Dear Colleagues,

It is both an honor and a privilege to be able to serve you as Governor. Virginia ACP has always been a welcoming and nurturing home to me, and I look forward to following in the footsteps of giants. Previous governors who I have known and worked with, from Jeff Harris to Lisa Ellis, have been great mentors to me. Our outgoing governor, Bill Fox, has been a great example, leader, and friend. I look forward to his advice and to his continuing involvement with Virginia ACP.

The backbone of Virginia ACP is its executive director, Ann Tennett. She is the brains of the operation, and I will depend on her to guide me through the governorship (sorry Ann).

We are living in challenging times, unprecedented in my many years of practice. I have had to be nimble and willing to adapt in order to take care of my patients and stay solvent. From seeing and testing patients in their cars, to shifting to a telemedicine practice, and to keeping up with all the new regulations, these last two months have been quite a ride.

It has been difficult for students, who must frequently learn clinical medicine remotely. Our residents have been on the front lines of managing COVID-19 patients, risking their health and the health of their families. And the same holds true for our hospitalists, who work long hours and maintain the smooth functioning of hospitals.

ACP has been a great advocate for internists during these times. As an example—while Medicare has given physicians monetary advances and grants, and have made it easier to practice telemedicine, there is more that they can do. Telephone visits are poorly reimbursed. For patients who don’t have internet access and for those who have difficulty using social media, telephone access is frequently now the only way to manage their care. Many practices cannot survive with the current telephone call reimbursement. ACP has been at the forefront of advocating for this and many other difficulties that internists face.

There will be many questions for Virginia ACP to address in the future. How much medicine should be practiced remotely? How much are we going to depend on Zoom and other apps for our teaching and collegial interactions? How should we work with nurse practitioners and physician assistants in the future? Will the medical insurance structure change after the pandemic is over? I hope to address these and other questions and work collaboratively with all of you to get answers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your Governor. I look to working with you and to listening to your concerns. I hope to maintain the great tradition that is Virginia ACP. Virginia rocks!

Stuart Henochowicz MD MBA FACP
Governor, ACP VA Chapter