

Message From the Chair

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The Council on Clinical Cardiology has continued to advance the American Heart Association mission by promoting excellence in clinical care and fostering the professional development and education of clinical cardiologists with a broad range of programs over the last year. The Council’s “flagship” program was the Fellows-In-Training/Early Career Day at Scientific Sessions in Chicago on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2010. This program was developed by the Council as a strategy to recruit and retain fellows and early career members to the AHA. The Council on Clinical Cardiology allocated discretionary funds to sponsor up to 250 fellows to attend Scientific Sessions. The program was marketed to non-AHA members with complimentary AHA Membership for one year at the Student/Trainee Level, complimentary registration to Scientific Sessions and a complimentary ticket to the Council on Clinical Cardiology Dinner. With more than 500 attendees on hand, the session began with two keynote addresses “Cardiovascular Clinical Investigation at the Crossroads” and “Bench and Translational Research: Bridging the Gap between Promise and Practice.” A moderated panel discussion followed with editors of the AHA journals addressing a range of issues related to advancing one’s career. A “Meet the Mentor” lunch was well attended with one senior leader in cardiology at each table.

The afternoon program included breakout sessions on “Bench and Translational Science” and “Clinical Investigation/ Fellows-in-Training.” Topics in the former session included “Strategies for Success in Basic Research,” “What You Need to Know about Translational Research,” “Genetic Research” and “The Future of Research Funding.” Topics in the breakout session for the clinical investigator included “Becoming a Successful Cardiovascular Investigator,” “Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes Research,” “Interventional Cardiology: The Basics of Building a Successful Career” and “Academic Careers in Cardiology: Strategies for Success.”

These sessions were followed by the Laennec and Levine Competition with competitive clinical and research presentations by cardiology fellows. Then more than 400 Council members and guests attended a reception and the Council dinner where the Laennec Clinician/Educator Award was presented to Dr. Renu Virmani and the Laennec Master Clinician Award was presented to Dr. William Little. Two Council members were recognized as Distinguished Scientists, Dr. Jay Cohn and Dr. David Harrison. The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Dr. Ann Bolger, and the James B. Herrick Award was presented to Dr. Elliott Antman who delivered the Herrick Lecture, “Evidence and Education.”

Dr. Ian Nixon was recognized for his contributions as editor of the two editions of “The AHA Clinical Cardiac Consult Book.” The new edition, which includes 180 chapters of highly relevant information on cardiovascular disease and stroke, was distributed at Sessions to 240 cardiology fellows who attended the Fellow-in-Training/ Early Career Day supported by an educational grant from the Council. All 240 fellows-in-training also became members of the AHA. The Council plans to continue to organize and support the Fellows-In-Training/Early Career Day at Scientific Sessions 2011.

The Council on Clinical Cardiology was also instrumental in initiating and organizing an AHA Atrial Fibrillation Summit held in Washington, D.C., in June 2010. More than 100 invited attendees participated with broad representation of basic, translational, clinical and population scientists, policy makers from regulatory agencies, nurses and patients to identify knowledge gaps related to atrial fibrillation. Participants developed a series of specific recommendations for research initiatives in atrial fibrillation.

Dr. Estes, chair of the Council on Clinical Cardiology, chaired the writing group which has a manuscript in press with the summit proceedings in Circulation.

The Women in Cardiology Committee continues to recruit and mentor female cardiologists with 24 early career cardiologists selected to participate in the mentoring program at Sessions. The Council has continued to support advocacy efforts of the AHA financial support of $10,000 for survivor travel stipends for Lobby Day. The Council had 76 new FAHAs in 2009/2010 including 59 domestic and 17 international members. The Council currently has 1,672 active FAHAs representing 22 percent of Council membership. Fellowship has been promoted in many ways, including the newsletter, website and at the annual dinner and reception. The committee chairs have been challenged to ensure every member of every committee is a FAHA in 2011.

The Council on Clinical Cardiology had a productive year publishing 10 manuscripts including the following: 1) AHA/ACS/AUA Androgen-Deprivation Therapy in Prostate Cancer and Cardiovascular Risk, 2) Arteriotomy Closure Devices for Cardiovascular Procedures, 3) Call to Action: Cardiovascular Disease in Asian Americans, 4) Clinician’s Guide to Cardiopulmonary Exercise Testing in Adults, 5) Heart Failure Syndromes: Emergency Department Presentation, Treatment, and Disposition: Current Approaches and Future Aims, 6) Interventions to Promote Physical Activity and Dietary Lifestyle Changes for Cardiovascular Risk Reduction in Adults, 7) Medication Errors in Acute Cardiovascular and Stroke Patients.
8) Prevention of Torsade de Pointes in Hospital Setting Testing of Low-Risk Patients Presenting to the Emergency Department With Chest Pain, 10) Update on Cardiovascular Implantable Electronic Device Infections and Their Management.

In addition, the Council co-sponsored 11 documents published in 2010 and commissioned an additional seven new manuscripts.

The Biennial Review of the Council in January 2011 was very favorable. Kathleen L. Grady, PhD, FAHA, chair of the Council Operations Committee, emphasized the achievements of the Council on Clinical Cardiology. These included excellent FAHA recruitment, focus on early career members, women in cardiology trainee development programs, increased rates of sponsorship and co-sponsorship of scientific statements, generous support of travel stipends, inclusion of fellows-in-training on all committees, and excellent collaboration with the science subcommittees. Among the recommendations for the Council on Clinical Cardiology are that we share best practices with other Councils pertaining to our success with the Fellows-in-Training Program and the Women in Cardiology Trainee of Excellence Award Program. Additionally, it was recommended that the Council reach out to the Hispanic community of cardiologists as thought leaders who could become AHA volunteers. Efforts should also be made to connect members with affiliates and local boards. Looking forward, the Council on Clinical Cardiology will expand its efforts to engage fellows-in-training and early career members, recruit members to achieve FAHA status, improve intra-council and inter-organizational collaboration, increase productivity of its science committees, and form strategic partnerships with other groups to advance the AHA’s strategic plan.

In addition, the Council will proactively participate in content development for Scientific Sessions. It is evident based on the accomplishments noted above that membership in the American Heart Association and participation in the Council on Clinical Cardiology provide many superb educational and professional opportunities for all healthcare professionals involved in clinical care, education or research in clinical cardiology. Visit our Council website at my.americanheart.org/clcdcouncil to learn more.

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