Message From the Chair

Spring is here and we are all thinking about new beginnings. I am nearing the end of my term as Chair of the Epidemiology and Prevention Council. These two years of service have been hugely rewarding for me. The honor of leading our group into the next decade and of having the opportunity to do new things to help achieve our missions is one of the best professional experiences I have had. We have initiated an Early Career Committee, which has contributed so much to our Council, and I am very grateful for their participation. The new Publishing Committee has been productive in bringing forth new AHA scientific statements. Many of our members, especially Dr. Donald Lloyd-Jones, have played crucial roles in the development of metrics that will be used to measure the success of AHA’s new 2020 goals.

These activities, along with all the other things that volunteer members of our Council take on each year, are geared toward improving health and increasing the cadre of scientists taking on the study of questions on epidemiology and prevention of cardiovascular diseases. Our Council members are so excited about the release of the AHA 2020 Goal, “To improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20%, while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20%.” We discussed it on the occasion of our 50th Annual Scientific Conference in March, and there was a tremendous energy and excitement among meeting attendees. Achieving the goal will improve “primordial prevention” or the prevention of development of cardiovascular risk factors. This will translate to reduced risk of multiple diseases including cardiovascular disease and stroke, cancer, diabetes and most diseases of aging. The opportunity to use the influence and energy of the AHA and its volunteers in order to achieve this goal is unprecedented. My experiences in these past two years have allowed me to see what a great organization the AHA is and have stimulated me to motivate others, including scientists and non-scientists, to be involved in our efforts.

I encourage everyone to think about the challenge of how to improve cardiovascular health in our communities. AHA is working to increase awareness of the definition of ideal cardiovascular health, and this information is being translated to the public initially as “Life’s Simple 7,” a term coined by AHA President Dr. Clyde Yancy. Anyone can go to a new AHA website, mylifecheck.heart.org, and take a simple quiz called My Life Check to get a score for their health status based on Life’s Simple 7. Results include advice about lifestyle changes and interventions that might be useful based on an individual’s score. Tools like this can be used by patients to illustrate how lifestyle changes can improve health. Over 40,000 people have taken the quiz already and have committed to making changes to improve their scores.

How can we facilitate the achievement of the challenging AHA 2020 Goal? AHA does this by funding and disseminating science, supporting public policy positions and educating the public. As individuals and AHA members, there are many ways you can participate. Join You’re the Cure, serve on an AHA study section, review manuscripts for an AHA journal, work on writing an AHA scientific statement, join an AHA committee or participate in a Heart Walk.

To get started on the AHA’s 2020 Goals, Barry Franklin, Chair of the NPAM Council, and I will edit a prevention-themed series of papers in Circulation to bring forward key issues. For AHA Fall Sessions, we are creating a new abstract category for papers specifically related to the achievement of the 2020 Goals. I encourage you to submit abstracts to this category. We are working with the NPAM Council and others to develop a new AHA Committee on Behavioral Science to help fill gaps in knowledge on prevention.

It is an exciting time to be involved as a volunteer for the AHA and to participate in the science that we all care so deeply about. I hope that all of you will think about ways that you can contribute to achieving the AHA’s 2020 Goals, as we have a great challenge ahead of us, and these goals are important to all of us. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Council Chair, and I hope to stay involved in AHA as a volunteer for many years to come. I am confident that Dr. Chris O’Donnell, our next Chair, will do a great job for our Council, and I thank him for his support during the past two years.

Mary Cushman
MD, MSc, FAHA

Mary Cushman, MD, MSc, FAHA, passing the Chair torch to Christopher O'Donnell, MD, MPH, FAHA
The 50th Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention Scientific Sessions drew a record number of 816 attendees, March 2–5, 2010 in San Francisco.

The 50th Anniversary of the conference was celebrated with a special exhibit featuring information about the origins and early evolution of cardiovascular disease epidemiology and prevention research and about the Council. Many thanks to past Council Chair Dr. Henry Blackburn, who not only organized the exhibit but provided excellent jazz at our annual dinner!

We were honored to have Dr. Jeremiah Stamler open the conference with his presentation of the David Kristchevsky Memorial Lecture. He gave an excellent presentation about the Mediterranean eating style and its relation to coronary heart disease and stroke prevention.

Additionally, we were fortunate to welcome Dr. Trivellore Raghunathan as the Richard D. Remington Methodology Lecturer, who spoke about combining information from multiple data sources for social to molecular epidemiology of heart disease.

The Council again hosted several activities that focused on the education and training of young scientists; “meet the expert” roundtable luncheons; and “Connection Corner” were well received. Finally, we recognize the recipients of the Council’s special awards:

Dr. Josef Coresh was the recipient of the Council on Epidemiology and Prevention Mentoring Award, which highlights the importance of superior mentoring in cardiovascular epidemiologic research by honoring a person who has provided exceptional individual and institutional mentoring and advocacy.

The Jeremiah and Rose Stamler Research Award for New Investigators is named for the Stamlers in appreciation of their seminal contributions to cardiovascular disease epidemiology. The award is designed to recognize and stimulate excellence in research by investigators in training.

Winner: Meredith C. Foster
Finalists: Tamar S. Polonsky, Daniel Kim, Renata Micha, Lu Qi

The Sandra A. Daugherty Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Disease or Hypertension Epidemiology is named for Dr. Sandra Daugherty in appreciation of her outstanding career as a clinical researcher and epidemiologist working in the areas of hypertension, chronic fatigue syndrome and women’s health issues. The award is designed to recognize the role of junior faculty and to stimulate excellence in research by junior investigators.

Winner: Joachim Ix
Finalists: Edmond Kabagambe, Stacie Daugherty, Alvaro Alonso

Dr. Joshua Bis was the recipient of the Roger R. Williams Award for Genetic Epidemiology and the Prevention and Treatment of Atherosclerosis. The award is named for Dr. Roger R. Williams’ pioneering work in the field of the genetics of inherited lipid disorders and the prevention of atherosclerosis.

Travel Grants

Council Travel Awards recognize promising and outstanding investigators in the early stages of their careers and provide travel assistance for trainees and early career investigators to participate in AHA scientific meetings.

Early Career Minority Travel Grant Awardees

Eric McClendon
Alanna Morris

Early Career/Trainee Travel Awards

Stephanie Chiuve
Renata (Eirini) Micha

Leadership Committee

Chairperson: Mary Cushman, MD, MSc, FAHA
Vice-Chairperson: Christopher O’Donnell, MD, MPH, FAHA

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