

The governing council of the AHA Section for Metropolitan hospitals met February 24-25, 2011 in Rosemont, IL. Governing council members received reports on AHA advocacy and regulatory policy initiatives and discussed several priorities including accountable care organizations and a culture of health and wellness. They reviewed the AHA strategic plan and its physician leadership initiatives. A roster of the Section's governing council is available at <http://www.aha.org/aha/member-center/constituency-sections/Metropolitan/roster.html>



Washington Update: Members received a report on the political environment, the Association's 2011 advocacy agenda, its strategy for the 112th Congress, and immediate policy priorities. Members were briefed on regulations implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 as well as the timeline on other hospital rulemaking such as insurance reforms, Medicaid funding and benefits, value-based purchasing, health information technology, and accountable care organizations (ACOs). Members raised questions about the timeline for judicial decisions on the ACA as well as federal budget priorities and the availability of stimulus funds for health information technology.

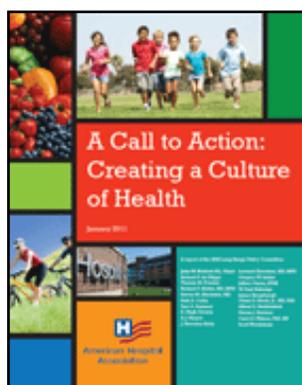
Challenges and Opportunities of ACOs: ACOs are mandated as part of the ACA and have been heralded as a promising model for improving quality of care and reducing unnecessary costs through better coordination and collaboration among providers. Several requirements for forming a Medicare ACO are specified in the reform law, but many details about the program's operation are yet to be determined. AHA has commented twice to CMS with recommendations in developing the ACO program. Members commented on the key issues related to ACO developments, what must/must not be included in the regulation, and the role of specialty providers in ACOs. For more visit <http://www.hret.org/accountable/index.shtml>.



AHA 2011-2013 Strategic Plan: Members were briefed on the AHA's 2011-2013 strategic plan, which reflects a number of key initiatives in which the Association is engaged on behalf of its members and the field, as well as strategies to strengthen its own operational efficiency. Members were asked to share the initiatives they have found to be most effective in improving performance around central line-associated blood stream infections, readmissions, and mortality measures. Members were also asked for input on tools and resources AHA could provide to help meet these goals. For more information about AHA's strategic plan,

please visit: <http://www.aha.org/aha/about/index.html>

Stabilizing the Debt: A number of transformational forces and the imperative to change federal spending patterns to stabilize the national debt amidst significant upheaval in how the general public perceives the role of the government, will profoundly affect the health care sector in the years ahead. To foster appreciation of some of the hard fiscal choices ahead, members were asked to complete a survey on how to reduce the nation's debt. The on-line exercise, *Stabilize the Debt: an Online Exercise in Hard Choices*, walked members through different budget options for reducing the debt that included increasing and/or decreasing government spending. Members shared their responses and discuss alternatives. To access the exercise, please visit <http://crfb.org/stabilizethedebt>.



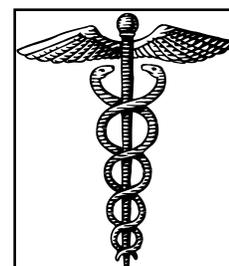
2010 Long-Range Policy Committee Report: A Call to Action: Creating a Culture of Health:

Health for Life initiative identified a focus on wellness as one of the five essential elements to achieving better health and health care in America. Given its importance in transforming our health care system, AHA's Long-Range Policy Committee spent last year identifying successful practices in hospital employee health and wellness. The report is a call to action for hospitals to be leaders in creating a culture of health, and to serve as role models for healthy living and fitness for their communities. The committee found in its survey of almost 900 hospitals on employee health and wellness

activities that over 86 percent have an employee health and wellness program but that there is a tremendous variety in hospital program offerings.

Members were asked to review the report and discuss initiatives to improve employee health and wellness and how incentives might be created to encourage employee participation. You may access the report at <http://www.hret.org/whatsnew/resources/creating-a-culture-of-health.pdf>.

AHA's Physician Leadership Initiatives: The AHA has been developing strategies and resources to reach out to physicians as they become more involved in the administrative and clinical leadership of a hospital. AHA's Board of Trustees formed a Physician Leadership Initiative Task Force to provide advice and guidance in identifying resources and engagement strategies specifically for physicians who work closely with our hospital members. The task force recommended that AHA adopt four engagement strategies to achieve more collaborative working relationships with physicians: education, quality and safety, leadership development, and advocacy and public policy.



For more information about the topics covered in these highlights or on the AHA Section for Metro Hospitals, contact John T. Supplitt, senior director, at 312-422-3306 or jsupplitt@aha.org.