

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

SGIM Annual Meeting: Breaking Records at 37, SGIM is Inspired, Vibrant, and Growing

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When I arrived in San Diego, it was already clear that the annual meeting would be an amazing experience and prove that SGIM is a healthy and vibrant organization in its 37th year. Among the notable numbers, SGIM set a new record: The annual meeting in San Diego was the largest in SGIM history! At last count, attendance of 2,034 shattered the previous attendance record of 1,839 in Chicago in 2004 and included almost 800 fellows, residents, and medical students and more than 50 international attendees. In contrast to the modest gains in the recent match,¹ the meeting reflected the growing strength and popularity of general internal medicine (GIM).

Records aside, the meeting also had many important "firsts," and I will mention a few. The highly successful TEACH program, led by Eva Aagaard, graduated its first class, while the inaugural GIM fellows' symposium was wildly popular. The Society bestowed the first Frederick L. Brancati mentoring and leadership award, named for a wonderful and exceptional generalist who was devoted to his faculty, mentees, SGIM, and the Association of Chiefs and Leaders in General Internal Medicine. And with a trial fit for a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute grant, the Program Committee conducted a trial of shortened abstract presentations and arranged a concurrent control group as a comparator, completing the first pragmatic clinical trial ever performed entirely at an SGIM annual meeting!

Most of us attend the annual meeting to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, make new friends, network, and re-energize. This year the energy and enthusiasm were incredible. I can only mention a few of the many outstanding presentations. Monica Vela, MD (Herbert W. Nickens Award), told us of her moving journey as the daughter of immigrant Mexican parents, first conquering entry into the American schools and then breaking away from the traditional role of a young Latino woman in a very traditional family to her current role as Dean for Diversity. In a rousing keynote address, America Bracho, MD, scolded, exhorted, and encouraged the audience to "rethink how to strengthen our partnerships with communities" using lessons from her community and her personal journey leading Latino Health Access. Mark Smith, MD (Malcolm Peterson Award), recently of the California Healthcare Foundation, reminded SGIM members "under 40 or 45" of the great founders of the Society for Research and Education in Primary Care Internal Medicine (SREPCIM) who had dreams and romantic notions about the future of primary care. Acknowledging the difficulty pronouncing this acronym, Dr. Smith told us that the Society changed its name to SGIM. The romance persists as SGIM has in many other ways adapted and evolved over the past 37 years and continues to grow and thrive in the current reality of the Affordable Care Act

(ACA), accountable care organizations, and the patient-centered medical home.

The most impressive, humbling and somewhat intimidating gathering I attended was the Presidents' Breakfast. Seventeen SGIM leaders spanning four decades met with Eric Bass, Marshall Chin, SGIM staff, and me to convey their thoughts about how SGIM was doing as a Society and how SGIM was adapting to the new reality of ACA policy and implementation. Their advice and wisdom will guide us over the next few years. The achievements of two of those past presidents were recognized with awards. In accepting the Robert J. Glaser Award, Martin Shapiro, MD, told us of his incredible accomplishments and his fear that his uncle would even now disagree that Martin has "done enough." Tom Inui, MD (Elnora A. Rhodes Service Award), reminded us of SGIM founders and leaders whose accomplishments, in the face of adversity, we must remember. Finally, Eric Bass challenged us, asking if SGIM was strong enough to take on issues where we as a Society disagree. The subsequent reasoned and thoughtful town hall meeting, airing differences of opinion about SGIM Choosing Wisely recommendations, confirmed that we are a strong, unified Society able to work constructively together despite our differences—and that working through those differences actually makes SGIM stronger.

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There is not enough space to highlight the innovative and creative depth and breadth of the 37th Annual Meeting in San Diego. Next month, *SGIM Forum* will highlight many more exceptional parts of the meeting. For now, congratulations and thank you to the Program Committee—chaired by Neda Ratana-

wongsa, co-chaired by Happy Menard, and supported by Sarajane Garten and the wonderful staff of SGIM—for the exceptional meeting! They have set a high bar for David C. Thomas and Sharon Strauss for the 2015 SGIM Annual Meeting in Toronto, whose theme is *Generalists in Teams: Adding*

Value to Patient Care, Research and Education.

References

1. Kane GC. APDIM
<http://www.im.org/AcademicAffairs/match/Pages/2014MatchReport.aspx>

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