



Wisconsin News

American College of Cardiology
1123 North Water Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202



Governor's Message



Michael P. Cinquegrani,
M.D., F.A.C.C

As you are all well aware, January 1, 2002 marked not only the beginning of a new year but also a much anticipated decrease in physician reimbursement by Medicare. The ACC vigorously opposed these cuts which will affect cardiologists on average to a greater degree than other physician groups. Unfortunately, the politics of the moment in Washington did not bode well for any modification of the cuts. A number of representatives and senators were sympathetic to our concerns, but time ran out for any substantive legislative changes that would have limited or eliminated the cuts. The stage, however, has been set for further attempts to reverse this mess during 2002.

I was able to watch this story unfold on a daily basis via the Board of Governors listserve. From that vantage point I can say the college approached this problem in an assertive manner. Perhaps you remember receiving faxed legislative alerts from both the chapter office as well as Bethesda. You were being called to action to lend your voice in the process of influencing legislation that many believe will adversely affect our ability to provide care to Medicare patients. It is my hope that you followed the college's leadership in this area, assuming you agreed the cuts were a bad idea, and wrote or emailed your representatives to let them know how you feel. If you did communicate with your representative and received a response, please consider sharing it with Barbara Greenan at the Bethesda office of ACC. The more our representatives hear our voices in number, the greater is the chance of effecting change. Listen for the call again because it will come, and I urge you to respond.

The college is proceeding with the establishment of its political action committee (PAC). A PAC Board is being formed and will have representatives from all of the states. PAC Board members will meet twice a year, at the fall legislative conference in Washington and the spring ACC meeting. The PAC Board will review for approval potential candidates recommended for support by the ACC. PAC Board members will be expected themselves to contribute financially to the PAC as well as recruit additional membership. From my point of view, the formation of a PAC is a very important activity for the college. Other professional medical organizations have gained political strength through similar actions, sometimes to our detriment. It is very timely for the views of our profession to be heard by the people we elect.

Continued on page 2

Wisconsin Chapter ACC Board of Directors

Governor

Michael P. Cinquegrani, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Governor-Elect

Peter S. Rahko, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Past President/Governor

L. Samuel Wann, M.D., F.A.C.C.

COUNCILORS

Northeastern Region

Louie Coulis, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Louis Suarez, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Northern Region

Charles S. McCauley, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Shereif H. Rezkalla, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Southeastern Region

Stuart Berger, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Howard W. Short, M.D., F.A.C.C.

David Slosky, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Southern Region

Peter S. Rahko, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Kenneth Wallmeyer, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Western Region

Janice Clark, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Steven C. Smart, M.D., F.A.C.C.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Government Relations

Peter S. Rahko, M.D., F.A.C.C.

Programs

Kenneth Wallmeyer, M.D., F.A.C.C.

3rd Party Payor/Medicare

David Slosky, M.D.

Michael Cinquegrani, M.D.

Administrative Office

1123 N. Water Street, 3rd Floor

Milwaukee, WI 53202

Phone: (414) 276-8788

Fax: (414) 276-7704

Chapter Administrator

Marty Tirado

tirado@svinicki.com

Congress Adjourns Without Action on Medicare Fee Schedule Legislation

ACC vows to push for early action in Congress next year

Despite concerted efforts by the physician community, legislation intended to significantly decrease cuts in Medicare physician fees was not brought up for a vote before Congress adjourned today. The "Medicare Physician Payment Fairness Act" (S. 1707 / H.R. 3351), which would have mitigated severe cuts in Medicare fees to physicians and other health care providers, had overwhelming bipartisan support in the House and Senate. Despite this support, the opposition of a few powerful lawmakers was able to prevent action on this legislation. Even an eleventh hour push by Reps. Ernest Fletcher, R-Ky., and Nancy Johnson, R-Conn., in the House, and Sen. James Jeffords, I-Vt., in the Senate proved futile. As a result, physicians will receive an across-the-board 5.4 percent cut in Medicare fees effective Jan. 1. For cardiologists, the cuts are steeper, with an average reduction in fees of more than 8 percent.

The collective voice of physicians nationwide clearly played a significant role in gaining a near super majority of cosponsors of both the House and Senate bills in less than seven weeks of the legislation's introduction. Unfortunately, in the end, no level

of support was enough to overcome the opposition of those lawmakers who refused to move the legislation forward on the grounds that it was not budget neutral.

"ACC members should be congratulated on their overwhelming response to the College's call to action on this issue. With a majority of House and Senate members as cosponsors of this legislation, Congress' inaction this year is inexcusable," said American College of Cardiology (ACC) President Douglas P. Zipes, MD. "This is just the battle. There is still a war to be won. Enacting administrative and legislative changes to remedy the conditions that created this problem in the first place are the College's top priorities."

Further details on the legislation and future efforts on the Medicare physician fee schedule update will be published on the ACC Web site and in Cardiology in January and February. A detailed summary of Medicare fee changes for cardiologists in 2002 is available on the ACC Web site at www.acc.org/advocacy/advoc_issues/medicare_detailed_1101.htm.

Governor's Message - Continued from page 1

Last September 15 we sponsored our annual meeting. The mood in general was somewhat somber given the events of the preceding week, but all of our speakers and many members and guests attended. I would like to thank the special effort to attend made by Dr. Bruce Lindsay, Chair of the Board of Governors, who represented the college at the meeting. The educational content of the meeting was current and well received by the audience. In the future, I would like to see a meeting occur further north in the state to engage chapter members closer to their locale. That will be a matter for my successor to consider.

Speaking of which, Dr. Peter Rahko will take over as chapter governor at the upcoming ACC meeting in Atlanta. Ken Wallmeyer will assume the position of secretary-treasurer. There will also be some councilor positions open for election. That should occur in the near future. One thing that will not change is our chapter administrator, Marty Tirado of Svinicki Association Services. Marty has been a pleasure to work with and I owe him a big thanks for all of his help. He has come to know the workings of the college and is an important asset of our chapter.

It has been a pleasure to serve as governor for the Wisconsin Chapter of ACC. I come away from this experience with great enthusiasm and respect for the ACC. Our professional organization is made up of dedicated, well organized, and focused individuals. The people who make up our college, from active members to administrators, work for the betterment of cardiology as a profession, both educationally and politically. I am very proud to be a member of the ACC and I look forward to ongoing involvement with the chapter. Lastly, I offer all of you my best wishes for your futures.

State By State Impact of 5.4% Medicare Cut

WISCONSIN

Physicians in Wisconsin will see Medicare payments fall by \$39.8 million if the physician conversion factor is cut by 5.4%. The Marshfield Clinic which serves thousands of rural Wisconsin communities will face losses of more than \$2.8 million. The larger-than-expected Medicare payment cuts have eaten into a small reserve that clinic officials had built into their budget in order to help finance a planned entry into the Medicare+Choice program. As a result, Marshfield is now unlikely to open a Medicare managed care product and rural Wisconsin won't gain access to the new benefits and/or lower cost-sharing that might have been available through this option. With 15% of its residents on Medicare, the state has a higher concentration of elderly and disabled citizens than the national average of 14%. However, at 13.4, its ratio of Medicare-participating physicians per thousand beneficiaries is well below the national average of 15.7. About 40% of family physicians in the state are in the 50-or-older category where surveys indicate that many doctors were considering leaving or reducing the practice of medicine even before next year's payment cuts were announced.

Highlights of the 2001 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Chapter ACC



*Bruce Lindsay, M.D., F.A.C.C.
speaks to Wisconsin members over lunch on
priorities and issues within the ACC such as the
formation of an ACC PAC, decentralization of
learning center programs, web based education
and the National Cardiovascular Database
Registry. Dr. Lindsay is the current Chairman
of the ACC Board of Governors.*



David Simon and Guidant Corporation



Steve & Nancy Burlingame of Milwaukee Heart Scan, LLC.



Jason Laessig and Jeff Trettin of Pfizer Pharmaceuticals.

*"Thank You" to the following companies for the educational grants
received for the Wisconsin Chapter ACC Annual Meeting:*

Pfizer Pharmaceuticals

Guidant Corporation

Cordis Corporation

Merck & Co.

Novartis Pharmaceuticals

Medtronic, Inc.



Wisconsin Chapter -
American College of Cardiology
1123 North Water Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

First-Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Milwaukee, WI
Permit No. 4922



You're Invited to the
ACC Wisconsin Chapter Reception
Monday, March 18, 2002
6:30 - 8:00pm
Sheraton Atlanta Hotel
(165 Courtland St., NE) Atlanta 2 Room

Congratulations Dr. James H. Stein

Congratulations to Dr. James H. Stein from the University of Wisconsin Medical School for winning the W. Proctor Harvey, MD, Young Teacher Award.



Dr. James H. Stein

This award recognizes and honors young members of the ACC who have distinguished themselves by their dedication and skill in teaching. Dr. Stein will receive a certificate and a cash award of \$5,000, to be presented at the Convocation ceremony during the ACC Annual Scientific Session.

Does ACC Have Your E-mail?

To keep members up-to-date on critical issues, it is important that ACC and the Wisconsin Chapter can communicate with members at a moment's notice. The quickest and most efficient way to ensure we reach each member personally is via email. Does ACC have your email address? Members who are unsure if their email address is current can check and update their profile information on the ACC Online Member Directory [<http://services.acc.org/memberdirectory/>] or call the ACC Resource Center at 800-253-4636, ext. 694. ACC does **not** share your email information with outside parties.



Wisconsin Chapter of the American College of Cardiology

Dear Wisconsin Cardiologist,

The Wisconsin Chapter of the American College of Cardiology would like to obtain your interest in attending an organizational meeting for the Fellows-in-Training (FIT) Society of the Wisconsin Chapter.

This society is being created to serve cardiology Fellows-in-Training like yourself. The FIT Society will be a subgroup of the Wisconsin Chapter of the ACC. There is no cost to become a member of this society or the American College of Cardiology. All that is necessary is that you register as a member of the American College of Cardiology which automatically enrolls you in the Wisconsin Chapter as well.

As just mentioned earlier, Membership in the American College of Cardiology is free for all Fellows-in-Training at accredited programs though out the United States and Canada. Fellows in-Training are given the designation of Affiliates-in-Training and in addition to the complimentary ACC membership they are eligible to receive all of the benefits of College membership, including:

- Affiliates-in-Training Newsletter, a bi-monthly newsletter that addresses the specific concerns of trainees, such as the results of our yearly compensation study and listings of job opportunities in academia and private practice;
- Subscription to Cardiology, the ACC's monthly newsletter;
- Complimentary registration to the College's Annual Scientific Session (March 17-20, 2002, Atlanta, GA);
- Reduced fees for many extramural programs and ACC educational products; and on-line access to Cardiosource.com, a compilation of cardiology journals; and,
- Complimentary subscription the JACC.

Wisconsin Affiliates-in-Training will automatically become members of the Wisconsin FIT society. Our goal is to create this subgroup to better serve the special concerns of trainees like yourself. The Society will organized periodic functions which may include:

- Special dinner meetings or conferences with guest lecturers chosen by the members;
- Clinical/Research competitions; and,
- Any other social or educational activities of interest, such as golf outings.

If you are interested, please return the form below to the Wisconsin Chapter office. Dr. Thomas Lewandowski, of Appleton Cardiology Associates is a past President of the Michigan Chapter FIT Society and has offered to act as an advisor for our society. If you have any additional questions, you can contact either Dr. Lewandowski at 800-236-8988 or the Chapter office at 414-276-8788.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Cinquegrani & Dr. Thomas Lewandowski

Yes, I'm interested in participating in the Fellows-in-Training (FIT) Society of the Wisconsin Chapter ACC. Please contact me regarding the first meeting.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please respond

via e-mail:
tirado@svinicki.com

fax
(414) 276-7704

or by mail
to the address below