The current state of the Council on Quality of Care and Outcomes Research (QCOR) could not be stronger! We recently underwent our Biennial Review from the Council Operations Committee (COC) and received laudatory praise for our work in multiple areas: 1) our annual Quality of Care and Outcomes Research in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke Scientific Sessions continues to grow and is the leading international conference in our field, 2) the Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes journal, which routinely highlights state-of-the-art work from our field, and 3) our commitment to mentorship and fostering the next generation of outcomes researchers.

To further highlight our commitment to young investigators, we are allocating new funds for early career investigator travel grants to the annual QCOR 2011 Scientific Sessions. We will award up to 12 Early Career Travel Grants to the top early career and trainee abstract presenters for our conference in Washington, D.C. this May. This is exciting and will allow the meeting to continue to provide a forum for interactions between young investigators and leaders in the field of outcomes research.

Visit my.americanheart.org/qcorcouncil for more information.
The Quality of Care and Outcomes Research in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke 2011 Scientific Sessions will be held May 12–14 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The conference brings together scientists and clinicians from outcomes research and quality improvement across multiple disciplines, including cardiology, neurology, emergency medicine, nursing and pharmacy as well as policymakers, employers, payers and other key stakeholders in health care. As in previous years, the conference has strong emphasis on healthcare policy and delivery, as well as promoting involvement of new or junior investigators. Topics and speakers represent a variety of viewpoints to stimulate thoughtful discussion and debate on the most important challenges facing health care today.

On May 12, the conference opens with a morning workshop, “Transitions in Care to Prevent Rehospitalization,” followed by three concurrent workshops in the afternoon including:

• “Advanced Methods in Adjusting for Confounding” intended for experienced researchers;
• “Funding Yourself” developed for junior investigators seeking guidance for the grant application process, to be led by representatives of several funding agencies including the National Institutes of Health;
• An interactive simulation of hospital-based quality improvement projects, in which teams of participants will propose solutions for quality problems to panelists acting as hospital stakeholders.

The first of three plenary sessions on quality and outcomes will address strategies and plans for the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) that was formed in 2010 by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The second focuses on performance measures in cardiovascular diseases with contrasting perspectives of whether AHA/ACC performance measures will ultimately improve the quality, safety and outcomes of care for percutaneous coronary interventions. The final plenary session, “Assessing Drug Safety Post Approval: Lessons from Vioxx, Avandia and Meridia,” will cover regulatory, statistical and scientific challenges in the post-market approval surveillance of how drugs are adopted and prescribed in real-world practice, and how unintended, adverse events are monitored.

Concurrent sessions include timely stroke patient care; prehospital and emergency department care for cardiovascular patients; use of risk prediction and shared decision making at the point of care; a perspective from editors at the New England Journal of Medicine, Archives of Internal Medicine, and Circulation for how to best position your papers; and oral abstract sessions. A meeting highlight is the Young Investigators Oral Abstract Session, where a panel of judges evaluates the top five abstracts submitted by junior investigators and recognizes the top submission with a Council award. Daily poster presentations are the highlight for most attendees and provide a forum for new and established investigators to discuss new ideas as well as build long-term professional collaborations.

New to the conference this year is a series of committee hearings whose intent is to develop brief position papers that will be published in Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes. Audience members will have an opportunity to contribute to publication if they are inclined. Topics for these sessions are being formulated at this time.

The most important aspect of the conference, however, is the interaction that takes place during, between and after the sessions. The conference is small enough to facilitate such interchanges and the spirit of the quality and outcomes community has always been one of openness, collaboration and spirited debate. We are honored to invite you and your colleagues to contribute to the QCOR 2011 Scientific Sessions, and hope to personally welcome you and listen to your suggestions and feedback about this and future conferences. You may also contact Mark Stewart at Mark.Stewart@heart.org with your comments.