



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS (ACS)



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION (ACSPA)

Advocacy in Action

***Advocacy in Action** is a new electronic newsletter from the American College of Surgeons Professional Association (ACSPA) and the American College of Surgeons (ACS). This publication is designed to provide readers with timely updates on the robust political, educational, and policy-making activities the ACSPA and the College are carrying out on behalf of the surgical profession and surgical patients. **Advocacy in Action** is published monthly or more frequently when urgent or late-breaking information warrants your immediate attention to help our members stay abreast of the socioeconomic issues that affect their ability to provide quality care to their patients. For more information about items in this publication, contact ahp@facs.org*

ACSPA

● So far this year, the ACSPA SurgeonsPAC has raised \$68,785 from 278 Fellows and staff; this amount, combined with donations collected in 2007, adds up to a total of \$707,035 in contributions for the 2008 election cycle. The PAC has a goal of reaching \$1 million.

● ACSPA SurgeonsPAC staff has attended 17 Washington, DC, fundraisers for members of Congress, including:

- Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), Chair, Senate Finance Committee
- Rep. John Boehner (R-OH), House Minority Leader
- Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
- Rep. Tom Price, MD, FACS (R-GA)
- Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY), Chair, House Ways and Means Committee.

● Staff has traveled to fundraisers in the home states of the following members:

- Senator Baucus
- Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Vice-Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
- Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT), House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.

● Staff plans to travel to events for the following members:

- Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY), member of the Senate Finance Committee and Chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), for the DSCC Spring Retreat in Florida
- Sen. John Barrasso, MD, (R-WY), an orthopaedic surgeon, for a fundraiser in his home state
- Rep. Allen Boyd (D-FL), Chair of the Blue Dog Coalition, for a fundraiser in his home state
- Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX), lead sponsor of Medicare payment reform legislation containing College-supported provisions establishing separate conversion factors for six categories of physician services, for an event in Nevada

Medicare payment

● On January 23, Josef E. Fischer, MD, FACS, Chair of the ACS Board of Regents, visited Capitol Hill to discuss Medicare physician payment and surgical workforce issues with members of key Senate committees. Specifically, Dr. Fischer met with Senator Baucus and the health policy staffs for Sens. Charles Grassley (R-IA), Ranking Republican Member of the Senate Finance Committee, and Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

● ACS staff has met at least once with the health policy aides to all Senate and House health care leaders to discuss the Medicare physician payment cuts scheduled to take effect July 1.

Workforce

● On February 12, the College submitted a statement to the Senate HELP Committee regarding the surgical workforce crisis in this nation and its effects on patient care. The College detailed the numerous studies at both the national and state levels that point to dangerous shortages in the surgical workforce and recommended a course of action for Congress. To view the College's statement, go to <http://www.facs.org/ahp/views/workforce.html>.

Trauma

● With appropriations activities in full force, the College has met with more than 25 House and Senate offices to advocate for \$10 million in fiscal year (FY) 2009 funding for the Health Resources and Services Administration's Trauma-Emergency Medical Services Program.

● The College's Committee on Trauma (COT) will hold its annual meeting March 12-15 in Washington, DC. Members will spend a day on Capitol Hill meeting with their legislators to discuss the effect of trauma injuries on their states and how the legislators can assist their constituents by supporting FY 2009 funding for the Trauma-EMS Program.

State issues

● Seven states have introduced legislation this year that follows the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act (UEVHPA) model that National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws adopted in 2007. The purpose of such legislation is to make it easier to provide liability protection to surgeons and other health care professionals who cross state lines to provide disaster and emergency relief. ACS chapters will be asked to participate in grassroots advocacy efforts through the Surgery State Legislative Action Center to send letters to their state legislators and get this legislation passed. These states include Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Utah.

Practice management

● The College has again contracted with Karen Zupko and Associates to provide a series of beginner and advanced Current Procedural Terminology and ICD-9-CM coding workshops during 2008.

● The College has once again joined with Economedix to present a series of practice management Web casts in 2008.

What you can do

● Participate in the Joint Surgical Advocacy Conference March 9-11 in Washington, DC, which the College is presenting in cooperation with five surgical specialty societies. The program will feature issue briefings and Capitol Hill visits centered on Medicare reimbursement and other topics outlined in this newsletter. Registration materials were sent via e-mail to all active ACS members earlier this year.

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