PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Moving Forward in Support of the IOM Recommendations

It has been a year since the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released its landmark report on pain: Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research. As the Academy has pointed out, many of the recommendations outlined in the report overlap much of the vision and mission of the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM).

The IOM recognized education as “a central part of the necessary cultural transformation of the approach to pain.” Educating the Pain Medicine physician continues to be one of AAPM’s core purposes, and I am pleased to report on the recommendations the Executive Committee received from Academy’s Medical Student Education Sub-committee, chaired by Beth B. Murinson, MD, PhD.

The report, “Towards a career distinguished by competence and compassion: Recommendations for a new curriculum in pain medicine for medical students,” analyzed the current state of medical education and resolved that medical student education in pain is an ideal arena for curriculum development. The subcommittee agreed that currently there are no clinically focused curricula in pain designed for medical students, which presents unrealistic expectations on most medical schools to properly train their students in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of pain. Through a survey of AAPM leadership, the subcommittee developed a list of the top 20 topics for a new, clinically oriented curriculum in Pain Medicine. This is just the first step in developing a fully integrated medical education in pain and will continue to be an area of focus for the Academy. I would like to personally thank Dr. Murinson for her leadership and look forward to moving this project forward.

The IOM report on pain also called for the fostering of collaboration between the primary care physician and the subspecialist. AAPM continues to make progress in this area with our Primary Care Initiative. The Primary Care Special Interest Group, chaired by Bill McCarberg, MD, met informally at the annual meeting to discuss a proposed summit. The group provided some pragmatic perspectives about addressing the pain management needs of the patients and how we could collaboratively address the major health issue of undertreated pain. We subsequently sent an invitation to leaders of several primary care organizations concerning the proposed summit and have received positive responses regarding their participation. Although a definite date has not been set, it is hoped that the summit will convene before the end of the year.

These are just two areas of focus the Academy is currently pursuing, and I anticipate providing you with additional updates on the many other initiatives, including the formation of the AAPM Foundation and specialty recognition developments in future messages. Let me take this opportunity to remind us all of our core purpose/mission as an organization and that is: “To optimize the health of patients in pain and eliminate the major public health problem of pain by advancing the practice and the specialty of Pain Medicine.” As I have mentioned before, I have agreed to take the charge and “Get the Job Done” and would like to thank you for your continued efforts in accomplishing our goals.

MARTIN GRABOIS, MD
President, American Academy of Pain Medicine
Baylor College of Medicine
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Houston, Texas, USA