



# The Capitol Key

A [newsletter](#) service for Advocates for Internal Medicine Network of the American College of Physicians

April 2012

## Our Exciting Changes

We hope you are as thrilled as we are about the new changes to the College's grassroots advocacy program. As we announced in January, our biggest news is that after more than 15 years as the "Key Contact Program," the name has been changed and you are now part of the Advocates for Internal Medicine Network.

Along with a new name comes a new program logo, and the opportunity to be more active in advocacy through our new social media tools (*i.e.*, Twitter and Facebook).

We hope these changes will increase your interest in advocacy at a time when so many pivotal changes are occurring in health policy; changes that undoubtedly will have bearing on your (future) patients and how you (will) practice medicine.

We encourage you to take advantage of these other ways to engage your lawmakers, outside of traditional emails and call-in campaigns —where social media has taken on an increasingly important role.

### New Name

To be more effective in attracting new participants to the grassroots advocacy program, ACP's Council of Student Members, Council of Associates, and Council of Young Physicians wanted a program name that better reflected the advocates' role, thereby potentially increasing member participation in ACP's advocacy efforts and member involvement in internal medicine. Too often they heard colleagues ask, "What's a Key Contact?"

AIM<sup>ACP</sup>*n*

Advocates for  
Internal Medicine  
*network*

To find the best name, we conducted a short survey for College members with the help of ACP's Research Department and a Key Contact "advisory team."

The 11 potential new names were narrowed down to three finalists. Then, Key Contacts alone were asked to select the program's final new name. The overwhelming choice was Advocates for Internal Medicine Network (AIM<sup>n</sup>).

### Advocate of the Year Award

The ACP Services Board has renamed the Key Contact of the Year award to the "Richard Neubauer Advocate for Internal Medicine Award."

The annual Richard Neubauer Advocate for Internal Medicine Award recognizes the Advocate who has made exceptional contributions to advance the College's public policy agenda. The award is presented during Leadership Day held in Washington, DC. In addition, the recipient is recognized at the following year's Convocation.

Dr. Neubauer, a phenomenal and passionate advocate for internal medicine, passed away on October 31. He was a member of the Board of Regents, a former Alaska Chapter Governor, former chair of the PAC Board of Directors, and 2004 recipient of the Key Contact of the Year Award. We are honored to have this prestigious award in his name.

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**Twitter—@advocatesim**

ACP advocacy now has its own Twitter account. Please follow us @advocatesim. We are posting advocacy news from ACP—legislative and regulatory, and information on the activities of Congress and the Administration—almost everyday.

**Facebook Advocacy**

ACP advocacy now regularly posts on ACP's Facebook page-acpinternists.

Look for our advocacy posts and please comment regularly.

ACP's Advocates are the most active and engaged cohort of ACP members. Let the rest of ACP hear from you and show how important advocacy is to ACP.

**Follow your Members of Congress on Twitter on Facebook**

Not only do we want you to follow ACP advocacy on Twitter and Facebook, but if you have not done so already, please follow your legislators on Twitter and Facebook, too.

These are great venues for communicating with them directly. TweetCongress.com finds that 387 members of Congress (out of 535) have Twitter accounts. Almost every one of the 535 members has a Facebook page.

You can find links to their accounts from their official Web pages.

House - <http://www.house.gov/>

Senate -

[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

Thank you for being an Advocate for Internal Medicine. You are part of the largest member-participation group within ACP. You fortify ACP's policy efforts. Here's to "talking" to you in more ways and your "talking" more with your legislators.

# LEADERSHIP DAY JUN 6-7, 2012

## Register Now!

<http://capwiz.com/acponline/home/LD>

2011 Sold Out  
We Expect Another Sell-out in 2012



Questions?

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## IN THE PRESS

Robert M. McLean, MD, FACP  
New Haven, CT

**Medicare Cuts May Devastate Both Doctors and Patients**

*The Day Connecticut* – Dec. 5, 2011

<http://www.theday.com/article/20111205/NWS01/312059969>

The ACP Advocate Blog  
by Bob Doherty

<http://advocacyblog.acponline.org/>



## Being a Life Long Advocate

by Shane R. Sergent and Sophia M. Johnson

Osteopathic Medical Student III

Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine

We are at the dawn of a new era of health care in the United States and advocacy is more important than ever. While more Americans will have access to affordable health care, insurance companies and governmental regulation have an increasing role in determining how health care is delivered. Topics such as the looming catastrophic shortage of doctors, loan repayment for students, Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) repeal, and reforming the medical liability system are not decided by those who are largely affected by such changes. It is crucial that we focus on these topics in advocacy efforts.

One vital issue is the flawed SGR, an antiquated formula used to calculate physician reimbursement for Medicare services. The cost to deliver health care grows every year, but physician reimbursements are rarely, if ever, increased to match this growth. This leads to some primary care physicians being fiscally unable to provide quality care to their patients, provide for their families, and pay back medical student debt while keeping their doors open. Although the SGR continues to be an agenda item in Washington, it is only addressed as a last minute effort to stop payment cuts, and not as a proactive effort to find a permanent solution.

It is essential to discuss SGR reform with congressional representatives in order to maximize our advocacy efforts. Through physician and student advocacy, the SGR cuts have been postponed and it should be encouraging that our collective voice was heard and will continue to be heard as long as we continue to advocate.

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, 32 million previously under- or un-insured Americans will be in need of a primary care physician. However, we are facing a primary care physician shortage. In addition, incentives for medical students to enter primary care through student loan forgiveness were hardly addressed in the bill. At the same time, the growth of medical schools is far outpacing that of residencies. Therefore, it is crucial to address medical student debt and primary care physician and residency shortages so that graduates continue to pursue primary care and Americans have access to primary care physicians. We are also in a time where we need medical liability reform more than ever. Malpractice insurance rates are extremely high and can even deter medical students from choosing to pursue certain specialties.

While more Americans have access to care, we must continue to advocate for access to preventive services and reimbursement for such services so that physicians can continue to provide that care. Our health care system needed some type of reform and although there are



Sophia Johnson, MS III, and Shane Sergent, MS III, looking at home in front of the U.S. Capitol during last year's Leadership Day.

many different viewpoints on the Affordable Care Act, we can still work for more change. Policymakers respond to volume and this is a key component for influencing reform; writing, e-mailing, calling, and meeting with representatives adds to this influence. As leaders of the profession through advocacy, the ACP acts as our united voice. I urge you to attend the 2012 ACP Leadership Day **June 6-7** to advocate for continued reform. While there will always be provisions that you strongly support and some that you strongly oppose, our objective should always be to preserve the health of our patients and support policy change that is in the interest of providing the best possible care.

Each year hundreds of students and physicians congregate in Washington, DC, for the ACP Leadership Day. The reforms of today will transform the physicians of tomorrow. Working hard to influence legislation being developed in Congress should be the role of physicians, medical students and patients. As third year students, we have realized the role that students need to play in advocating for the profession we have chosen. We need to be part of advocacy today because our future is rapidly changing. To learn more about advocacy in the ACP, please visit the Advocates for Internal Medicine Network's Legislative Action Center at [www.capwiz.com/acponline/home/](http://www.capwiz.com/acponline/home/).