

Please take a few minutes to contact our lawmakers and ask for their support to fight back against this epidemic.

Example: Hi, I'm Jill. I'm a doctor in Lewiston. I would like Congressman Poliquin to cosponsor H.R.5311 to help limit and treat opioid addiction.

THAT'S IT! If you'd like, share a personal anecdote. Stories are always helpful, but our strength is in numbers; staffers will aggregate our messages and at least share a tally with the legislators, typically daily.

Below are the ACP's priorities on opioids, broken down by legislator. Feel free to learn more from the links above, but you don't have to be an expert to be a constituent!

Bruce Poliquin
202-225-6306 (or see website for district office numbers)
The ACP would like the congressman to introduce and pass a comprehensive legislative package to improve prevention, education, treatment, and recovery for those suffering from opioid-related additions, including:

1) Cosponsoring H.R.5311, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0, as a step toward a more comprehensive opioids-related package that is under development,
2) Expanding access and coverage for medication-assisted treatment (methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone),
3) Rejecting a proposal to impose a three day prescribing limit for initial opioid prescription to ensure that doctors have appropriate flexibility to determine the proper duration of each opioid prescription.

Susan Collins  
202-224-2523 (or see website for district office numbers)
The ACP would like the Senator to introduce and pass a comprehensive legislative package to improve prevention, education, treatment, and recovery for those suffering from opioid-related additions, including:

1) Cosponsoring S.2456, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0, as a step toward a more comprehensive opioids-related package that is under development,
2) Expanding access and coverage for medication-assisted treatment (methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone),
3) Rejecting and proposal to impose a three day prescribing limit for initial opioid prescription to ensure that doctors have appropriate flexibility to determine the proper duration of each opioid prescription.

Angus King  
202-224-5344 (or see website for district office numbers)
The ACP would like the Senator to introduce and pass a comprehensive legislative package to improve prevention, education, treatment, and recovery for those suffering from opioid-related additions, including:

1) Cosponsoring S.2456, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0, as a step toward a more comprehensive opioids-related package that is under development,
2) Expanding access and coverage for medication-assisted treatment (methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone),
3) Rejecting and proposal to impose a three day prescribing limit for initial opioid prescription to ensure that doctors have appropriate flexibility to determine the proper duration of each opioid prescription.

Chellie Pingree  
202-225-6116 (or see website for district office numbers)
The ACP would like the congresswoman to introduce and pass a comprehensive legislative package to improve prevention, education, treatment, and recovery for those suffering from opioid-related additions, including:

1) Cosponsoring H.R.5311, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0, as a step toward a more comprehensive opioids-related package that is under development,
2) Expanding access and coverage for medication-assisted treatment (methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone),
3) Rejecting a proposal to impose a three day prescribing limit for initial opioid prescription to ensure that doctors have appropriate flexibility to determine the proper duration of each opioid prescription.

Enjoy your summer, but please stay involved! Our patients are counting on us!

Email Hani Jarawan (HaniJarawan@gmail.com) with questions.

From left to right: Cashel O’Brien, UNE Medical Student, Brian King, MD, Resident, Hani Jarawan, MD and Rebecca Hemphill MD FACP, Maine Chapter Governor
From left to right: Hani Jarawan, MD, HPP Chair, Brian King, MD, Resident MMC
Rebecca Hemphill, MD FACP, Maine Chapter Governor, Cashel O’Brien, UNE Medical Student
Hani Jarawan, MD