Hello everyone. As we begin the New Year, I've listed some activities that might interest you through 2008.

**Review the Annals of Internal Medicine, Issue #1 Volume 148**

On January 1, 2008, the ACP released a new evidence-based paper in the Annals of Internal Medicine. The paper was developed by ACP's Health and Public Policy Committee and approved by the Board of Regents in October, 2007. The paper reflects comments from members of the Board of Governors, Board of Regents, ACP Councils, and selected expert advisors. See page 7.

The paper outlines the ills plaguing the American health care system and proposes evidence-based recommendations addressing each of them, based on findings of a review of 12 industrialized countries. The paper concludes that the current U.S. health care system—which involves multiple payers without guaranteed coverage (pluralistic model)—results in the U.S. lagging behind other countries on access, quality and efficiency of care. The paper proposes two different pathways to achieve universal coverage: a pluralistic system with universal coverage or a single payer system. Rather than endorsing either pathway, ACP calls on the public and policymakers to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. For instance, the paper reports that single payer systems perform well on most measures of quality, satisfaction, access, and administrative costs, but are more likely to result in shortages of services subject to price controls and waiting lists for elective procedures. Pluralistic models with universal coverage do better on giving individuals the freedom to purchase additional services, but less well on measures of equity (access without regard to ability to pay) and administrative costs. To my knowledge the ACP is the first medical professional organization that offers a "single payer" option as a possible solution to achievement of universal health insurance coverage. What are your thoughts?

**Visit the ACP web site**

The College has launched a redesigned version of ACP Online on Monday, January 28th. The new site is based on a user-centric design which allows for easier to find and more streamlined content.

ACP has also unveiled a new non-partisan ACP Web tool on www.acponline.org that analyzes the health care reform proposals of the Presidential candidates, drawing on the recommendations outlined in the College's position paper. The tool will be updated continually throughout the 2008 election cycle. An online members-only discussion area is also accessible on the College's Web site.
Sign up to be a judge for our 2008 Resident Abstract Competition, Oct. 11, 2008

On October 13, 2007, we held our annual Resident Abstract/Poster and Medical Jeopardy Competition at Thomas Jefferson University School of Medicine. The event was well-attended by residents, residency program directors, and faculty. We judged 47 posters. The clinical diversity was excellent as was the quality. The resident presenters certainly were well-prepared to discuss their clinical cases/research projects. It was quite satisfying to see the excitement and passion for clinical medicine in these residents. Congratulations to the winners and all of the residents who presented their posters.

Special thanks to Greg Kane, MD, FACP, and Ashish Rana, MD, FACP, who organized the entire event - a job very well-done. Dr. Kane is a program director at Jefferson Medical College and Dr. Rana is program director at Crozer-Chester Medical Center. We hope to return to Jefferson next year and look forward to another stimulating and enjoyable day.

Please consider being part of this program. If you have several hours free on Saturday October 11, 2008, we welcome your participation helping judge the resident’s research projects. I guarantee you will learn new things.

Join the state chapter’s HPPC

Our Health and Public Policy Committee (HPPC), under the direction of Dan Kimball, MD, FACP, from Reading, PA, continues to advocate for internists at both the national and state levels. Our Pennsylvania ACP lobbyist, Ken Lawrence, has been very effective in assisting our review of and our engagement in health care-related discussions with our state senators and representatives. We have just learned that the Insurance Commissioner has extended the MCARE abatement through March 31, 2008 pending further legislation. Governor Ed Rendell has also recently announced that he proposes legislation extending the MCARE abatement for another 10 years with the provision that his Cover All Pennsylvanians program (CAP) will also be funded. We will continue to monitor this issue and make the strong argument that continuation of the MCARE abatement is vital to the practicing internists in the Commonwealth.

Keep in touch - two important ACP members

I am pleased to report that two Pennsylvania internists, Ralph Schmeltz, MD, FACP, FACE from Pittsburgh and Eric Gertner, MD, FACP from the Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown, PA, have been named to the Chronic Health Care Task Force, as part of the Governor Rendell’s Prescription for Pennsylvania. This represents a wonderful opportunity for two ACP internists to help shape the care for Pennsylvania residents with chronic disease. Leaders from our Pennsylvania Chapter have already briefed Governor Rendell about the potential benefits of the PCMH. I believe that the PCMH, in some fashion, will be one of the recommendations of the Chronic Health Care Task Force. We will look forward to hearing periodic reports from Dr. Schmeltz and Dr. Gertner.

Chapter’s Annual Award Dinner

One of the major highlights this past year was our Awards Dinner held at the Hershey Country Club on December 1, 2007 following the State Medical Jeopardy Competition and Pennsylvania ACP December council meeting. Physicians from each of our regions received awards for their outstanding commitment to patient care, education or service to the ACP. From our region, Glenn Eiger, MD, FACP, Program Director at Albert Einstein Medical Center, received the Clinical Practice Award for his significant contributions and innovations in the training of residents and the practice of medicine.

Prepare to attend IM 2008

ACP’s Internal Medicine 2008 (previously called Annual Session) is being held in Washington, DC May 15 through May 17. The Scientific Program promises to be excellent.

I am pleased to announce that Harris Clearfield, MD, FACP, was selected as a Master of the American College of Physicians, the highest honor in the College. Masters comprise a small group of highly distinguished physicians, selected from among Fellows who have achieved recognition in medicine by exhibiting preeminence in practice or medical research, holding positions of high honor, or making significant contributions to medical science or the art of medicine.

Paul Epstein, MD, FACP, deputy editor of the Annals of Internal Medicine and former ACP Governor, was also selected as a Master and will attend the convocation.

The Southeast Region is also proud to announce that Brian L. Strom, MD, FACP has been awarded the John Phillips Memorial Award. This national award will be presented at the annual session in Washington, DC. The award is bestowed for outstanding work in clinical medicine, which is interpreted to include all phases of clinical research or practice of medicine.

The Chapter recognizes and congratulates these Pennsylvania Southeast Region physicians who were
elected to Fellowship in the College on October 1, 2007:
Nehal N. Mehta, MD, FACP, Philadelphia
Elliot C. Norry, MD, FACP, Abington
Elias S. Siraj, MD, FACP, Jenkintown
David S. Weinberg, MD, MSc, FACP, Philadelphia
Martha M. Zubritzky, MD, FACP, Blue Bell

Dr. Clearfield, Dr. Strom, and all the new ACP Fellows will be honored at the convocation ceremony on Thursday evening May 15, 2008 at the Washington, DC, Convention Center.

As we begin a New Year, I would like to hear from you. How can our Chapter provide better service to you? My email address is cutler@doctoroffice.org.

Charles Cutler, MD, FACP
Governor

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Legislative Report
Public Affairs Strategies

January 2008

The Pennsylvania General Assembly completed the first half of their two-year legislative session in December, and the legislators returned in January. Health-care was and will remain a front-burner issue through the elections in November.

Our Chapter's Health and Public Policy Committee was very active in 2007, confronting a legislative agenda that offered opportunities and challenges for our members and the medical community at-large.

Among the highlights:

**Physician Retention Loan Forgiveness Act Passes House of Representatives**

On Thursday, June 26, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed HB 1093, the Physician Retention Loan Forgiveness Act, by a vote of 191-9. This legislation will provide 100 percent loan forgiveness for new primary care physicians and obstetricians who practice in Pennsylvania for ten years.

Our chapter's council identified loan forgiveness as one of the most important components to retaining and attracting medical students both to the Commonwealth and to the field of primary care. Chapter leadership was instrumental in the creation of this legislation and played an active role in promoting it to legislators and medical organizations. Our members responded in overwhelming numbers to an action alert we sent using VoterVOICE, urging members to contact their state representatives.

While this was an important step, the bill still needs to pass the Senate and get signed into law by Governor Rendell. The bill’s passage remains one of our top priorities for the remainder of this legislative session. We may seek your assistance again as we pursue approval in the Senate.

**ACP Provides Testimony**

Members of our chapter Health and Public Policy Committee provided testimony on major health-care issues facing internists.

Dr. Ralph Schmeltz spoke before the House Insurance Committee on House Bill 700, "Cover All Pennsylvanians." This is Governor Rendell’s initiative to provide insurance for the uninsured.

Dr. Dan Kimball provided testimony on House Bills 1253 and 1254 (Scope of Practice Bills for Nurse Practitioners and Clinical Nurse Specialists) before the House Professional Licensure Committee.

For copies of this testimony, please contact John Derrickson at pcim.hq@verizon.net

**Dinners with Legislators**

Our chapter Governors joined other members to host a series of dinners around the state with key legislators. These dinners provided an opportunity for ACP members to share their experiences and concerns with their legislators in an informal atmosphere. Dinners were held with State Representatives Calgitarone, Frankel, Gerber, Lentz and also State Senator Connie Williams.

**Spring Preview**

**Mcare Abatement**

The fall session ended with an impasse over extending the Mcare abatement in 2008. Governor Rendell has proposed using the surplus in the Mcare fund to pay for his "Cover All Pennsylvanians" proposals, and has tied the abatement to this initiative. Governor Rendell recently authorized a partial-year extension: the issue needs to be confronted immediately or a crisis could occur. While both issues are important, the PA Chapter of the ACP stands with other medical organizations in urging that abatement be kept separate from insuring the uninsured.

**Clean Air Act**

The PA Chapter of the ACP has consistently supported smoking bans to reduce second-hand smoke. The legislature is stalled over legislation that would provide state-wide guidelines for smoking in public places. Currently, the legislation sits in a conference committee. We will continue to support legislation with the fewest number of exemptions to protect the greatest number of
people.

**Get Involved**

The Health and Public Policy Committee generally meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 8:30 PM via teleconference during the legislative session. If you are interested in participating or just receiving more information on policy issues, please contact our lobbyist, Ken Lawrence of Public Affairs Strategies, via e-mail at ken@publicaffairsstrategies.com or 610-940-1650 or our HPPC Chair, Dan Kimball, at dockimball@aol.com.

We also encourage you to respond to our VoterVOICE emails and engage your legislators whenever possible to share your views. The ongoing personal relationships you have with your state representative, state senator and federal legislator is of utmost importance. Maintaining that relationship by thanking these individuals when they support us makes it more likely that they will listen to us when we seek their assistance on important issues in the future.

If I can help in any way, do not hesitate to contact me or the state office of the ACP.

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**Southeast Abstract Competition Another Outstanding Success**

Ali Akbar, MBBS, Mercy Catholic Medical Center, discusses his work with Dr. Ashish Rana, Program Director, Crozer Chester Medical Center and the Southeastern Region’s 2007 Abstract Chairman.

More than 100 abstracts were submitted by our residents and 47 were selected for presentation at the SE poster competition.

Dae Hyun Kim, MD, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, discusses his 1st place in research poster with Dr. Larry Ward of Temple. Dr. Kim’s Poster, Prevalence of Lifestyle Risk Factors and Use of Health Services by Level of Disability in Community Dwelling Older Adults, will be presented at the ACP’s national competition in Washington, DC during Internal Medicine 2008.

Malaviya Lalkrushna, MD, Crozer Chester Medical Center, received 1st place in Quality Improvement with a poster titled Screening for Microalbuminuria and Subsequent Use of ACE/ARB in Non Hypertensive Diabetics.

Nivati Chiniwala, MD, MPH, Crozer Chester Medical Center, received 1st Place - Case Report for a poster titled Clostridium Difficile Bacteremia: A Rare Presentation of a Growing Problem. Case Report and Review of the Literature.

Fortune Medeiros, (left) administrative assistant to Greg Kane, MD, Program Director, Jefferson Medical College and 2007 Jeopardy Chairman, relaxes with Heather L. Nace, MD, TJUH. Jefferson will host the 2008 competition on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2008.
Congratulations Southeast Region Physicians

The Southeastern Region is honored to announce that Harris R. Clearfield, MD, FACP, has recently been named a new Master. Dr. Clearfield will receive his Masterships at Internal Medicine 2008 in Washington, DC.

The Southeastern Region is also proud that Brian L. Strom, MD, FACP, has been awarded the John Phillips Memorial Award. This national award will be presented at IM 2008 in Washington, DC. The award is bestowed for outstanding work in clinical medicine.

Six Pennsylvania Physicians Honored at Awards Dinner

Edward R. Bollard, MD
Laureate Award

Edward R. (Ted) Bollard, MD, DDS, FACP, Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Training Program, Department of Medicine and Associate Professor of Medicine at Penn State University College of Medicine was honored for his long-term commitment to excellence in medical care, education, or research, and service to his community, state chapter, and the American College of Physicians.

Elliot Goldberg, MD
Laureate Award

Elliot Goldberg, MD, FACP, Chairman of the Department of Medicine at The Western Pennsylvania Hospital, was presented the Laureate Award by the Pennsylvania Chapter at its Annual Awards Dinner in Hershey. The Laureate Award honors Fellows and Masters of the ACP who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to excellence in medical care, education, or research, and service to their community, their state chapter, and the American College of Physicians.

Currently, Dr. Goldberg is helping to expand programs and add new fellowships to the Department of Medicine at West Penn. He continues to work on further expansion of the Temple Medical School affiliation.

Paul A. Bialas, MD
Waxman Voluntary Teaching Award

Paul A. Bialas, MD, FACP, is the 2007 recipient of the Herbert S. Waxman Voluntary Faculty Teaching Award from the Pennsylvania Chapter of the ACP.

The Waxman Award recognizes an effective and committed internist in Pennsylvania who has distinguished himself or herself as a member of the voluntary faculty at a teaching hospital or medical school.

Dr. Bialas has volunteered his time to teach medical students throughout his career. Serving as Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine for the Penn State College of Medicine, he has been receiving students for one-month preceptorship rotations for the past ten years. Students enjoy a broad exposure to patient care, including office, hospital and procedural medicine.

He presently serves as clinical coordinator of the Northwest PA Area Health Education Center (AHEC), where he assists with the medical student placements for the mostly rural 15 county area in the northwest corner of the state.

Stephen H. Cooksey, MD
Clinical Practice Award

Stephen H. Cooksey, MD, FACP, Associate Chief of Nephrology at Western Pennsylvania Hospital and Medical Director of Dialysis Clinics, Inc. in North Versailles, PA, was presented the Clinical Practice Award for his service to patients, community and profession.
Glenn Eiger, MD
Clinical Practice Award

Glenn Eiger, MD, FACP, Internal Medicine Residency Program Director, Albert Einstein Medical Center, Philadelphia was presented the Clinical Practice Award.

Eric D. Newman, MD
Clinical Practice Award

Eric D. Newman, MD, FACP, Director, Clinical Trials Office; Director, Department of Rheumatology; and Vice Chairman, Division of Medicine Chair and Chair, Osteoporosis Disease Management Program at the Geisinger Health System, Danville was recognized for his service to patients, community and profession.

Drexel Wins Medical Jeopardy Pennsylvania State Championship

Drexel University College of Medicine’s Medical Residency Team won the 2007 Medical Jeopardy State Championship after their victory over regional winners from Geisinger Medical Center in Danville and Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh.

Congratulations to Drexel team-members Gayathri Nagaraj, Vaibhav Sahni, Joseph Vadakara and Petros Grivas and coach Archana Gowda. They will represent Pennsylvania at the national tournament in Washington, DC during the ACP’s annual session in May.

We also recognize the regional winners. They are Yuba Raj Acharya, Jeremy Patterson and Maria Camilla Bermudez from Geisinger Medical Center and Piyush Lohiya, Nadia Ijaz and Yasaman Mohtasebi from Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh. You are all champions!

Thank You!

A very special thank you to our regional Chairs who were responsible for three successful abstract and Medical Jeopardy competitions.

Eastern Region
David George, MD

Southeastern Region
Greg Kane, MD
Ashish Rana, MD

Western Region
Kofi Clarke, MD
Andreas Andros, MD
Stasia Miaskoweskitz, MD

We also thank Martin Evers, MD for conducting our state Medical Jeopardy Championships in Hershey.
ACP proposes solutions for U.S. health care based on review of other countries

ACP offers suggestions to reform the U.S. health care system, based on a comprehensive analysis of well-functioning health care systems of 12 industrialized countries in “Achieving a High Performance Health Care System with Universal Access: What the USA Can Learn from Other Countries,” a new evidence-based paper released on December 4th on the Annals of Internal Medicine website. The paper was developed by ACP’s Health and Public Policy Committee and approved by the Board of Regents in October, 2007. The paper reflects comments received on an earlier draft from members of the Board of Governors, Board of Regents, ACP Councils, and selected expert advisors.

The paper outlines the ills plaguing the American health care system and proposes evidence-based recommendations addressing each of them, based on findings of a review of 12 industrialized countries. The paper concludes that the current U.S. health care system—which involves multiple payers without guaranteed coverage (pluralistic model) results in the U.S. lagging behind other countries on access, quality and efficiency of care. The paper proposes two different pathways to achieve universal coverage: a pluralistic system with universal coverage or a single payer system. Rather than endorsing either pathway, ACP calls on the public and policymakers to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. For instance, the paper reports that single payer systems perform well on most measures of quality, satisfaction, access, and administrative costs, but are more likely to result in shortages of services subject to price controls and waiting lists for elective procedures. Pluralistic models with universal coverage do better on giving individuals the freedom to purchase additional services, but less well on measures of equity (access without regard to ability to pay) and administrative costs.

The paper identified lessons from other countries’ health care systems that could be applied to the particular political and social culture of the U.S. to achieve a high performing health care system, including achieving universal health insurance coverage for all Americans. To improve the quality of care, ACP recommends building incentives into the system for both patients and physicians, redirecting federal health care policy toward supporting a patient-centered medical home model of care, and developing a national workforce policy to ensure an adequate supply of physicians. To improve administrative cost and burden, ACP recommends creating a uniform billing system for all services, supporting HIT infrastructure with federal funds, and encouraging public and private investment in medical research.

According to David Dale, ACP President, as a result of extensive policy development over the past several years, ACP is uniquely qualified to inform the public debate and the presidential campaign about reforming the U.S. health care system. He notes, “a growing number of studies by health policy experts have exposed the limitations of the U.S. health care system. Our recommendations provide evidence-based solutions to our country’s many health care problems – including the appalling lack of access to affordable health coverage, the impending crisis caused by the insufficient supply of primary care physicians, rising health care costs, and excessive administrative and regulatory costs.”

In a continuing effort to inform the debate on health care reform, in December 2007, ACP co-sponsored The National Congress on the Un and Under Insured: From Practical Local and Regional Solutions to State and National Health Reform where the paper will also be presented.

The paper, in addition to an accompanying editorial by Dr. Harold Sox, are available on the website of Annals of Internal Medicine, www.annals.org. The paper will also be published in the January 1, 2008 print issue of Annals.

ACP has also unveiled a new non-partisan ACP Web tool on www.acponline.org that analyzes the health care reform proposals of the Presidential candidates, drawing on the recommendations outlined in the College’s position paper. The tool will be updated continually throughout the 2008 election cycle. An online members-only discussion area is also accessible on the College’s Web site.

Visit the Chapter website at www.acponline.org/about_acp/chapters/pa