

*An E-Newsletter
from the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians*

You Could Earn Up to 36 Hours of CME at the Annual Meeting Nov. 7-10!

The GAFP Annual Meeting will kickoff on Wednesday, November 7th with a CME dinner on Consumer Driven Health Plans at the Sheraton Suites Galleria. The meeting continues through Saturday at the Cobb Galleria Centre with topics ranging from Celiac Disease, Immigrant Health, Depression, Women's Health Issues, Tobacco Cessation, Chronic Kidney Disease, and PTSD. In addition there will be interactive workshops on Botox, Dermatology and EKG Advances.

Also, don't forget to visit our supportive Industry Partners in the Exhibit Hall. More than 100 vendors have chosen to take part in this year's meeting.

This year's meeting boasts the highest number of presentations submitted for Evidence Based Continuing Medical Education, which means you have the chance to get up to 36 hours of CME! You don't want to miss these great educational offerings.

Although online registration is now closed, you may register onsite. Please call our office if you need more information (800) 392-3841. We'll see you at the meeting!

2007 Congress of Delegates Resolutions

The 2007 GAFP Congress of Delegates will be held at the Sheraton Suites Galleria starting Saturday, November 10 and conclude on Sunday, November 11th. Testimony will be heard during the Internal and External Reference Committee Meetings, Saturday, 3:30 – 5:00 pm in the Cumberland 1 & 2 Ballrooms and Vinings Room.

Below are the Resolutions scheduled for discussion and ultimately requiring a vote. Only delegates can vote on the resolutions; however, as a GAFP member you are encouraged and welcome to attend the hearings, to give testimony and/or discuss the resolutions with your district delegates before voting occurs. Please contact the GAFP Office if there are any questions at (404) 321-7445.

The Resolutions assigned to the Reference Committee on Internal Issues:

- GAFP Bylaws Changes previously printed in the GAFP July Newsletter.
- Executive Director Title Change will address the current job title and position status be advanced to the Executive Vice President.
- Resolution on GAFP Fallen Veterans addresses a way for the GAFP to honor colleagues or any of their family member who serve in the US military
- Recommendation from the PAC Board Chair to increase military contributions.
- Recommendation from the Nominating Committee to increase member involvement.

The Resolutions Assigned to the Reference Committee on External Issues is:

- In House Lab Imaging Study Availability addresses the issues of reimbursement of in house labs, imaging and other studies needed in critical or urgent decision making.
- GAFP Purchasing Influenza Vaccine at Bulk Competitive Rate addresses creating a co-op for GAFP members to purchase flu vaccine at a bulk competitive rate.
- Recommendations from Southwest Georgia Family Medicine Residency Program addresses the need to continue to advocate strongly for increased funding for family medicine GME and increase reimbursement for family physicians at the state and national levels in collaboration with AAFP.
- Recommendations from Southwest Georgia Family Medicine Residency Program addresses the need to continue to strongly support the Pathway to Med School program and help facilitate collaboration among interested family medicine residencies and AHECs in other regions of Georgia.

- POLST (Physician Order for Life Sustaining Treatment) addresses a state law House Bill 24 effective July 1, 2007 and the need for GAFP to actively encourage the Georgia state legislature to draft legislation that would require the use of a standardized POLST that would be portable throughout the state of Georgia.

GAFP Leadership Meets with Aetna Medical Director

Jack Spicer, MD, GAFP member and Aetna's medical director in Georgia met with GAFP's President Alice House, MD and President Elect Bruce LeClair, MD on September 27th to discuss member issues as it relates to Aetna insurance. One of the focused discussions was centered on pay for performance and the need to increase primary care physician reimbursement. Dr. Spicer indicated that Aetna is working to roll out a national pay for performance program and expects it to be launched in late 2008. He has agreed to brief the Georgia Academy prior to the launch. Drs. LeClair and House voiced their concerns about pay for performance becoming more onerous for family physicians and the method that Aetna will use to evaluate a practice.

Urinalysis Dipstick Payment:

One issue of concern that was cleared up was Aetna's payment of urinalysis dipstick with evaluation and management codes. Dr. Spicer was able to report that Aetna had changed its payment policy effective November 2006. The new policy states:

Beginning with claims processed as of November 12, 2006, we will pay the following codes when billed with office-based evaluation and management codes (E&Ms) appended with Modifier 25:

1. urinalysis dipstick CPT codes: 81002 and 81003
2. pulse oximetry CPT codes: 94760, 94761, 94762

The office-based E&M codes that apply are 99201-99205, 99211-99215, 99241-99245 and 99381-99397.

VAP Testing and Payment:

Aetna does not currently pay for the VAP (Vertical Auto Profile) Test which is an expanded cholesterol test unless the patient has a triglyceride level greater than 400 mg/dL. Drs. Spicer and LeClair agreed to continue to discuss this issue as there is new research on this test. The VAP testing payment issue is a national Aetna policy.

Next Steps:

Dr. Spicer stated that the meeting was very helpful and he would like to continue to have regular meetings with Georgia Academy leaders. The Georgia Academy will continue to meet with Dr. Spicer and his Aetna colleagues in the future to discuss issues that affect family medicine and our patients.

Georgia Academy Provides Media Training for State Legislators

On October 10th, a group of elected officials huddled uncomfortably around a television monitor watching an unauthorized videotape. They were nervous and apologetic about the contents. No, the content on the videotape isn't going to ruin their political career but it could hurt their chances for re-election.

The Georgia Academy sponsored a media training session for the Senate Democratic Caucus with national consultant Pat Clark who, at the beginning of the day, tapes a mock "Good Day Atlanta" program and asks the senators probing questions. "I ask questions that will lead them away from their message and show how easy it is for a reporter to take advantage of the unprepared," affirms Ms. Clark, a former AMA staffer.

This is the fourth time over the last three years that the Georgia Academy has offered this program to state officials. The Georgia Academy has hosted two programs open to all state legislators, one for the House Republican Freshmen and October's Democratic State Senate Caucus. State Senate Democratic Caucus Chairman, Senator David Adelman, was appreciative of this outreach and remarked that "The Georgia Academy is smart to offer this unique program to elected officials who should be taking advantage of learning techniques to help them reach out to their constituents."

Task Force Distributes FM brochures to High School Students

The Task Force on Student and Resident Recruitment reviewed an AAFP booklet entitled "Explore Family Medicine...A Roadmap for Your Future," published last year. The brochure details family medicine as a career choice and includes academic handouts to guide high school students before reaching medical school. In early 2007, the GAFP board approved a financial note to print 1,500 booklets. The Task Force has partnered with the Georgia Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to distribute these family medicine resources throughout the state to interested high school students.

MAG Mutual Announces 10 percent Insurance Savings for Physicians

MAG Mutual Insurance Company announces that effective November 1, its Georgia physicians save an average of 10% when purchasing their medical professional liability insurance.

With the passage of Georgia's tort reform law in February 2005, MAG Mutual promised to pass on the saving as the benefits of the law appeared. The 10 percent savings is a combination of a rate reduction, the recently announced policyholder dividend and the company's new 0 percent financing plan for installment payment premiums. Savings for individual policyholders will range from a minimum of 5 percent to as much as 15 percent depending on the physician's medical specialty and other factors.

Recertification Class of 2004 - Don't Miss December 31 Deadline

All family physicians that were certified or recertified in 2004 must complete their Stage 1 requirements by the end of the year, thus retaining eligibility for a 3-year extension of their certificate. Successful completion of each 3-year Stage is necessary to remain eligible for a 3-year extension to your certificate, which is awarded upon completion of Stage 2. Family physicians who do not complete Stage 1 requirements by the deadline will, by default, continue on the 7-year certification path until their next scheduled recertification examination. If you have any questions about this process, please contact the American Board of Family Medicine at (877) 223-7437.

Save the Date - February 7th - Day at the Capitol

Clear your calendar and plan on attending the Georgia Academy's Day at the Capitol on Thursday, February 7, 2008 in Atlanta. You will hear briefings by our elected officials and get up-to-the-minute reports on pending state legislation. There will also be an orientation on how to interact with your legislators and they will be invited to join you for both breakfast and lunch. Although this event is free for all GAFP members, a registration form will be sent to you in early December.

Branded Topical Corticosteroids will Require Prior Approval

The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), Medicaid Fee For Service program will implement a clinical prior authorization protocol for the branded topical corticosteroids beginning November 1. All branded agents will require failure of a generic agent within the same potency class or a higher potency class.

Criteria is posted on the DCH Website- dch.georgia.gov > Providers > Pharmacy > Prior Authorization Process and Criteria Prior Authorization requests may be obtained by contacting SXC Health Solutions at (866)525-5827.

Board Meeting November 7th

The next Board meeting of the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians will be held on Wednesday, November 7th at the Sheraton Suites Galleria in Atlanta, at 3:00 pm. All GAFP members are welcome to attend. If you would like to receive an agenda, please contact the office at gafp@gafp.org or by calling (800)392-3841.

Thank You to Our 2007 Political Action Campaign (PAC) Donors

Through August 2007, the following members have contributed \$7,630 to the PAC:

Catherine Andrews, MD
Thomas Bat, MD
Janet Bivens, MD
Peggy Sue Cavitt – Student
Jonathan Cook, DO
Loy Cowart, MD
Leslie Gaskill, MD
John Gerguis, MD
R. Clark Gillett, Jr., MD
Ross Goehring, MD
James Hagler, MD
Elizabeth Herman, MD
Irving Hellenga, MD
Wayne Hodges, MD
Wayne Hoffman, MD
Alice House, MD
Steven House, MD

Tong Huynh, MD
Phillip Kennedy, MD
Bruce LeClair, MD
Susan Margletta, MD
Howard McMahan, MD
William Nichols, Jr., MD
George Nixon, MD
Cathleen Quillian-Carr, DO
Leonard Reeves, MD
Thad Riley, MD
Mitzi Rubin, MD
George Shannon, MD
Harry Strothers, MD
Roslyn Taylor, MD
Beverley Ann Townsend, MD
Rick Wherry, MD

Of Note

Millard J. Collier Jr. MD, of Lithia Springs, recently served as a panelist discussing “First-hand Perspectives on Healing the Maladies in Medicine” as Vice President, of the Georgia State Medical Association during the *2007 Georgia Health Care Symposium: Guiding Principles for Reform in Georgia*.

AND Dr. Collier was also quoted in the *Florida Times-Union* in an article entitled; “Bill gives pharmacists right to switch drugs: Some oppose the practice of substituting a cheaper generic version.”

Steven House, MD, of Macon, will be representing the GAFFP at the American Cancer Society Pain Management Forum on Wednesday, November 14.

Howard McMahan, MD of Ocilla and George Shannon, MD of Columbus represented the GAFFP at the Medical Association of Georgia's House of Delegates, October 11-12 in Savannah. Thank you Drs. McMahan and Shannon for representing your colleagues and our patients!

George Shannon, MD, of Columbus was recently quoted in the *AAFP News Now* in an article entitled, “High Cost of Turnover: Here's How Family Physicians Can Hire, Retain Quality Staff.”

Willard A. Snyder Jr., MD, Brunswick and Marcus C. Roberts, MD, of Tifton were recently quoted in the *American Medical News* publication in an article entitled; “Medicare lets some private fee-for-service plans resume marketing.”

Eric Wilson, MD, of Athens recently served as the GAFFP representative on the panel discussion “Georgia's Healthcare Crisis” held during the *Georgia Black Legislative Caucus*.

Rick Wherry, MD, of Dahlonega, has been appointed to DCH's Medical Care Advisory Committee for Medicaid.

Classified Ads

FOR SALE: SoapWare Version 4.90, have original box shipped in, educational/tutorial material book with license qualifying for upgrade to Version 5.0. Can give idea on system needed for this EMR. Asking \$350.00. Also have 4 Welch Allyn Ophthalmoscopes with heads. Asking \$175.00 each and in very good condition. Call Dr. Copas at (770)842-3341 cell /office (770) 979-9331.

Solo Practice Physician is retiring. Location is in the Lake Lanier area. If interested, please call (770) 401-1559.