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2400 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
(800) 253-4636, ext. 5603

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ACC Fellows in Training

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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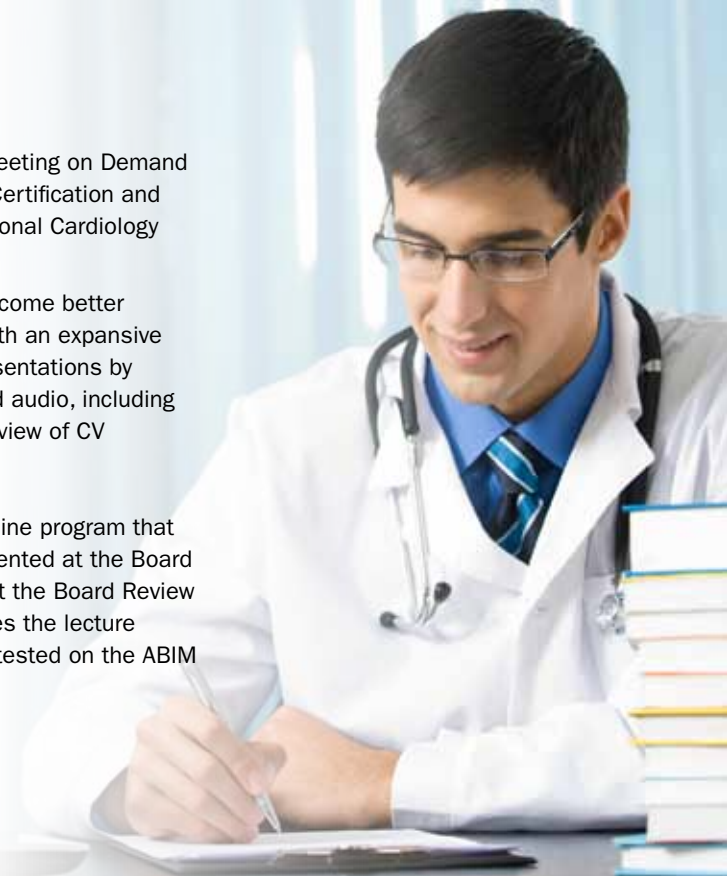
Two New Ways to Help YOU Prepare for the Boards

The American College of Cardiology Foundation has just launched two new Meeting on Demand (MOD) preparation modules- the new ACCF Cardiovascular Board Review for Certification and Recertification Meeting on Demand (MOD) and the new ACCF/SCAI Interventional Cardiology Board Review Meeting on Demand.

The **ACCF Cardiovascular Board Review MOD** is the most efficient way to become better prepared for your cardiovascular Boards. This online program provides you with an expansive and in-depth summary of cardiovascular diseases and features recorded presentations by experts from the CV Board Review live program with accompanying slides and audio, including embedded interactive questions that will help you obtain a comprehensive review of CV diseases.

The new **ACCF/SCAI Interventional Cardiology Board Review MOD** is an online program that allows you to review the lectures, as well as the questions and answers presented at the Board Review course. This MOD also includes additional questions not presented at the Board Review course to help you efficiently prepare for your Board exams. It also reorganizes the lecture material, and presents the lectures in the five main organized content areas tested on the ABIM Board examination.

Visit www.CardioSource.org/products to learn more!





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LOCAL CHAPTERS CONNECT WITH FITs

Across the country, local ACC chapters are reaching out to Fellows in Training (FITs), welcoming them to the profession of cardiology and introducing them to everything the American College of Cardiology has to offer.

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A NEW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM MADE JUST FOR FITs!

Looking for another way to network with colleagues, share tips and information and find out about upcoming events? Join the Fellow in Training CardioSource.org community.

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ACC President: Ralph G. Brindis, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.C.
ACC President-Elect: David R. Holmes Jr., M.D., F.A.C.C.
Publisher: Jack C. Lewin, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer, ACC
Editor in Chief: David Winchester, M.D.
Managing Editor: Kelly E. Ventura
kventura@acc.org

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Contact: Kelly Evans Ventura, kventura@acc.org
or call (202) 375-6613

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FITs sharpen political skills at ACC legislative conference

*Unique opportunity to
become effective advocates
for patients and profession*

When more than 300 people gathered in Washington, DC, for the annual ACC Legislative Conference in September, Justin Bachmann, M.D., was among them, as were several other Fellows in Training. FITs spent the weekend rubbing shoulders with senior cardiology leaders, catching up on legislative and financial issues and practicing the art of persuasion. Then they put their new-found knowledge to work, traveling to Capitol Hill with other attendees for face-to-face meetings with legislators and congressional staffers.

Each year, Capitol Hill delegations include senior cardiologists, ACC leaders and others with extensive advocacy experience, but being a political neophyte has its advantages. In fact, FITs can be the most persuasive members of the group, says Bachmann a cardiology fellow at UT-Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and the FIT representative for the Texas Chapter of the ACC.

"Legislators are particularly responsive to advocacy by fellows," he says. "Every day they meet with lobbyists and other people entrenched in the system. But, we're at the beginning of our careers. We're working long hours, not making much money and carrying a significant amount of debt. We're in service positions and that gives us a certain legitimacy from which to speak."



The ACC is so committed to involving FITs in advocacy efforts that it issued travel scholarships to 10 cardiology fellows, which helped pay for the FITs' expenses at this year's Legislative Conference. Some local ACC chapters also provided travel support, including the Texas chapter, which paid Bachmann's way.

The 2½-day legislative conference was like a boot camp-cum-revival meeting, with plenty of hardcore training to strengthen attendees for the fight ahead. This event was leavened by political satire, keynote addresses and social events to lift the spirit. This year, the spotlight was on the crisis in Medicare reimbursement. Both of the 2010 cuts—that range from 10 percent to more than 40 percent for cardiology services, and the recurring battle over the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR)—could soon slap all physicians with a year-end 23 percent Medicare fee cut, unless Congress again passes legislation to stall it. Another six percent cut in the SGR is slated for 2011.

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Despite this gloomy forecast, many FITs may be reluctant to get involved in political advocacy, feeling that their hands are already too full with the demands of training and preparing for board exams.

“The stakes are too high to sit on the sidelines,” Bachmann says. “If fellows are concerned, they should be willing to stand up and advocate for their profession. You can put your head in the sand, but it won’t change the difficulties you’ll face once you’re out in the real world. We’re going to be facing a job market that’s very tight.”

In fact, cardiology practices are already changing dramatically, according to the ACC’s 2010 Practice Census. Conference attendees learned that more than half of all cardiology practices have instituted cost-cutting measures as a direct response to the reductions in the 2010 Medicare fee schedule. Of these, half of cardiology group practices report reducing staff. Patient care has also been affected, with 18 percent of practices limiting services, 10 percent reducing hours and availability, and nine

“I sat at a table with people who are luminaries in cardiology,” Bachmann said. “I can’t think of any other setting where I’d encounter these people and be able to just chat with them.”

percent limiting the number of new Medicare patients. In addition, nearly 40 percent of private group practices report that they are currently integrating with hospitals or merging with other practices.

To prepare FITs to talk with legislators and congressional staffers about such complex issues, the legislative conference included lobbying training for all attendees. In addition, the Cardiovascular Leadership Institute held a special one hour in-depth advocacy training session for FITs, cardiac care associates, practice administrators, newly elected members of the Board of Governors and others who were new to advocacy. It was a chance for distinguished ACC leaders to share their knowledge, experience and practical tips on how to make the most of “face time” with lawmakers.

Bachmann found the following tips useful in his visit to Capitol Hill:

- If you are a constituent of the legislator you’re meeting with, make that known.
- Be concise. Come prepared to focus on two or three main points.
- Be honest.
- Be respectful.
- Find a way to put a human face on the data. For example, emphasize on how Medicare cuts force cardiologists to lay off hard working staff or cut back on charity care to patients.

The annual legislative conference can be an intense initiation into politics and professional advocacy. Though beyond that, it’s a great opportunity to meet people, not only other FITs who are preparing for a leadership role in ACC, but also senior cardiologists who can offer advice on future career choices.

Local chapters connect with FITs

Across the country, local ACC chapters are reaching out to Fellows in Training (FITs), welcoming them to the profession of cardiology and introducing them to everything the American College of Cardiology has to offer.

“Most FITs think the College is JACC, guidelines development and the national meeting. They may not know that the College also advocates for them and their patients at the national and state level. The ACC also leads quality programs—like the Door to Balloon Time initiative and offers cardiologists a whole myriad of educational opportunities. The local chapters are where Fellows in Training can interact with peers and have a one-on-one opportunity to see the ACC in action,” said Richard Kovacs, M.D., F.A.C.C., chair of ACC’s Board of Governors.

Dr. Kovacs, who is also a professor of clinical medicine at Indiana University School of Medicine and at the Krannert

Institute of Cardiology in Indianapolis, thinks that outreach is taking several forms.

First, every local ACC chapter has an elected council. This year every council has set a goal of including at least one FIT among its membership.

Second, each local chapter now involves FITs in the planning and execution of its annual meeting. Several chapters, including Dr. Kovacs’ Indiana chapter, hold an annual research competition, which gives FITs an opportunity to present an abstract, have it judged by senior cardiologists and have the chance to be presented with an award.

For the first time this year, the research award may come with a bonus. Ten FITs will be invited to Heart House in January to attend meetings of the Board of Governors and the Cardiovascular Leadership Institute. Not only will FITs learn how cardiologists are transforming healthcare, but they will have the opportunity to meet many cardiology

leaders including ACC President Ralph Brindis, M.D., member of both the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors.

Local chapters are also helping FITs with their special concerns, such as the overload of Board exams and the transition from training to career. Several chapters, for example, have organized meetings just for FITs to help answer such critical questions as how to decide whether to go into private practice or academia, how to find a good practice and how to analyze a contract.

“These opportunities can change how cardiology fellows see their future and how they see themselves in relation to the College,” Dr. Kovacs said. “FITs have so much on their mind just learning the craft of cardiology. They may not be thinking about their role as a professional. We want to be sure they know what the ACC is all about.”

A NEW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM JUST FOR FITS!

Looking for another way to network with colleagues, share tips and information and find out about upcoming events? Join the Fellow in Training *CardioSource.org* community. Within this social networking community, FITs have the opportunity to connect with one another, as well as post videos, photos, create a personal blog and contribute to online forums. All you have to do to be a part of the online community is create your own personal community profile (persona). This persona will grant you access to *CardioSource.org*'s interactive online database, where you

can build professional relationships and connect with members.

"The new CardioSource communities feature is a great way for FITs to interact and to communicate with cardiologists about issues important to our profession, ranging from career development to the latest clinical research," says David E. Winchester, M.D., chair of the FIT committee.

In addition to the FIT community, FITs can also browse and join several of the other specialty communities, including the

adult congenital and pediatric cardiology community, interventional community and more. Browse current conversations and discover the hot topics cardiologists are talking about now. Currently in the FIT community, members are engaging in discussions on Board preparation and upcoming educational opportunities. Become a part of the FIT online community today by logging into *CardioSource.org*, clicking on My CardioSource and selecting "Visit CardioSource Communities" from the "My Communities" tab.



Women's Career and Leadership Development Conference

for Women Cardiologists in Practice and Academics

February 25-26, 2011
The Ritz-Carlton
Charlotte, North Carolina

The ACC Foundation has a new program just for female physicians and female fellows in training (FITs). The Women's Career and Leadership Development Conference will feature unique opportunities for networking, leadership skill development and career growth. During this interactive program, expert faculty will provide strategies and guidance to all attendees through exercises which will help with career management and negotiations of a work/life balance. As part of the program, 15 travel awards will be granted to female FITs to cover all travel expenses incurred from attending this meeting. Participation in this program is a great opportunity to build your career from the very start, make the right connections and get to know the other women in cardiology!

Register today at
www.CardioSource.org/WICConference



April 2 - 5, 2011 • NEW ORLEANS
Exhibits: April 3 - 5

Join Us at ACC.11 & i2 Summit for FREE!

As a FIT, you are the future of cardiology. At ACC.11 & i2 Summit you'll find everything you need to achieve success in your profession — world-class educational opportunities, career advice, hands-on training and more! Plus, new this year — ACC FIT members receive FREE registration!

Start by taking advantage of all ACC.11 & i2 Summit have to offer, including a wide range of Spotlight sessions, Late Breaking Clinical Trials, in-depth symposia, Meet the Experts sessions, lunchtime case reviews, joint ACC/i2 vascular sessions, abstract presentations and poster sessions — all with programming of interest to FITs. Plus, don't miss programming tailored just for FITs, including the i2 Fellows Bootcamp, FIT Imaging Bootcamp, FIT Case Bowl, FIT Forum and more! Visit www.accscientificsession.org/communities and click on FITs to learn more and register today for FREE.