



Commission for Governmental Advocacy 2016 Annual Report

COMMISSION FOR GOVERNMENTAL ADVOCACY

Resident

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Class of 2016

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Resident Report

Purpose & Scope of Work

The Commission for Governmental Advocacy directs and informs AAFP political advocacy efforts. We work closely with AAFP lobbyists, lawyers, and staffers to discuss resolutions passed by the Congresses, weigh those and other initiatives with current AAFP goals and policy, and give recommendations to the Board on what actions the AAFP should take with regard to our political stance on various issues and advocacy efforts.

Activities & Achievements

As the student and resident representatives, we attend Winter Cluster with all of the other commissions. During these meetings, we are responsible for presenting resolutions passed at National Conference and representing student and resident interest in those discussions. At these meetings, we grappled with issues such as the opiate-addiction epidemic, rural graduate medical education, pharmaceutical industry transparency, and insurance relationships. Furthermore, we collaborated with other commissions and institutions on the potential affects of radical changes to our medical climate, such as the Affordable Care Act and MACRA.

Because of our emphasis on political advocacy, we also attend the Family Medicine Congressional Conference where we work with our state delegations to visit senate and house representatives to directly advocate for issues vital to the Family Medicine community. Unlike the other commissions, the CGA's second meeting occurs after FMCC to build off of the work done on the Hill in the days before. Finally, we attend National Conference to help facilitate the Congresses and encourage other students and residents to carry on the proverbial torch with future AAFP positions.

Any Subcommittee Work

Perhaps my most fulfilling work this year was with the Working Group on Rural Health, an inter-commission subcommittee dedicated to addressing the needs of rural Family Medicine physicians. As the daughter of two primary care doctors in rural Appalachia, the challenges faced by our rural practices are near and dear to my heart. Along with other subcommittee members, we're working with existing rural health resources like the Rural Training Track Collaborative and National Rural Health Association on issues like student and resident-friendly databases for rural training opportunities, international and domestic rural community collaboration, and advocating for existing and future rural training programs and funding. I hope carry on these discussions and address some of the barriers and limitations we've encountered through my research at the Graham Center next year.

Lessons Learned and the Value of Serving on

Most obviously, I learned about the AAFP's organizational process and progress, as well as the political process overall. This experience has been invaluable in my development as a physician advocate will undoubtedly inform my upcoming fellowship year as the Health Policy fellow at Georgetown and the Robert Graham Center. More importantly, I learned the value of my own voice and opinions. Many of the qualities that make us good family physicians – our kindness, empathy, and eagerness to compromise – can sometimes make us less effective at fighting for our profession, and this experience has reinforced the importance of standing up for a profession that I love and that truly holds the interests of our patients as paramount. Although, I was always aware of my own inexperience, my fellow commission members strongly encouraged me to speak with conviction on resident-related or any other issues. While this position exposes the student/resident reps to an incredible amount of new information and opportunity, I learned that even as I'm just getting my feet wet I still have a perspective that is valuable and desired.

Student Report

Purpose & Scope of Work

The Commission for Governmental Advocacy directs and informs AAFP political advocacy efforts. We work closely with AAFP lobbyists, lawyers, and staffers to discuss resolutions passed by the Congresses, weigh those and other initiatives with current AAFP goals and policy, and give recommendations to the Board on what actions the AAFP should take with regard to our political stance on various issues and advocacy efforts.

Activities & Achievements

As the student representative, I attended Winter Cluster with all of the other commissions. During these meetings, the resident representative and I were responsible for presenting resolutions passed at National Conference and representing student and resident interests in those discussions. At these meetings, we grappled with issues such as the opiate-addiction epidemic, rural graduate medical education, pharmaceutical industry transparency, and insurance relationships. Furthermore, we collaborated with other commissions and institutions on the potential effects of radical changes to our medical climate, such as the Affordable Care Act and MACRA.

Because of our emphasis on political advocacy, we also attended the Family Medicine Congressional Conference where we worked with our state delegations to visit senate and house representatives to directly advocate for issues vital to the Family Medicine community. The CGA's second meeting occurs directly after FMCC to build off of the work done on the Hill in the days before. Finally, we attend National Conference to help facilitate the Congresses and encourage other students and residents to carry on the torch with future AAFP positions.

Lessons Learned and the Value of Serving on CGA

I learned so much during this past year about the AAFP's lobbying and organizational progress, as well as politics in general. This committee taught me fundamental elements key to fighting for physicians' and our patients' needs. It's crucial as family physicians to know that we can improve our patients' health not just in the clinic, but through legislation and lobbying. As the student representative, I was the youngest and least experienced member of CGA, but I always felt welcomed. AAFP clearly values the opinions of students and residents, and listens to our issues and concerns. Although I was always aware of my own inexperience, I was encouraged by my fellow commission members to speak with conviction on student-related or any other issues. While this position exposes the student/resident representatives to an incredible amount of new information and opportunity, I learned that even as a student I still have a perspective that is valuable and desired.

Note: This report was prepared by the resident or student representative(s) listed and includes their account(s) of the business conducted during their term. This is not an official record of business proceedings from the AAFP or any other entity. To find out more about the business of the AAFP, its congresses, commissions, and current policies visit aafp.org.