

# Family Medicine Updates



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## **AAFP'S NEW PRESIDENT URGES FAMILY PHYSICIANS TO "BE PART OF THE UNSTOPPABLE FORCE OF FAMILY MEDICINE"**

AAFP President Glen Stream, MD, MBI, of Spokane, Washington stood before his family physician colleagues during the Opening Ceremony of the AAFP Scientific Assembly on September 14, 2011, and reminded them of the challenges the specialty of family medicine faces.

"Every day, some procedural subspecialist tells a medical student, 'You're too smart to be a family physician,'" said Stream. "We're going to change that."

Stream spoke of the tension between what often are referred to as "cognitive vs procedural" physicians and reminded his audience that even though many people place family medicine in the cognitive category of medical specialties, the list of medical procedures routinely performed by family physician is impressive.

"We've delivered babies, injected joints, set fractures and placed casts, performed endoscopic procedures and colonoscopies, done minor and even major surgical procedures," said Stream. "Our hands are the hands of the most capable, comprehensive, and compassionate physicians known."

Stream told his audience that family physicians must go beyond providing the best possible medical care to America's patients. "We have an ethical obligation to transform our health care system," complete with a solid family medicine foundation. "Collectively, our hands must not just treat one patient at a time, but also be the force that transforms our dysfunctional system."

Far too many people view America's health care system as an entity so glutted with special interest groups seeking to maintain the status quo that the system cannot be changed, much like an immovable object, according to Stream. But, he noted, "I don't believe in immovable objects. I believe in unstoppable forces." And, according to Stream, family medicine is the unstoppable force that will transform America's dysfunctional health care system.

Recalling his college physics class, Stream reminded his audience of famed English physicist and mathema-

tician Sir Isaac Newton's 2nd law of motion: namely, force equals mass times acceleration. "To increase our force for change, we must increase both mass and acceleration," said Stream.

He told the audience that in 2011, the AAFP's membership became a mass to be reckoned with when, for the first time, the Academy could boast of more than 100,000 members. Furthermore, said Stream, the Academy added to that "mass" via coalitions with other primary care organizations that also understand family medicine's role in providing high quality and cost-effective health care.

The acceleration piece of Newton's formula is apparent in the efforts of AAFP members and leaders as they engage in advocacy efforts with legislators and embrace the Academy's federal political action committee, known as FamMedPAC, as its sphere of influence broadens, said Stream.

He praised students, residents, and recently-trained family physicians for their energy and deep commitment to the family medicine revolution. "They are our future, and that future is bright."

The AAFP's new president also acknowledged that the pace of such significant change is slow and often discouraging, but he reminded audience members that "perseverance is in our DNA." Case in point: Stream said it took him 10 years to convince his medical group to implement an electronic health record, and once he succeeded, he returned to school for a master's degree in informatics so he'd be prepared to lead the implementation team. Perseverance in action.

Despite the challenges ahead, Stream urged the group in front of him to focus on the positive.

"As so often happens when we discuss challenges, we forget to share the joy and fulfillment we experience as family doctors," said Stream, and that's a message medical students need to hear. "Being a family physician is the best job in the world, and I love being a family doctor. We are the most complete physicians. We are partners with our patients working toward their best possible health. America needs us to be the foundation for the future."

Stream urged his colleagues at the Assembly to celebrate being family physicians and then return home with renewed vigor. "Reach out to members of Congress, precept medical students in your office, be more involved in your Academy," he said. "That's how we'll create a better American health care system."

Above all else, dare to dream the impossible dream. "Be part of the unstoppable force of family medicine."

## New AAFP President Will Use Social Media to Engage Members

AAFP members have some new options when it comes to communicating with their elected leader.

After being introduced as president of the AAFP during the Congress of Delegates, Glen Stream, MD, MBI, of Spokane, Washington, said he plans to use social media to reach out to Academy members.

Stream emphasized similar ideas in *AAFP Leader Voices*, a new blog at <http://blogs.aafp.org/cfr/leader-voices/> that launched on the same day.

The new AAFP president also said in his speech and in his blog entry that he plans to use Twitter to give members regular updates on his activities. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/#1/aafpprez>. In addition, Stream has a new Facebook account at <http://www.facebook.com/AAFPPresident> that will provide updates.

Stream said he hopes AAFP members will provide feedback through these various social media channels.

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AAFP News Now



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## PISACANO LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION NAMES 2011 PISACANO SCHOLARS

The Pisacano Leadership Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), recently selected its 2011 Pisacano Scholars. These 5 medical students follow in the footsteps of 80 scholar alumni who are practicing physicians and 16 current scholars who are enrolled in family medicine residency programs across the country. The Pisacano Leadership Foundation was created in 1990 by the ABFM in tribute to its founder and first executive director, Nicholas J. Pisacano, MD (1924–1990). Each Pisacano Scholar has demonstrated the highest level of leadership, academic achievement, communication skills, community service, character, and integrity.



**Rebecca Mitchell Coelius**, a 2011 Pisacano Scholar, is a 4th-year medical student at the University of California-San Francisco School of Medicine

(UCSF). She graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, Society, and the Environment. Rebecca received numerous awards as an undergraduate, including the *USA Today* All-USA Academic First Team Award and the *Glamour* Top 10 College Women Award.

As an undergraduate, Rebecca volunteered at an orphanage in Kenya. She was inspired by community efforts towards seemingly intractable development challenges and founded the international non-profit SpanAfrica, which has partnered with over 50 organizations across Kenya, Zambia, and Ghana in support of local approaches to health, microfinance, sustainable agriculture, and education. After completing her undergraduate work, Rebecca was a Fulbright Scholar in India. She traveled across the subcontinent researching how US humanitarian aid policy was impacting women's reproductive health and HIV/AIDS projects at the local level.

While at UCSF, Rebecca was awarded the Dean's Research Fellowship for research on patient attitudes about the potential of computer-assisted health care to improve quality in primary and acute care clinics. Rebecca has also served as the American Medical Student Association's National PharmFree Director of Access to Medicines, and was one of the leaders in a national campaign to consider access and affordability in federal patent policy for biological medicines. Rebecca has also been a student representative on the American College of Physician's California Health and Public Policy Committee and a student coordinator for the UCSF Bioethics and Health Policy Electives.

This year she is working with the San Francisco General Hospital Center for Excellence in Primary Care to support the transformation of a local community health center into a model for innovation in primary care provision.



**Alexandra Hunt**, a 2011 Pisacano Scholar, is a 4th-year medical student at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UW). She graduated with Honors from the University of California Santa Cruz with a Bachelor's degree in Art. Alexandra was team captain of the UC Santa Cruz Women's soccer team and named NCAA All-Western Region Women's Soccer Player of the Year during her junior year.

Prior to entering medical school, Alexandra worked as a health educator and volunteer assistant at a rural health clinic in El Salvador. Following her time in El Salvador, while pursuing medical school prerequisite