



Puerto Rico Chapter Earns Top Distinction

Because of its teamwork, passion and dedication, the Puerto Rico Chapter of the ACC earned the College's top distinction for 2008, the HERO ("Heroic Efforts creating Results and Opportunities") award. The award is given to the three chapters that show the most promise in upholding the ideals and mission of the ACC: education, advocacy and quality.

The Puerto Rico Chapter has a unique set of challenges to overcome. As a territory of the US, Puerto Rico has no voting member in the US Congress. This makes it difficult to participate in health care reform discussions on a national level because of the lack of a national representative to champion their cause.

Lack of representation and status as a territory leads to another unique challenge — health care professionals receive 20 percent less in reimbursement under Medicare. This can make it difficult for providers to meet their overhead costs and can limit access for patients.


Despite these challenges, the Chapter thrives. Its annual meeting is extremely popular and has a high participation rate by members. "These meetings bring together the best of the great universities into a single package," says **Chapter President José Rivera del Río**. In addition, they also feature leaders in cardiovascular education. The 2009 meeting was attended by 10 former national ACC leaders.


Patient education is also a strong focus of the Puerto Rico Chapter. For the past 10 years, the Chapter has hosted one-day public health symposia that feature lectures on heart health and include entertainment. Continuing this successful venture, the 2009 "Communitarian Convention" will be held in four towns simultaneously. It will feature FIT and CCA lecturers, and potentially a patient speaker. The topic will be management of congestive heart failure.


Moving forward, the Puerto Rico Chapter plans to build on its strengths. In 2009 alone, the Chapter will hold two new symposia on intervention and non-invasive cardiology, as well as monthly conferences at which FACCs and CCAs can earn continuing medical education credits. The Chapter is also working with its new governor on Medicare reimbursement issues, as well as local legislation and health issues.

For more information on the Puerto Rico Chapter, visit: www.acc.org/chapters.

States Hold Legislative, Heart Healthy Days

 Several ACC chapters in February held legislative and heart healthy days. In Arizona, the Chapter held its first-ever legislative day in Phoenix. Chapter President-elect **Kris Vijay, M.D., F.A.C.C.**, and several other chapter members met with 15 state lawmakers to discuss issues of importance to the cardiovascular community, including imaging, automated external defibrillators and access to care. Although the legislative climate in Arizona is tense, the day was a great opportunity for members to meet their own legislators and those in key positions.

 In Indianapolis, 25 Chapter members met with representatives from the American Heart Association, Indiana State Medical Association, the state Chamber of Commerce and several state lawmakers. The event featured a presentation by Indiana First Lady Cherri Daniels, who discussed her "Heart to Heart" initiative to promote women's heart health and potential partnerships with the Chapter. The following day, the members met with more than 50 elected officials to discuss the passage of a smoke-free bill and how federal dollars for health information technology could be of use to the state.

 The Maryland Chapter held its 2nd Annual Heart Healthy Day in Annapolis. Fifty state legislators and their staff participated in screenings delivered by FACCs and CCAs. After an initial blood pressure and body mass index screening, the members accessed Cardiosource from laptops for further consultation. The legislators and staff were impressed that ACC members took the day out of their busy schedules to provide these services and educate them on steps they can take to improve their cardiovascular health. Through the event, the Chapter was able to raise awareness of issues in cardiology outside of typical communication channels and to enhance its reputation with lawmakers.