



Cavarocchi-Ruscio-Dennis Associates

Health Policy Report

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- **SGIM HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES REFOCUS AT ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWING ENACTMENT OF HEALTH CARE REFORM**

Overview

With Congress's completion of comprehensive health insurance reform legislation, the Health Policy Committee (HPC) used the opportunity of the Annual Meeting in Minneapolis last month to "review and renew" its priorities. As was often pointed out by members of the HPC, as difficult as the enactment of healthcare reform was to accomplish, it does not signal the end of the road of policy work on health.

Quite the contrary, there is a great deal that remains to be done with regard to health policy. Many of the provisions of healthcare reform will require new regulations and administrative actions to implement. Others create new boards and commissions that will need members appointed. Many of the authorizations in the law are not funded and need to be brought to the attention of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

It would certainly be convenient if everyone in SGIM who has worked so hard on this topic for the last sixteen months could take a well deserved breather. But that does not look like it is going to happen. Rather, this represents yet another terrific opportunity for SGIM members who have not previously been involved in health policy to step up and support the future of general internal medicine.

The leadership of the committee is listed at the end of this report. Members should not hesitate to contact Dr. Moran or any of the subcommittee chairs and offer their help. The decisions that are made in the next several months will be crucial to the future course of primary care. Your help is needed today.

Education Subcommittee Issues

The subcommittee met during the SGIM Annual Meeting in Minneapolis to discuss next steps in the implementation of the landmark health care reform law, including the new and expanded workforce training provisions. The subcommittee used the occasion to set its goals for the year, which include: additional funding for Title VII, an SGIM role on the newly-created national health care workforce commission and other advisory panels, graduate medical education and developing a resource for the dissemination of health policy curricula for trainees (students and residents). The new commission will be responsible for tracing workforce supply and need; coordinating government-wide policy; and making policy and funding recommendations to the president and Congress.

To help keep members informed, the subcommittee is preparing a plain-English summary of the new workforce, medical home and GME provisions contained in the new law.

Given the challenges ahead with implementing the new health care reform law—and the great need for generalist physicians to meet current and future health care demands—the subcommittee is encouraging SGIM members to get involved.

If you have an interest in health professions education and training issues, please contact Dr. Angela Jackson, whose contact information is at the end of this report.

Research Subcommittee Issues

The Research Subcommittee has long been involved with research issues at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), among others. Healthcare reform included two major research initiatives. The creation of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Initiative (PCORI) to oversee comparative effectiveness research and the creation of the Cures Acceleration Networks (CAN) within the Office of the Director of NIH.

The subcommittee will focus its future efforts on appropriations for research, both in terms of those authorized in the healthcare reform bill, as well as those that are on-going and critically important research programs; the creation of the boards that will oversee and advise for both PCORI and CAN; and any policies developed at any of the research agencies that will impact these or other issues.

There is widespread agreement on the subcommittee that more hands are better than fewer. For this reason, there will be a concentrated effort to increase recruitment of new members for the subcommittee.

If you have an interest in research issues, please contact Dr. Ira Wilson, whose contact information is at the end of this report.

Clinical Practice Subcommittee Issues

The Clinical Practice Subcommittee is continuing its focus on practice redesign to support and strength the provision of primary care. The subcommittee will be examining and supporting models, like the Patient Centered Medical Home, which has the potential to revolutionize how primary care is provided. It will also be examining the impact of other models outlined in the health reform law, like accountable care organizations and bundled payments, will have on primary care.

While the health reform law includes provisions to benefit primary care, like the 10 percent bonus payment for 5 years, the subcommittee will look to build on these gains to improve payment for primary care. It will also continue its work on improving the relative values assigned to evaluation and management services, using the health reform law's directive to the Secretary to review misvalued codes as a starting point.

The subcommittee will also explore how to better represent the issues facing hospitalists providing primary care.

If you have an interest in clinical practice issues, please contact Dr. Scott Joy, whose contact information is at the end of this report.

Health Policy Executive Committee Contact Information

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To volunteer to serve on the HPC and its subcommittees, please contact anyone listed above.