

WASHINGTON UPDATE

• **Primary care is cost-effective,** and programs which educate primary care physicians need targeted support to succeed.

That was the message delivered to a key congressional committee in recent testimony by two Academy representatives.

The AAP members added that funding approved by Congress in the past has been successful in educating primary care physicians to care for medically underserved Americans.

Defending these assertions has become particularly essential, as the Reagan Administration's proposed budget for 1986 calls for a \$700 million cut in indirect Medicare assistance to teaching hospitals, and a freeze on the direct Medicare "pass through" to those institutions. It also recommends a total elimination of primary care training programs funded through the U.S. Public Health Service.

Fellow Steven P. Shelov, M.D., who testified April 25 for the AAP as well as the American College of Physicians and American Academy of

Family Physicians, told the health subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee that primary care has been shown to reduce the need for more expensive tertiary consultation and inpatient services.

"One study of a pediatric clinic indicated that providing continuous, primary care led to a 29 percent decrease in visits per 1,000 enrollees and, most importantly, a 20 percent decrease in hospital admissions," Dr. Shelov said. "Another study by Albert *et al* in Boston showed that, for families using primary care services, hospitalization rates for children were one-third less and hospital stays, when they occurred, were 15 percent shorter."

Earlier in the month, Joel J. Alpert, M.D., told the same house panel that, because they generate higher revenues, specialties such as surgery and anesthesiology "traditionally have received disproportionate hospital, medical school and third-party payer support for residents."

Primary care training programs therefore are more dependent on the assistance that teaching hospitals receive through Medicare's indirect adjustment, and the President's proposal to cut that sum in half would "doubtless lead to the elimination of many residency programs which yield little revenue, such as primary care."

The Administration's efforts to end USPHS support for primary care training grants would worsen the situation, Dr. Alpert said. Recent studies have shown that as many as 97 percent of the residents involved in these programs have gone on to practice pediatric primary care; 52 percent of these pediatricians serve in rural or socioeconomically deprived urban areas that traditionally are underserved by more specialized physicians.

"It is unlikely that the present environment in teaching hospitals will lead them to support primary care residency programs without strong financial incentives," Dr. Alpert concluded. "Congress must

specifically target funds for program and faculty development, and must follow through to make sure that these programs actually develop high-quality primary care physicians.

AAP members who want to help save federal support for graduate medical education should contact their members of Congress at once.

• **Marjory Mecklenberg**, the controversial and beleaguered head of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' family planning program, resigned recently in the wake of revelations about a departmental investigation into 14 questionable "business" trips she and her deputy made in 1983-84. She has been replaced by **Jo Ann Gasper**, formerly the deputy assistant secretary for planning and evaluation (social services). Gasper, who is considered a more capable administrator than Mecklenberg, shares her predecessor's strong antiabortion and pro-family views. ■

Fellows choose officers in six district elections

In addition to choosing a 1985-86 vice president and president-elect, Fellows also cast ballots last month in six Academy district elections.

Each district officer will hold their positions for three-year terms. The district results are listed here:

District I

District I consists of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Uniformed Services Chapter East, Vermont, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec.

Gilbert L. Fuld, M.D., FAAP, was elected as alternate district chairman. A practicing pediatrician in Keene, N.H., Dr. Fuld served as chairman of the New Hampshire

Chapter from 1977 to 1983 and as secretary-treasurer from 1974 to 1977. He received his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1962.

Murray E. Pendleton, M.D., FAAP, was elected as representative to the National Nominating Committee. Dr. Pendleton was chairman of the AAP Massachusetts Chapter when the organization received the 1984 Wyeth Outstanding Chapter Award for chapters with 300 or more members. He received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1946.

District III

District III consists of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and West

Virginia.

Arthur Maron, M.D., FAAP, has been re-elected to a second term as district chairman. A private practitioner in West Orange, N.J., Dr. Maron also served as alternate district chairman from 1978 to 1981. He received his medical degree from Albany Medical College, Albany, N.Y., in 1958.

District IV

District IV consists of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

David T. Tayloe, M.D., FAAP, was elected as alternate chairman. Dr. Tayloe was chairman of the AAP North Carolina Chapter when the organization received the 1981 Wyeth Outstanding Chapter Award for chapters with 300 or more members. He received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1950.

George A. Zirkle, M.D., FAAP, was elected as representative to the National Nominating Committee. A former chairman of the Tennessee Chapter, Dr. Zirkle is a private practitioner in Knoxville and clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Zirkle received his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia in 1945.

District VI

District VI consists of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Kenneth O. Johnson, M.D., FAAP, was elected as district chairman. Chairman of the Wisconsin Chapter since 1979, Dr. Johnson is a private practitioner in Milwaukee and associate clinical professor of pediatrics at the Medical College of Wisconsin. During his tenure as chapter chairman, the Wisconsin Chapter received the Wyeth Outstanding Chapter Award for chapters with 101 to 299 members. He

received his medical degree from the Northwestern University Medical School in 1958.

James H. Moller, M.D., FAAP, has been elected as alternate chairman. Dr. Moller is chairman of the AAP Section on Cardiology and a member of the Minnesota Chapter Executive Committee. He received his medical degree from Stanford University School of Medicine, San Francisco, in 1958.

District VII

District VII consists of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas.

Betty A. Lowe, M.D., FAAP, has been re-elected to a second term as alternate chairman. Dr. Lowe is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Arkansas School of Medicine, where she also serves as medical director of the Arkansas Children's Hospital and associate dean for Children's Affairs. She received her medical degree from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine in 1956.

Wallace H. Dunlap, M.D., FAAP, was elected as representative to the National Nominating Committee. A practicing pediatrician in Baton Rouge, La., Dr. Dunlap also is a clinical associate professor of pediatrics and a clinical instructor in the community medicine program at the Tulane University Medical School, New Orleans. He received his medical degree from Kansas University in 1961.

District IX

District IX consists of California Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Burt Harvey, M.D., FAAP, was re-elected to a second term as chairman. A private practitioner in Palo Alto, Calif., Dr. Harvey also is a clinical professor of pediatrics at the Stanford University School of Medicine. He has served on the faculty since 1960. He received his medical degree from the New York University College of Medicine in 1952. ■

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