

AACH President's Message April-May, 2015

This President's message will cover both April and May.

Much has been happening at the board level. Foremost, perhaps, has been the appointment of a Diversity Task Force, charged over the next three months with developing a series of recommendations that include:

- Interval and long-term goals with respect to diversity, including some measurable objectives
- Recommendations regarding data that should be collected on diversity so that we can monitor our progress, including the type of data and type and frequency of reports
- Next steps toward achieving recommended goals.

The members of the Task Force include:

- William Salazar, MD, Chair
- Mike Farrell, MD
- Auguste Fortin, MD, MPH, President-Elect AACH
- Caitlin Grenness, PhD
- Monique Hill, MSW
- Poonam Khurana, MD
- Carol Mostow, MSW
- Kara Myers, CNM, MS

The Task Force was chosen by the board from among quite a few volunteers, with the goal of including: an AACH leader, a junior member, some health care professionals with a primary degree other than MD, minority as well as majority members with respect to ethnicity, those with educator, researcher, and clinician perspectives, and some members with expertise and previous experience in diversity work. I think we achieved all of those goals (see attached list with more information about each member). We very much look forward to receiving the Task Force's report, which should provide direction for specific actions and next steps. If you have ideas you would like the Task Force to consider, please feel free to email one of the members or me directly. For more background on this initiative, please see my March President's message

Other activities at the board level have included (but are not limited to):

- Approval of a proposal that board and committee minutes be posted on a secure website for members to view, in the interest of improving transparency within the organization.
- Approved of an Endowment Investment Policy for our Putnam Fund, so that it grows appropriately.
- Approval of an option for institutional membership in AACH (more to come from the Membership Committee).
- Approval of a "strategic alliance" with the Academy for Professionalism in Health Care (APHC) which simply states that we list our website addresses on each other's website, list information / announcements regarding events/conferences on each other's websites, and maintain communication between officers of the respective organizations.
- Approval of having ENRICH and FORUM coincide in terms of time and place in years that ICCH is not held in the U.S., starting in 2016. Details being worked out.
- Strengthening our relationship with the European Association for Communication in Healthcare (EACH) in a manner that is in each organization's, and our members', best interests.
- Appointment of a small team to further refine our mission, vision and belief statements to ensure appropriate wording with respect to diversity. It turns out that words really do matter, and we want to get it right.

- Beginning of in depth discussion regarding what our goal (see below) to “increase meaningful input from patients” really means and how to accomplish that. I hope that by the end of the year I will be able to report substantive progress on this front.

Our Research Committee is working on a proposal to create an exciting new group mentoring program for junior faculty researchers that would be funded by the Putnam Fund.

Our annual ENRICH faculty development program is just around the corner (June 18-21) in Philadelphia, “the city of brotherly love and sisterly affection.” The focus of the course is “Meeting at the Crossroads of Communication and Professionalism”. ENRICH is a wonderful course for those of us who teach communication, and the way many of us, including myself, were introduced to AACH. Even if you cannot make the course, please recommend it to your colleagues. We were blessed this year with a philanthropic gift that has funded interprofessional scholarships, enabling us to support the attendance of several healthcare professionals who are not physicians.

Coming up October 25-28 in New Orleans is the International Conference on Communication in Healthcare 2015, held in collaboration with EACH. AACH and EACH members enjoy discounted registration fees. Hopefully, you have already submitted an abstract, and are planning to attend. Please recommend it to your colleagues and trainees, as it is a wonderful meeting.

Both EACH and ICCH are great for networking!

Finally, the importance of communication between police, government, and communities and across cultural barriers for all of our citizens has recently come to the forefront in our country, and especially for those of us from Baltimore. So far, I am proud of the many positive ways in which my city is responding to this challenge. And I am especially proud of AACH for the educational work and research its members are doing to improve not just communication among healthcare professionals and patients, but to inform communication in general.

Please do not hesitate to email me with your suggestions and ideas directly (dkern1@jhmi.edu) or, under “Membership/Volunteer” on our website, to send us ideas and let us know how you would like to contribute. We welcome your input and your help.

Cheers,

Dave Kern

GOALS FOR 2015

- Maintain Financial Strength
 - Fiscal responsibility for core programs
 - Profit for external programs
 - Philanthropy
- Preserve/Strengthen Current Programs
 - Core Faculty Development: ENRICH, Winter Course, FIT Program
 - Research Meetings: ICCH/Forum

- Putnam Scholars Program
 - DocCom, External Programs
 - Publications: Medical Encounter, Patient Education and Counseling
- Expand Membership
- Diversify Membership and Board
- Enhance Member Benefits and Engagement
- Increase Meaningful Input from Patients
- Increase Recognition/Publicity