

2009 ACR Annual Meeting: Resident Experience

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Over 180 radiology residents from the United States and Canada attended the American College of Radiology Annual Meeting and Chapter Leadership Conference this year in Washington, DC. In this meeting, the residents met in a two day program specific to the Residents and Fellows Section (RFS) and then participated in the general ACR program. The meeting culminated in Capitol Hill Visits - scheduled in advance with each state's representatives and senators.

For many first time residents, like me, this was a totally new and exciting experience where current issues facing radiology and residents were brought to the table and discussed in a democratic and organized manner. For example, at the resident level topics such as the changes in board certification timing and its implications were discussed by RFS chair as well as leaders such as Drs. Thrall and Lexa.

Each presentation was fol-

lowed with an open microphone session allowing the residents an equal opportunity to query the presenters regarding their position statements.

Some lectures were exceptional, such as the "More than meets the eye" presentation by Dr. Gundersen who made analogies to how our lives are like various rocks: some rounded and worn smooth, others used to start a fire,

some others are completely flat and even, and strangely some like the lodestone are even magnetic. Each rock type was correlated with a meaning for leading a life that matters and how that is related to practicing the art of radiology. Dr. Gundersen particularly spoke about how important it is to cultivate future leaders that are able to continually question the world around them and are open to discovery. He brought up the problem with the current models of resident education that emphasizes fact recall and the lack of integrated learning that focuses on exploration.

The RFS program began with a business meeting that introduced the outgoing executive committee and concluded with stump speeches for election of the incoming chair, secretary, and representatives. Additional presentations were made regarding two resident led initiatives to

address the perceived perception that radiologists are detached from the

patient and community relationships. These include the "Face of Radiology" as well as "Heart of Radiology" campaigns. I also witnessed a major grassroots effort started by the resident Major Peter van Geertruyden to recruit residents as state liaisons' to expand the role and initiate growth of state-based RFS chapters.

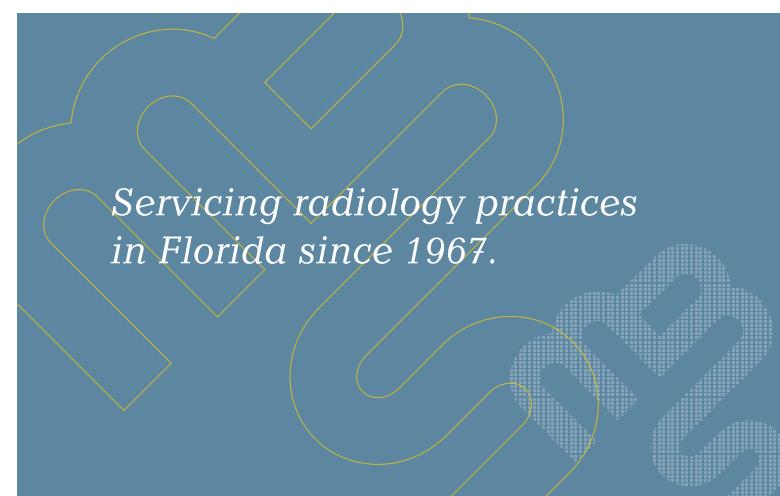
The meeting concluded with the Capitol Hill Visits coor-

dinated by Ted Burns, ACR Director of RADPAC & Political Education. In an effort to give participants an opportunity to learn about radiology's most pressing issues, the government relations RADPAC staff prepared talking points regarding issues extensively discussed in the main ACR program (sustainable imaging growth, e-ordering, decision support, and reimbursement). I met with staffers at both the congressional house and senate level and learned that despite the ACR's large presence, there are many competing interests pulling at the representative and senators' sleeves. At the end, I was fortunate to be invited to the senate hearing on Medicare fraud

chaired by the U.S. Senator Mel Martinez who tackled head-on a \$68 billion nationwide problem; \$60 billion of which is generated in Florida. I was introduced to one of the witnesses (FL-District Attorney Alexander Acosta) and promoted physician involvement in the decision making process to both combat the fraud and improve patient care.



Dr. Williams and Dr. Andrew Rivard



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