Your ACP chapter has been busy this year. We started the year in March with the LA/MS chapter meeting for an excellent CME opportunity. Dr. David Hirsch was the MS Laureate Award Winner and was recognized for his advocacy role. Our chapter was awarded the Chapter of Excellence Award given by the ACP.

In April, I visited San Diego, CA for the Board of Governors' meeting which was in conjunction with Internal Medicine 2007 (formerly the Annual Session). May 15 - 16, 2007, was the annual Leadership Day in Washington, D.C. Dr. Phillips Jenkins, an internal medicine intern, and Carter Payne, a third year medical student, attended the meeting with me. We met with Representative Chip Pickering and his staff. We also had visits with the staff of Senator Trent Lott and Senator Thad Cochran. Stopping the Sustained Growth Rate cuts for medicare was our top priority. Reforming the current payment system, the crisis in primary care, and other issues were also discussed.

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Dr. David Hirsch
Laureate Award Winner

From left to right: Carter Payne, Dr. Phillips Jenkins, Dr. Samuel Peeples, Representative Chip Pickering, and Mary Mills Ritchie
encourage all our members to contact our legislators personally. Use of the Legislative Action Center, becoming a key contact, and joining the ACP-PAC can pay huge dividends. Please visit the website at www.acpservices.org/pac/ for information and to contribute.

The MS/LA Chapter Meeting for 2008 will be April 3-5, 2008, in Natchez, MS, at the Natchez Convention Center. Please mark these dates and join us. We will be looking at practice innovation with a strong lineup of speakers. We have rooms reserved at several bed and breakfast facilities and Natchez has two new hotels that are ahead of schedule for completion before our meeting.

**LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

Your ACP chapter was active at the MSMA meeting in San Destin, Florida. As part of the primary care coalition, Dr. Dan Edney and I met with Dr. Dan Jones and other representatives from UMC to discuss ways to promote primary care. Also, at our ACP luncheon we discussed ways to strengthen our chapter. One idea that came out of our discussions is to host a Leadership Summit to bring members from around the state to develop a plan to organize and unify internal medicine in our state. Other specialty organizations in our state have a stronger organizational structure which makes them much more effective advocates. If you would be interested and willing to participate, please let me know at speeples@mbhs.org. We hope to meet in the fall, or possibly in January in conjunction with the Mississippi Blues Marathon and related activities.

**HEALTHY HABITS INITIATIVE**

In 2006 representatives from MS-ACP, MSMA, MAFP, MAP, and UMC met to discuss ways to improve health education in our state. With our schools being the primary means of touching the largest number of our state residents, we worked to develop a program that could be used in the schools with plans to extend this to parents and other venues. With funding from the Bower Foundation, we have begun the Healthy Habits Initiative. With the beginning of the school year, third year medical students will be giving health education talks in schools around our state as part of their FP preceptorship blocks. We encourage all practicing physicians to join us in this initiative and hope to see physicians addressing schools, churches, civic organizations, and parent-teacher organizations. If you are interested in helping, please contact me at speeples@mbhs.org.

**CRISIS IN PRIMARY CARE**

Our Nation is seeing a drastic decline in physicians going into primary care. Family practice and pediatrics have been hurt by this, but internal medicine has seen primary care numbers plummet. In 1998, 50% of IM residents entered primary care. In 2005, only 20% did so. Only 13% of interns in IM in 2005 planned to go into general medicine. Our numbers at UMC are probably below the national average by informal polling. Part of this phenomenon is due to new hospitalist positions, but is mostly due to residents going into a subspecialty.

The trend is disturbing as our population ages and more than ever general internists are needed. This trend is fueled by economies with primary reimbursement lagging behind other specialties and residents faced with debts of $150,000 and greater. Much of our last Board of Governor’s meeting addressed this issue. The ACP is studying a new model with the patient centered medical home (PCMN). It is hoped that this model, which emphasizes a team concept for management of complicated medical patients, will fairly compensate general internists and other primary care physicians for the value they bring. There are still many unanswered questions; with this and other models. Please continue to monitor this issue and help look for solutions to prevent the death of general internal medicine.

**2007 LAUREATE WINNER**

David I. Hirsch, M.D., F.A.C.P.

Doctor David Hirsch was born and grew up in a small town in New Hampshire. He obtained an undergraduate degree at Columbia College in the City of New York and his M.D. from the University of Vermont. From there he began the circuitous trek to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, first with a rotating internship at Denver General Hospital.

From Denver he was drafted into the Navy, serving two years during Vietnam. Afterwards, he returned to Denver as a medical resident and chief resident and was married to Billie, his wife of 36 years. He then went to Los Angeles and a Nephrology fellowship at UCLA hospitals - Mount Sinai and Wadsworth VA. During his fellowship and the following six months in Berne, Switzerland, he co-authored 8 publications on the pathophysiology and treatment of hypertension.

From there he moved to Plattsburgh, New York, where he practiced Nephrology for 13 years and served as a Clinical Instructor at the University of Vermont College of Medicine. While in Plattsburgh, he received his
Fellowship in the American College of Physicians and became a life member.

The next move was to Hattiesburg with his family to join the Hattiesburg Clinic and the Nephrology Department. When he retired, after sixteen years, he had seen the dialysis population grow from 150 patients to nearly 800, served in 10 dialysis centers, and had seen the Nephrology Department increase from 2 to 7 physicians.

In the past year, he has become an advocate for the practice of Internal Medicine and the input of the ACP into government updating and funding of the Medicare program. As the representative for the Mississippi ACP at the Leadership Day on Capitol Hill in May of 2006, he met with Congressmen or their staff members.

Doctor Hirsch lives in Hattiesburg with his wife, Billie. They have two children, Jessica, 31, and Jeremy, 29. He enjoys golf, and since retirement has been involved with real estate projects. Volunteer medical activities have included serving as a camp physician, serving with the Public Health Service after Katrina in and around New Orleans, and caring for dialysis patients during their vacations.

**SUPPORTING YOUR CHAPTER THROUGH CHAPTER DUES**

You may have noticed that your dues statement from ACP looks a little different this year. Don't forget to include payment of your chapter dues along with your ACP dues -- it is only through your direct financial support that we can deliver valuable programs and services to members of our chapter.

Your support allows us to offer local meetings with prominent experts focusing on timely clinical issues. National ACP leaders attend these meetings and report on the future of internal medicine and how ACP is representing your best interest. Your contribution also enables us to offer mentoring programs for medical students and local Associates' research competitions. Additionally, your dues support our advocacy efforts with state legislators on local issues and enables our chapter leaders to participate in Leadership Day on Capitol Hill so that your voice is heard in Washington. Many of these activities are coordinated by unpaid volunteer leaders in our chapter. However, local staff support is critical to help manage the day-to-day operation of the chapter, special activities, and chapter meetings. Your chapter dues help support the cost of local staff, as well as funding for new and existing chapter initiatives.

When you receive your dues notice, please support your chapter by sending your chapter dues of $30 along with your national dues. You will be contributing to both the national and local success of ACP.

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**F2008 Annual Scientific Chapter Meeting**
**April 3-5, 2008**

Natchez Convention Center
Natchez, MS

The scientific meeting will be held in conjunction with the Louisiana Chapter

Please visit again for more information coming soon. If you have any questions, please contact Brenda Cress at 601-714-3250, or email at bcrest@mbhs.org.

Visit the Chapter website at

www.acponline.org/chapters/ms