

FROM THE SOCIETY: PART I

Health Policy Committee Annual Meeting Update: Goals for the Coming Year and Opportunities to Make a Difference

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“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

—Albert Einstein

At our annual meeting in Toronto, members of the Health Policy Committee (HPC), Subcommittees (Clinical Practice, Education, Research, and Outreach), and Interest Group engaged in a series of lively and inspiring conversations directed at identifying opportunities to influence health policy. We identified three major committee objectives: fair and equitable Medicare reimbursement policies, adequate funding for health professions training, and support for health services research.

Alignment of HPC Objectives with SGIM’s Mission and National Health Priorities

We discussed the alignment of the HPC’s objectives and SGIM’s mission with the national health agenda of meeting the Triple Aim—improving the patient experience of care, improving the health of the population, and reducing the per capita cost of care. We noted that “the availability of primary care is positively and consistently associated with improved outcomes, reduced mortality, lower utilization of health care resources, and lower overall costs of care,” which provides us an outstanding opportunity to advocate both for better care for our patients and for our objectives.¹

We identified the following goals and areas of focus for the coming year:

1. To have the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

accept a proposal that has been submitted by an SGIM-led coalition—and endorsed by 16 specialty societies as of June 2015—to redefine and reevaluate outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) service codes and to develop new documentation expectations for E/M services;

2. To cultivate better partnerships and a broader coalition to support our objectives;
3. To organize SGIM Hill Day in March 2016, increase attendance, and continue the HPC orientation and education program during the evening prior to visiting members’ offices;
4. To develop a learning collaborative of teachers of health policy intended to share curricula, resources, learning objectives, evaluation tools, and other educational strategies (This collaborative is being led by the Outreach Subcommittee.);
5. To submit health policy programming for the 2016 Annual Meeting, including a workshop on teaching health policy to students and residents based on the findings collected by the HPC learning collaborative throughout the year;
6. To advocate for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to become a research agency, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to be funded beyond 2019, and for National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding to be substantially increased;
7. To continue to nominate SGIM members for representation on advocacy-related boards and

commissions and for representation on commissions at other agencies and organizations;

8. To continue writing monthly columns for *Forum*, CongressWeb alerts, virtual Hill Days, and Quick Hits to the membership when appropriate;
9. To develop a national cadre of health policy advocates, experts, and teachers through a Leadership in Health Policy (LEAHP) Program;
10. To continue annual advocacy updates at all regional meetings;
11. To educate members about graduate medical education reform; and
12. To see an increased understanding of SGIM’s advocacy positions on the next membership survey.

Thank You and Transitions

At the annual meeting, we took time to do the following:

1. We thanked outgoing HPC Chair Mark Schwartz and outgoing Research Subcommittee Chair Gary Rosenthal for their leadership.
2. We welcomed Nancy Keating as chair of the Research Subcommittee and Keith Vom Eigen as chair of the Clinical Practice Subcommittee.
3. We thanked Bobby Baron for his ongoing leadership of the Education Subcommittee and Cara Litvin for her ongoing leadership of the Outreach Subcommittee.
4. We recognized John Goodson and Erika Miller for their

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outstanding efforts to bring together a coalition in support of the E/M proposal to CMS.

Opportunities to Get Involved and Make a Difference

We welcome your participation in the HPC. Expertise in health policy is not required to get involved, but interests in learning and making a positive difference are highly desir-

able. If you would like to join a HPC subcommittee, please contact Francine Jetton at jettonf@sgim.org and ask to be added to the subcommittee's listserv. You may also contact a subcommittee chair or me if you have questions. We also welcome your participation at our interest group meeting or any of the subcommittee meetings at the annual meeting next May in Holly-

wood, FL. I look forward to seeing you there!

Reference

1. American College of Physicians. How is a shortage of primary care physicians affecting the quality and cost of medical care? Philadelphia: American College of Physicians, 2008.

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