

American Medical Association - Medical Student Section Region VI Conference

On the weekend of February 5-6, 2010, a major snowstorm hit the Philadelphia area, suspending bus and taxi services. Yet no amount of snow could stop a group of inquisitive and driven medical students from convening at Jefferson Medical College for their annual 2010 American Medical Association-Medical Student Section (AMA-MSS) Region VI Conference.

The American Medical Association (AMA) is the largest association of physicians and medical students in the United States. The AMA's stated mission is to "promote the art and science of medicine for the betterment of the public health, to advance the interests of physicians and their patients, to promote public health, to lobby for legislation favorable to physicians and patients, and to raise money for medical education." The student section of the AMA is broken up into

seven geographic regions; Region VI consists of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

The scheduled keynote speaker was Dr. James Goodyear, the current president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, and a strong student advocate. He has participated in several surgical skills nights throughout the state (including Jefferson Medical College), where he has taught students how to suture and tie surgical knots. Dr. Goodyear's keynote address was geared at educating the students about the current state of health care reform, and included his personal perspective on where it was heading, and how it would affect his practice. The major topics discussed at the conference were health policy, health care reform, and the importance of organized medicine (and its intersection with daily practice). Students also

participated in various workshops where they learned how to write a resolution and lobby their local Congressional representative. They also shared ideas on community service projects and membership drives. The meeting was an important networking opportunity for students to make new connections, and plan projects and events at their local chapters. Some of the student ideas included a region-wide bicycle relay race to raise awareness of the uninsured, health fairs, and healthcare reform debates. The success of the conference, despite the weather conditions, is a testament to the spirit and enthusiasm of the student section and their ability to overcome adversity. ■

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