



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

6400 Goldsboro Road, Suite 450, Bethesda, Maryland 20817-5846; P: 301-263-9000; F: 301-263-9025

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2007-2008

President

AMY E. FOXX-ORENSTEIN, D.O., FACG
Rochester, Minnesota
507-538-7637

President-Elect

EAMONN M.M. QUIGLEY, M.D., FACG
Cork, Ireland
353-214-901-228

Vice President

PHILIP O. KATZ, M.D., FACG
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
215-456-8217

Secretary

RONALD J. VENDER, M.D., FACG
Hamden, Connecticut
203-281-4463

Treasurer

DELBERT L. CHUMLEY, M.D., FACG
San Antonio, Texas
210-614-1234

Immediate Past President

DAVID A. JOHNSON, M.D., FACG
Norfolk, Virginia
757-466-0165

Past President

JACK A. DI PALMA, M.D., FACG
Mobile, Alabama
251-660-5555

Director, ACG Institute

EDGAR ACHKAR, M.D., FACG
Cleveland, Ohio
216-444-6523

Co-Editors, *The American Journal of
Gastroenterology*

JOEL E. RICHTER, M.D., MACG
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
215-707-5069

NICHOLAS J. TALLEY, M.D., Ph.D., FACG
Jacksonville, Florida
904-953-2814

Editor, *Nature Clinical Practice
Gastroenterology & Hepatology*

STEPHEN B. HANAUER, M.D., FACG
Chicago, Illinois
773-834-7308

Chair, Board of Governors

FRANCIS A. FARRAYE, M.D., M.Sc., FACG
Boston, Massachusetts
617-638-8339

Vice Chair, Board of Governors

SAMIR A. SHAH, M.D., FACG
Providence, Rhode Island
401-274-4800

Trustee for Administrative Affairs

JOHN W. POPP, Jr., M.D., FACG
Columbia, South Carolina
803-782-5850

TRUSTEES

CAROL A. BURKE, M.D., FACG
Cleveland, Ohio
216-444-6864

EDWARD L. CATTALU, Jr., M.D., FACG
Germantown, Tennessee
901-747-3630, ext. 337

ANTHONY N. KALLOO, M.D., FACG
Baltimore, Maryland
410-955-9697

SUNANDA V. KANE, M.D., MSPH, FACG
Rochester, Minnesota
507-284-0959

W. ELWYN LYLES, M.D., FACG
Alexandria, Louisiana
318-473-8188

IRVING M. PIKE, M.D., FACG
Virginia Beach, Virginia
757-523-9755

HARRY E. SARLES, Jr., M.D., FACG
Garland, Texas
972-487-8855, ext. 106

LAWRENCE R. SCHILLER, M.D., FACG
Dallas, Texas
214-820-2671

MITCHELL L. SHIFFMAN, M.D., FACG
Richmond, Virginia
804-828-5484

ROY K.H. WONG, M.D., FACG
Washington, DC
202-782-7256

Executive Director

BRADLEY C. STILLMAN

July 28, 2008

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
703 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bingaman:

On behalf of the American College of Gastroenterology, I am writing to you to endorse the Obesity, Prevention, Treatment and Research Act of 2008. This comprehensive legislation is sorely needed to address the national health threat of overweight and obesity. The College is committed to making a meaningful contribution to the nation's public health policy, clinical practice and clinical research relating to obesity.

The American College of Gastroenterology is a physician organization representing gastroenterologists and other gastrointestinal specialists. Founded in 1932, the College currently numbers nearly 11,000 physicians among its membership of health care providers of gastroenterology specialty care. Although the vast majority of these physicians are gastroenterologists, the College's membership also includes surgeons, pathologists, hepatologists, and other specialists in various aspects of the overall treatment of digestive diseases and conditions. The College has chosen to focus its activities on clinical gastroenterology – the issues confronting the gastrointestinal specialist in treatment of patients. The primary activities of the College have been, and continue to be, educational efforts directed at promoting and optimizing quality care including education.

Our members are on the front line in diagnosing and treating patients with a range of digestive diseases and complications directly related to obesity, particularly colorectal and esophageal cancer, Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), gallbladder disease and complications of bariatric surgery, including nutritional deficiencies and other adverse effects. In the future, gastroenterologists may play an even greater role in treating obesity, not just managing its complications, as the understanding of the GI tract's role in the control of appetite grows and as new interventions and novel therapeutic approaches related to the gut emerge.

To date, coverage barriers have often prevented physicians from offering overweight or obese patients the full range of known effective treatments. The bill's inclusion of coverage in various federal programs including Medicare of medical nutrition therapy and counseling is key and will encourage greater physician screening for overweight and obesity. In the coming years, there will be new pharmacologic and endoscopic treatments for obesity, and it will also be important for public and private payers to make timely and evidence-based determinations about their coverage as well. We also appreciate the legislation's emphasis on improved labeling for foods and efforts to increase physical activity so that we can better educate our patients.

Annual Scientific Meeting and Postgraduate Course
October 3 – 8, 2008, Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, Orlando, Florida
www.acgmeetings.org

The College supports the legislation's creation of the United State Council on Overweight & Obesity Prevention (USCO-OP) as well as grants for the prevention and treatment of obesity. As physicians we are driven by the level of the clinical evidence. However, the federal investment in the development of the evidence base around obesity – despite its prevalence -- has been disappointing and disjointed to date. The USCO-OP can lay the groundwork to address these challenges.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues towards the enactment of this vitally important and comprehensive legislation. Please don't hesitate to contact me or Julie Cantor-Weinberg, Vice President, Public Policy (301.263.9000 or jcantorw@acg.gi.org) to let us know how we may best assist your efforts.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Foxx-Orenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" being the most prominent.

Amy Foxx-Orenstein, D.O, FACC
President