Chairman’s Message to the Council
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The American Heart Association (AHA) is dedicated to improving the quality of care for patients suffering from or at risk for cardiovascular diseases, including stroke. One way we achieve this goal is by providing clinician-scientists, researchers and the public with scientific statements, practice guidelines and scientific advisories on various topics. We develop each through a clearly defined process. Multi-specialty panels write them and the AHA and collaborating societies and groups rigorously review them. The writing process is evidence-based and consensus-driven, and attention is paid to potential conflicts of interest, both in the formulation of writing groups and in review panels.

Our council has provided input to writing groups and review panels for a variety of AHA-sponsored projects. The AHA has used the expertise of our cardio-thoracic and vascular surgeons and cardiovascular anesthesiologists on several projects completed within the past few months, including:

- ACC/AHA Practice Guidelines on the Evaluation and Management of Heart Failure (see http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/112/12/e154)
- ACC/AHA Practice Guidelines on the Management of Patients with Valvular Heart Disease

Additionally, we have opportunities to work on AHA initiatives in collaboration with the AHA’s broad array of clinician-scientists and researchers whose major interest is improving the cardiovascular health of our current and future patients. This effort is beyond the scope of what is usually available through our individual specialty societies. You may review available statements and guidelines at http://my.americanheart.org/portal/professional/guidelines. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts and ideas on current and future projects.

CVSA Awards at Scientific Sessions

CVSA members are invited to apply or make a nomination for two awards presented at the AHA’s Scientific Sessions: the Vivien Thomas Young Investigator Award and the Surgery Mentoring Award.

The Vivien Thomas Young Investigator Award acknowledges the accomplishments of early career investigators focused on fundamental and applied surgical research. An abstract must be submitted to one of the categories for presentation at Scientific Sessions 2006 in which the CVSA is the primary sponsor. Additional application requirements include a manuscript, CV, and letter of support from a sponsor. Finalists will be determined this summer and invited to present in an oral abstract session at Scientific Sessions, after which a winner will be determined. The application deadline is June 2, 2006.

The Surgery Mentoring Award recognizes a scientist who shows exceptional support of the careers of scientists in cardiothoracic and vascular surgery, anesthesiology and other related fields through mentoring and advocacy. Candidates must be CVSA members and senior scientists (full faculty status of five years or more) in one or more of the fields represented by the council. The candidate must be working actively to build the careers of scientists in training under his or her supervision, and must have participated in activities that support the work and education of junior investigators. Nominations must include a letter of support stating the impact the candidate has had on mentoring junior investigators; the nominee’s CV is also required. The nomination deadline is June 30, 2006.

Please visit the CVSA Awards website at http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.html?identifier=3004015 for additional details on these programs, or contact Award Manager Julie Hinterthuer at 214-706-1181 or julie.hinterthuer@heart.org for more information.
Upcoming AHA Events of Interest to Council Members

One of the unique resources available to AHA members is access to a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines. Upcoming symposia of potential interest to CVSA council members include:

The Council on Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology is holding the **7th Annual Conference on Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology** at the Marriott City Center Hotel in Denver, Colo., April 27–29, 2006. The meeting provides a unique opportunity to meet informally with colleagues from around the world with wide-ranging research interests and expertise in arteriosclerosis, thrombosis and vascular biology. In addition to invited plenary lectures and mini-symposia, there will be oral and poster presentations of selected abstracts and three different poster sessions. A key conference objective is to provide opportunities for young scientists to interact and exchange ideas with more senior scientists in their research areas.

The AHA Quality of Care and Outcomes Research Interdisciplinary Working Group, and the Councils on Cardiovascular Nursing, CVSA, Clinical Cardiology, Epidemiology and Prevention, and Stroke will hold the **7th Scientific Forum on Quality of Care and Outcomes Research in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke** at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., May 8 and 9, 2006. This two-day conference will focus on new and developing opportunities, initiatives, projects, policies, and research related to quality of care and outcomes for persons who have or are at risk for cardiovascular disease and stroke.

The **Peripheral Arterial Disease Fellows Workshop** will be held at the Hyatt Harborside in Boston, Mass., July 7–9, 2006. This two-day workshop will provide a forum for mentoring young clinicians in evaluating and managing atherosclerotic vascular disease. The workshop will also offer exposure to atherosclerosis-related science and how-to workshops. A select faculty of vascular experts will present lectures and lead panel discussions and small group discussions on evaluating and treating patients with vascular disease, including peripheral arterial disease, aortic diseases, renal artery stenosis and carotid artery disease.

The Council on Basic Cardiovascular Sciences will host the **3rd Annual Symposium on Translation of Basic Insights into Clinical Practice** at the Keystone Conference Center, Keystone, Colo., July 31–Aug. 3, 2006. The symposium aims to further the understanding of normal and abnormal cardiovascular biology — from molecules, cells and tissues to organs, organ systems and organisms — and foster discussion on applying this knowledge to patient care. The meeting will emphasize the need to bridge the gap between basic research and clinical practice, with a focus on new concepts and mechanistic insights that could be translated into clinically applicable therapies. Another objective is to bring together experts from various fields whose interests intersect in translating our basic understanding to the bedside. Topics will include statins and phosphodiesterase inhibitors, sarcomeric force generation and its local protein regulation, cardioprotective therapies, new imaging techniques, cell therapy and cardiac regeneration and gene therapy.

Information on all of these events can be obtained online at my.americanheart.org.