

Director's Log
February 6, 2006

District Strategic Planning

In conjunction with the Annual Meeting this past weekend in San Francisco AAP-CA held an all-day strategic planning meeting. Attendance was excellent with a majority of the District Board present, including the Presidents of all four California AAP Chapters and each of their Chapter Executive Directors.

The meeting began with each participant indicating their expectations for the day. Foremost among these were a desire for the District to focus and prioritize, to find ways to better communicate among the leadership and with the members, and the need for a clear understanding of District and Chapter roles and how we can best work together.

Richard Pan, MD, District Vice-Chair and Chair of the District Strategic Plan Work Group, presented results from a pre-meeting planning survey of Chapter and District leaders. Each participant was asked to share what they felt was the most important message from the survey results. Comments were varied, but several themes emerged. The leadership clearly places advocacy for children and advocacy for pediatricians at the top of AAP-CA priorities. Further, achieving adequate reimbursement, a core requirement for access, was specifically noted as needing strong AAP action in California. Concerns about managed care and private sector issues outweighed public sector concerns. Communication about District and Chapter roles, priorities and activities was clearly felt to be lacking.

To provide an additional foundation for the day, each Chapter President was asked to report on their Chapter's priority areas, as developed through the Chapters' strategic planning processes. While each Chapter had a local and individualized plan, there were significant areas of overlap. An emphasis on Membership, Access, Reimbursement, Advocacy and Obesity/nutrition emerged as top areas for action. These were supported by the survey results above, as well, and were selected, without ordering, as the working areas of top priority for the AAP in California for the next 3 years. (Note that Obesity/Nutrition was selected as an example of "the Medical Issue" for this cycle. It is expected that the District will prioritize a different medical Issue every 1 to 3 years for top focus. Other examples are injury prevention and children's mental health.)

Work groups were formed around each of these five areas. The charge of each work group was to identify two to three priority outcomes under their goal area that they thought could be achieved by the AAP in California (Chapters and District) within the next three years. They were also asked to give some thought as to what the Chapters and the District roles would be in achieving these

outcomes. The group reconvened and each work group presented its results, with further input from the full group for discussion.

After a break for lunch, participants rolled up their sleeves and dug in on the critical work of determining how chapters and the joint chapter venture of the AAP-CA District can best work together. To that end, members were asked to fill in the blank in the following statement:

“The AAP-CA District, a joint venture of the four California AAP Chapters, exists in order to_____.”

A list was developed of core District "raison d'etra" to fill in this statement, including advocacy at the state level on behalf of children and pediatricians to public and private statewide entities; facilitating and supporting communication among the Chapters; permitting AAP members across the state to speak with one voice on statewide issues; and operating in a fiscally responsible and transparent way. In addition, a list was created of things that are not within the District's scope to do, but rather belong exclusively to each individual Chapter. These include the creation of individual Chapter plans and strategic priorities; and the ability of each Chapter to independently govern with its own Board, bylaws and staff.

Next steps in the planning process are for the work groups to review and refine drafts of the reports they made in their issue areas. These second drafts will go to the Chapter Presidents and the District's Executive Committee for consideration of what further input might be needed and how best to proceed. A draft Action Plan based on the five priority areas, Membership, Access, Reimbursement, Advocacy and a Medical Issue (Obesity/Nutrition) will be brought to the June District Executive Board meeting for additional work and ratification. When completed, it will be shared with the membership and become a guiding document for the District over the next 3 years.

Participants agreed the day yielded a productive jumpstart to our planning effort. I will keep you posted as the process proceeds.