

March 1, 2003

Dear Arizona Chapter Member:

As you likely know, Congress passed in their Omnibus Budget Bill of 2003, a provision devoting \$54 million over ten years to correct the errors that have plagued the Medicare physician payment formula. This change is expected to result in a 1.6% increase in Medicare fees with an estimated 2.2% increase in payments to cardiologists in 2003. Until this bill was passed, we as physicians were expected to absorb a 4.6% cut, which would likely have been more than 9% for cardiologists. This successful outcome can be credited to the hard work of physicians groups working in Washington, including the ACC. Our newly formed political action committee likely played a significant role and I believe should be strongly supported. The next major fight ahead is in the area of tort reform, which President Bush has strongly supported and for which there is considerable support on Capitol Hill.

Your newly elected Board of Councilors met on January 18th in Phoenix for a very productive strategic planning session. Among the goals set were a chapter-wide educational retreat which is scheduled for October 18 – 19, at the Hilton Sedona Resort, to create a Speaker's Bureau to reach out to the community and to finally get our Arizona Chapter web site up and running to provide useful information and an avenue for dialogue on important issues.

On this last point, I would strongly urge everyone who has not given an email address to make this available to the Chapter. I am enclosing a form to be use as a template for your practice information. It is my concept that this will provide a vehicle for ACC members in other cities to locate a referring cardiologist when one of their patients moves to Arizona. You may complete the enclosed form and fax to our administrative office at (602) 242-2515 or check our web site at www.acc-az.org, where this form will soon be available online to complete.

Once again, I would be very happy to hear from any of you at my email address: pmaki@bcardiology.com.

Respectfully,



Peter C. Maki, MD, FACC
Chapter President/Governor for Arizona