

Report on the ACS Board of Governors to the Central Surgical Association

The Board of Governors held its annual meeting on Sunday, October 12. During the past year, the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors Committee Chairs adopted a process of more frequent communication via conference calls held every two months with rapid electronic distribution of the minutes of those calls to all Governors. Members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents also participated in these calls. In addition, several webinar conference calls were organized in collaboration with the ACS Division of Advocacy and Health Policy that focused on current key health policy legislation coming before Congress and that allowed participation by all members of the Board of Governors. This new approach to communication enhanced the productivity of the Board Governors committees, improved participation by the entire Board of Governors membership, and strengthened the dialogue between the Governors and the regions. At the adjourned meeting, there was unanimous support for continuing this communication model. It was also suggested that the presidents of the ACS state chapters be included in future webinar conference calls.

The October 12 meeting included a 2 1/2 hour joint meeting between the Board of Governors and the Board of Regents that was devoted to a detailed discussion of the proposed statement on ACS policy on Health Care Reform. This statement, which is attached, will form the basis of the College's interactions with Congress on health care policy during the next couple of years when major changes to the health care system will be under consideration. Comments from this important meeting were used to modify the draft document.

Other discussions during the October 12 meeting included Operation Giving Back by Dr. Kathleen Casey, expansion of the national utilization of NSQIP and the desire to broaden the database to include patients treated by all surgical specialties by Clifford Ko, the status of health care legislation coming before Congress this year by Christian Shalgian, and the current status of the ACS PAC by Andy Warshaw. As of September 15, the PAC had raised \$523,889. This is over \$200,000 more than the same period last year. \$430,000 in political disbursements were made. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of Fellows contribute to the PAC.

The Board of Governors approved three statements generated by its liaison committees. The statements were subsequently approved by the Board of Regents, and will be published in the January 2009 issue of the ACS Bulletin. The first statements supported the passage in all 50 states of the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act which will allow physicians to provide care in times of national disaster without the need for additional state licensure or liability coverage. The second statement on the Rationale for Emergency Surgical Call Support addresses the need for fair compensation for surgeons who provide emergency care. The third statement was on Surgical Patient Safety and addresses issues of quality and safety in the care of the surgical patient in the operating room.

The format of the meeting between the Governors and the Regents was considered very successful and based on a vote taken at the meeting, there was unanimous support for continuing such a joint session in the future.

Respectfully submitted, Layton Ridders, Governor representing CSA