

AACH President's Message October, 2015

I have just returned from the AACH Board Meeting and ICCH (International Conference on Communication in Healthcare) in New Orleans. We held our annual membership meeting at ICCH. I will share some highlights from all.

Board and Membership Meetings: AACH is in *good financial health* due to a strong portfolio of external courses, high ICCH attendance, a robust membership, and an increasing number of DocCom subscribers. We approved a budget for 2016 and a work plan agreement with our management company, AMR.

Recommendations from our Diversity Task Force (see March-May President's messages) were approved, which addressed: data collection; systematic review of all AACH material, website, publications, courses, conferences, programs, and grants; recruitment and retention at all levels, and establishment of a mentorship program. The task force will continue as a Diversity Committee to oversee implementation of their recommendations. Proposed revisions of our mission, vision, and value statements to better address diversity were approved as well.

A slate recommended by our Leadership Development Committee for new board members and President-Elect was approved and will be coming to all members for approval soon. Diversity was an important consideration, though not the only one, in their recommendations. More to come on this topic.

One aspect of diversity for our organization was not addressed by the Task Force, because we felt it needed separate and focused attention. I am happy to report that the board has appointed Nan Cochran, our Past President, to lead a new (to be formed) task force, charged to provide the board with recommended actions on *how to better engage patients, patient and community representatives in the activities of our organization at all levels*. More to come on this topic as well.

We heard *reports from each Vice President*, which expanded some of what was reported in the June, July, August and September President's messages. The Research Committee is making progress on launching a renewed version of the Putnam Scholars Program which it plans to launch in the fall of 2016 and use to fund a longitudinal cohort of scholars.

Finally before, during and after ICCH, we worked on *our collaboration with EACH*, the European Association for Communication in Healthcare, with EACH leaders, and hope soon to announce some additional benefits for our members.

All of this and more was discussed at our *Members' Meeting*.

ICCH Meeting: The meeting was a resounding success! There were *over 500 registrants and 600 submissions*. There were 4 plenary sessions with distinguished speakers, 4 lunch time Meet the Leader/Professor sessions, 12 symposia, 22 workshops, 152 posters, and 199 oral abstracts, a rich menu to choose from. *Jonathan Silverman, Suzanne Kurtz, and Juliet Draper*, authors of "Skills for Communicating with Patients" now translated into several languages and in its 3rd edition, *were awarded the Payer Award*. *Bob Arnold was awarded the Engel Award* for his outstanding contributions in the areas of palliative care and education related to communication and ethics.

One approach to deciding among the plethora of options is to choose offerings related to a common theme. Because of the interest of the board in enhancing patient engagement in our organization, I chose to direct the majority of my attention to sessions and presentation that addressed *patient engagement*. One plenary session by Martha Hayward addressed patient engagement directly and another by Dean Schillinger engaged the audience by using video "spoken word" poems of teenagers about the impact of nutritional marketing and choices on the increasing prevalence of Type II diabetes in our youth, especially

among vulnerable populations... an approach that might provide a very effective public health counter marketing campaign. I went to an interactive Meet the Leader/Professor lunch time session facilitated by Barbara Lewis and Martha Hayward, both patient advocates, on what it means to authentically engage with patients and families. There were a few workshops / symposia on patient engagement, and numerous posters and oral presentations. I attended several. I went away with an appreciation of how far our researchers have progressed in engaging patients and patient representatives at all levels of our research enterprise, of the advances being made by an increasing number of healthcare organizations and practices in this area, and thinking about how we could more effectively engage patients in our educational enterprises, from curriculum planning to teaching, and at all levels of AACH. I got some new ideas in this as well as other areas.

Most importantly, there was *plenty of opportunity to network and sow seeds for collaboration*, which may be the most important reason for attending professional meetings. We seem to have met this need for our many first time attendees and new AACH members, based upon informal feedback and comments at the Members' Meeting. Our *Pairing with Colleagues* sessions, which paired more senior/experienced members with more junior/newer members reached quite a large number of individuals with the intention of enhancing networking and creating a welcoming environment, which is a goal of all of our AACH meetings and courses.

I hope others who attended ICCH found it as stimulating as I did, and that those who didn't will consider going in *2016*, when it is sponsored by EACH in *Heidelberg*, and in *2017* when it will again be sponsored by AACH, this time in *Baltimore's Harbor East*, a great place to visit!

Finally, please remember that *ENRICH*, our summer faculty development course for clinician-educators, and *FORUM*, our research meeting in America during years ICCH is in Europe, *will be combined in 2016 (June 16-19)*, affording the opportunity for fruitful communication and collaboration among educators and researchers. Mark the dates! The location is Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Dave Kern, dkern1@jhmi.edu

AACH MISSION AND VISION

Mission:

AACH is the professional home for all those who are committed to improving communication and relationships in healthcare.

AACH accomplishes this through:

- Welcoming researchers, educators, clinicians, patients, patient advocates, and all members of the healthcare team.
- Providing opportunities for collaboration, support and personal and professional development.
- Focusing on strengths, resources and needs of patients, clinicians and other professionals - both as unique individuals and in relationships to one another.
- Developing skills that integrate biological, psychosocial and social domains.
- Applying existing scholarship from multiple disciplines and developing new knowledge through research.
- Promoting collaborative relationships between clinicians and patients, teachers and learners, and other involved professionals.
- Incorporating core values of respect, empathy and genuineness in human relationships and the importance of self-awareness in all activities.

Vision:

A health care system where all patients, healthcare professionals, trainees, and researchers feel valued, are treated equitably with respect, compassion, understanding, and are actively engaged in healthcare processes and decisions.

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