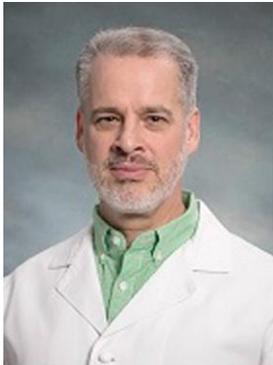




A Message from Your PaACC President



Vincent Figueredo, MD, FACC: Each fall, the ACC hosts its annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. The conference draws cardiologists and cardiovascular team members from all over the country to learn the “inside story” from our lobbyists, discuss strategies regarding advocacy for ourselves and our patients, and visit legislators and staff on Capitol Hill. It provides an invaluable opportunity for networking, up-to-date education, exchange of ideas, and most importantly, advocacy.

This year, the PaACC delegation had 27 members attend the conference. This is the largest PaACC contingent ever, the largest delegation at the 2018 conference, and the 2nd the largest delegation at the conference ever! Our interactions were well received, and we were heard! A special thanks to Dr. Bill Van Decker, who led our PA team, helping us with his extensive legislative knowledge and experience on the hill.

Our focus was to connect with our politicians on three topics. Our PA team did a great job relaying this information to the legislators and their staff. A special shout out to the record number of FITs who attended and who relayed compelling stories that connected with those we met.

The three topics of focus were:

1. Foster medical innovation and research through robust funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We specifically asked them to cosponsor H.R. 3592 to promote heart health and provide grants through the NIH and CDC to conduct research on cardiovascular disease and other heart ailments among South Asian populations living in the U.S. We also asked them to (or thanked them for) support the passage of H.R. 1222/S. 477 to enhance and expand congenital heart disease research and surveillance infrastructure at the NIH and CDC.

2. Exercise careful oversight of issues that contribute to administrative burden and detract from patient care, including undue limitation on access to medication and other necessary therapies, prior authorization and lack of electronic health record (EHR) interoperability. Ensure the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are interfacing with medical societies and physician practices to effectively minimize the adverse impact of these burdens on health care providers and patients.

In the House we specifically asked our representatives to consider joining the Congressional sign-on letter to CMS, led by Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN) and Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), requesting review of prior authorization under Medicare Advantage.

3. We thanked members for their votes in favor of the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018*, which addressed top cardiovascular priorities, including supervision of cardiac rehabilitation by physician assistants, nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists beginning in 2024; simplification of the Quality Payment

Program (QPP); additional funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); authorization of increased funding for the NIH, the FDA and the CDC; and elimination of the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB).

We felt like we were heard. Spending time in the offices of your legislators makes a difference. While we all felt like this year was a success, we encourage more of you to join us next year – save the date for November 2-5! It is important, interesting, and fun. Let's be the largest state team next year!

Congratulations to these 2018 award winners

PAMED International Voluntary Service Award:

Daniel Mascarenhas, MD, FACC

PAMED Top Physicians Under 40:

Nikhil Jaik, MBBS, FACC, UPMC Pinnacle

Michael Pfeiffer, MD, FACC, Penn State Health Medical Center's Heart and Vascular Institute

Amit Varma, MD, PhD, FACC, The Heart Group of Lancaster General Health

Christopher Wenger, DO, FACC, The Heart Group of Lancaster General Health

Free ACC.19 Registration:

CVT: Elaine Strohl, PA-C, AACC

FIT: Sheela Krishnan, MD

Physician: Yuchi Han, MD, FACC

**Join the PaACC delegation at ACC.19
in New Orleans March 16-18! Register today.**

Watch your email for information about a PaACC mixer at ACC.19!



Out and About with the PaACC FITs

Riaz Rahman, MD & Aditi Kalla, MD: Following our highly successful Western PA FIT Winter event, there was a lot of enthusiasm amongst the fellows for another meeting.

The spring event took place on May 23, 2018 from 6 pm to 9 pm at the LeMont Restaurant in Pittsburgh. It was an extreme success. Dr. Craig Alpert and Dr. Venmathi Indramohan, both attached to the Allegheny Health Network, and both recent fellowship graduates, spoke to a group of 25 fellows from

western PA about easing the transition from fellowship to faculty and some of the obstacles that fellows may encounter. Dr. Alpert works in an academic setting and Dr. Indramohan works in a non-academic environment. Their insight was highly beneficial and well received amongst the fellows.

The Eastern PA FIT fall event was also quite successful! Dr. Leandro Slipczuk from Einstein Medical Center spoke on “Cardiovascular Imaging and Lipid Management – Two Sides of the Same Coin” at Estia Restaurant in September in Philadelphia. The talk provided updates on advanced lipoprotein testing and novel imaging studies with the goal of improving preventative cardiology. Dr. Slipczuk’s talk was an excellent educational experience! The event was attended by cardiology fellows from multiple programs around Philadelphia and provided a platform to build a stronger FIT community within Eastern Pennsylvania.

Both the Eastern and Western FITs convened at Harrisburg, PA on September 29th, 2018 for a day of fun and education. Dr. Daniel Burkhoff started off the day with a fantastic lecture on Advanced Clinical Hemodynamics. Following this, the annual statewide jeopardy competition took place. The competition was fierce with University of Pennsylvania vanquishing first place. They will represent Pennsylvania at the National Jeopardy Event at ACC.19 in March 2019. A big thanks to all of our participants and audience members!

These events were only possible with the generous support of the PaACC. Both the Eastern and Western PA delegates plan to have more events soon. Stay tuned!

Congratulations to our PaACC FIT Jeopardy and Virtual Poster Competition winners!

PaACC FIT Jeopardy: Penn Cardiology

Senthil Selvaraj, MD, Michael Ayers, MD, Ashwin Nathan, MD, Rim Halaby, MD (alternate)

PaACC FIT Virtual Posters:

1st place: Amber Makani, MD, UPMC

2nd place (tie): Ahmad Masri, MD, UPMC

2nd place (tie): Andreas Kyvernitakis, MD, Allegheny Health Network



**Penn Cardiology
FIT Jeopardy Winners!**

In addition to our regional FIT meetings, on September 29th, PaACC held a state wide PaACC FIT Jeopardy Competition in conjunction with an educational event held that morning. In between the educational event on Advanced Clinical Hemodynamics, presented by ZOLL, and the Jeopardy Competition, we announced the three winners of our Virtual Poster Competition.

A big thank you is owed to:

- ZOLL and speaker Daniel Burkhoff, MD, PhD;
- Our Virtual Poster judges (Andrew Waxler, MD, FACC, James Harvey, MD, & Paul Tolerico, MD, FACC);
- The 8 teams from AGH, UPMC, LVHN, Temple, UPenn, Penn State, Geisinger, and Einstein who competed in Jeopardy;
- And our Jeopardy volunteers - Victor Ferrari, MD, FACC (judge), Pravin Patel, MD, FACC (moderator), Andrew Waxler, MD, FACC (judge), Suresh Mulukutla, MD, FACC (judge), Sri Adusumalli, MD (coordinator), Make Kostal, MD (moderator), and Marietta Ambrose, MD, MPH, FACC (coordinator);

without whom the whole day would not have been possible!



Meet our new FITs Elect!

Mehrdad Ghahramani, MD FIT Elect – East

Dr. Ghahramani completed his undergraduate education at Penn State University before venturing to Ross University for medical school. As a medical student, he developed a passion for global health which prompted him to rotate through hospitals in Kenya. In 2014, he returned to Penn State to complete his internal medicine residency. During residency, he took an interest in medical education and was elected as the representative for GME's Resident Council. As a resident, he also continued to pursue his interest in global health and cardiology by rotating as a visiting resident at the hospital where the first heart transplant was performed in Cape Town, South Africa.

Throughout his training, Dr. Ghahramani has also been involved with various research projects and twice he was the recipient of the Intramural Research Training Award from the National Institutes of Health.

Mehrdad is currently a cardiology fellow at Penn State, pursuing a career in academic cardiology, cardiac imaging and outcomes research. More recently, he has also taken a keen interest in the use of social media in cardiology.



As a FIT representative, he plans to work on improving fellows' engagement in the chapter, get involved with policy advocacy and advance FITs access to various educational opportunities.



Anum Saeed, MD
FIT Elect – West

Current Training: 1st year fellow of Cardiology, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

Prior Training:

Residency: Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, Brown University

Fellowship: Atherosclerosis and Lipidology, Baylor College of Medicine

Interest: Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, Heart Failure

Dr. Saeed is delighted to be chosen as the PaACC FIT Elect for the West. Being a FIT Elect provides a unique opportunity to interact with other FITs, create a standardized approach to engage FITs in the mission of the ACC and be a voice of all trainees at a local

state level.

Her aim is to encourage active engagement of FITs to generate discussion and more productivity in development of professional career pathways (during and after fellowship training), research/scholarly collaborations and improvement of FIT social interaction (in-person at chapter meetings and via social media forums).

PaACC Women-In-Cardiology (WIC) Become Better Negotiators

Ritu Thamman, MD, FACC: PaACC hosted a Woman-in-Cardiology (WIC) event in Philadelphia on August 23, 2018 on negotiations. The idea for this event came almost a year ago after a discussion with Dr. Nosheen Reza, a cardiology fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Monika Sanghavi, also at the University of Pennsylvania. We obtained Zahav for the dinner and began organizing this negotiations event last spring. I contacted Smita Mukherjee, PhD who was at Wharton Business School and Dr. Meryl Cohen, the Associate Chief of the Division of Cardiology at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Dr. Sanghavi asked Dr. Joyce Wald to join our panel discussion as well. [Read on](#) to hear more about this successful event.



CVT Corner



Christine Kindler, PA-C: It is with mixed feelings that I compose my last contribution to the Heart of the Matter newsletter, as I complete the final months of service as your CVT Liaison for East Pennsylvania. First, I would like to thank Dr. Vincent Figueredo for introducing me to the PaACC team and asking for my involvement as CVT Liaison 3 years ago. I hadn't been involved with ACC or attended an organized ACC conference since 1998, and I wasn't quite sure what to expect. Any anxieties were quickly relieved as I got to know the rest of the PaACC Executive Council, Maria Elias and the staff. They enthusiastically guided me through what I needed to know as CVT Liaison and they introduced me to my CVT Liaison-West counterpart, Lisa Henry, DNP, who is also a wonderful resource about everything ACC and PaACC.

I recall my first involvement was attending the annual ACC Legislative Conference in September of 2016 in Washington DC. It was my first venture into advocacy. That first conference flooded me with more acronyms than I thought was possible to even come up with...MACRA, MIPS, QPP, in addition to learning who's who on The Hill. I learned through our experienced physician advocacy champions, Dr. Bill Van Decker, Dr. Lee Goldberg, Dr. Andrew Waxler, and Dr. Richard Leshner, that, to be an advocate, all you had to do is to bring your authentic self and your patient experiences to your Representatives and Senators. The ACC advocacy team leaders put on an awesome conference where you learn how to leverage social media to enhance your communication and and learn about the causes of issues that affect our industry and patients. They teach you what issues are important to your Representatives and Senators and how to bring our issues to light with their legislative team, so they can best understand how their legislative actions directly impact our industry and our patients. It has been a humbling experience to see that our efforts over the past three years have enabled Congress to pass laws to increase NIH funding for medical research, pass the Balanced Budget Act which honored our request to have physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists supervise cardiac rehabilitation programs beginning in 2024, and simplify EHR Meaningful Use program by striking the requirement for measures to be made " more stringent" over time, to name a few. Ironically, all of this was accomplished while getting to know your colleagues from across the State and the U.S.

This year, the PaACC Advocacy team was able to meet again in Washington to discuss with Senators Casey and Toomey supporting the passage of S. 477 to enhance and expand congenital heart disease research and surveillance infrastructure at the NIH and CDC. We were fortunate to have PaACC FIT members present who were able to passionately and eloquently describe their personal and professional experiences as clinicians, researchers and cardiac patients themselves and how further funding can positively impact the growth of research efforts and improved patient care. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet with the House of Representatives for the Eastern Districts of Pennsylvania due to a seat vacancy and the upcoming election. Please stay tuned for further follow up on how we can influence the incoming Representatives to join the Congressional sign on Roe-Bera letter, which will request review of prior authorization under Medicare Advantage.

To close, I will say I have been honored to have this opportunity and to meet my extended Cardiology family in Pennsylvania and across the U.S. I will be sad to not be as involved on the monthly calls and perhaps not communicating with all of you on an as frequent basis, but I plan on attending future Legislative Conferences. Through PaACC, I have met other advance practice colleagues, and I have been invited to be a part of the ACC PA-NP Competency Writing Committee, and I am hoping that I will continue to maintain connections with PaACC through this activity. My goal this year is to achieve my AACC designation before I exit my post. My other goal is to continue to encourage you to encourage your other colleagues in cardiovascular medicine to strongly consider pursuing ACC membership. I will always be available to help guide any CVT through the membership process and show you how ACC is truly your professional home.

Please welcome my colleague from Bryn Mawr Hospital, Elaine Strohl, PAC/AACC, will be assuming the role of CVT Liaison-East. Elaine has been a PA in Cardiology for over 10 years, is a graduate of Dusquesne University and focuses on inpatient cardiology at Bryn Mawr Hospital as well as managing the heart failure clinic for her practice. I am proud that she has already jumped in and attended both ACC.18 this past Spring in Orlando and the recent Legislative Conference. I wish her the best of luck for the 2019 term. Again, many thanks for the past 3 years as your CVT Liaison-East Pennsylvania.

PaACC Advocacy Update

Andrew Waxler, MD, FACC: As the next chapter evolves in the relationship between Pennsylvania physicians and the health insurance industry, Highmark is rolling out a new program that many physicians may find rather concerning. Using a cardiology group's TIN, Highmark is now ranking the cardiologists (as a group) in a given area based on their cost of care. Highmark then publishes a list of the region's top 75% of cardiologists, based solely upon financial efficiency, and this list will be given to the PCPs in that area. This new program is spreading from the western part of the state eastward, having reached Berks County (not yet in Philadelphia).



It is not entirely clear how else Highmark will use this list/data. Furthermore, it is equally unclear if PCPs will be forced to only refer to those cardiologists on the list; however, apparently, they will be encouraged to use it.

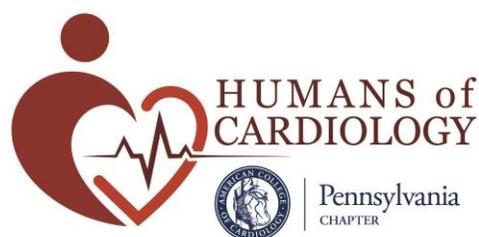
Highmark apparently will attempt to account for groups that take care of sicker patients (such as transplant centers), but it is unclear how fair/accurate this will be. It's not a stretch to think that programs like this could have unintended consequences as cardiologists might choose to avoid the sicker, and thus more expensive, patients.

Several of us from the PaACC - Bill Van Decker, Jerry Naccarelli, Srinivas Murali, and I - had a constructive meeting with Highmark a couple of weeks ago to try to iron out some of these issues. At this point there are still more questions than answers, but hopefully we will be able to have some degree of influence in this potentially problematic evolving program.

Keep your eyes and ears open for more information going forward. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, looking out for the interests of our patients and our colleagues, and will keep you updated.

AMERICAN COLLEGE of CARDIOLOGY
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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2018
New York Hilton — Midtown
COURSE DIRECTOR
Valentin Fuster, MD, PhD, MAACC
New York State

Humans of Cardiology is Now Open to All PaACC Members!



"[...] his story gives meaning to what we do and reminds us that medicine saves, team work prevails, and hope is always there".

"These are women in cardiology: intelligent, powerful, strong women who are tireless in their work ethic".

"And yet that memory continually inspires me to thoughtfully connect with those around me, even on the most challenging days".

Do you also have a story to share? Connect with your fellow PaACC members by sharing a story of your triumphs and challenges in the world of Cardiology.

To view past issues, [visit the Humans of Cardiology page](#) of our website.

Submit Your Own Humans of Cardiology Story