



# College Advantage

A Publication of the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

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## Mapping the College's future

New College strategic plan will advance our mission, elevate our profile, and enhance services and support for our members and patients

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American  
**College**  
of Allergy, Asthma  
& Immunology



Luz S. Fonacier, MD, FAAAAI,  
President, American College of  
Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

# Diversity is strength

Welcome to 2021 – the year we all have looked forward to as a way of putting 2020 behind us. I commend our College leaders who navigated us through the past difficult months. And this speaks to how nimble we are as an organization, with our leaders and experts strategically positioned to monitor and quickly respond to every event and scenario.

Out of trying times and experiences comes the opportunity to move

forward on a new path illuminated by what we’ve learned. I am honored to lead the College at this moment in our history. Many months ago, even before COVID-19, I chose to focus on a theme of diversity and innovation in our profession, and there could not be a better time to talk about these things.

As I said in my remarks after taking on the president’s role in November, a piece of RNA brought the world down to our knees. Yet COVID-19 forced our specialty to innovate, diversify and expand in unimaginable ways. For example, having no choice but to forgo gathering for our Annual Scientific Meeting, we devised and developed a virtual experience that delivered wonderful learning and allowed us to connect as peers. Examples of positives that came from this virtual meeting: we had the biggest attendance in any U.S. allergy meeting last year (more than 3,280 registrants) and we had attendees from 38 different countries!

The innovation and diversification will continue. As I’ve mentioned in previous communications, a goal for the College is diversity as strength. Whether that means expanding the organizations we work with, the topics we address, or the way that our membership represents and reflects the diverse population we serve – all of these are positive steps. Further, if we are to continue to thrive, the world demands that we adapt

and diversify as far as the types of conditions we treat and the approaches to treatment.

This month we introduce our Racial Disparities Resource Center, a College microsite that offers a curated collection of content to assist our members and others in health care. The goal is to close some of the gaps that exist in understanding conditions and challenges experienced within specific population groups, and to provide patients with the most appropriate care and treatments. You can read more about it in this issue of College Advantage.

We also recently created and activated our COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. The College leaders serving on this task force are some of the top experts in the country around this topic, with substantive professional experience running immunology or vaccine programs; involvement with clinical trials; knowledge of the international COVID-19 situation; and much more. The group’s charge is to disseminate knowledge in real time for fellow allergists and immunologists, and to provide recommendations and tools for communicating with patients about the vaccine products, risks and benefits.

One of the first jobs of the task force was to respond urgently to concerns about the risk for allergic reaction to the first mRNA vaccines that were approved. As each product is introduced to the public, and as more information becomes available about the vaccines, College resources will be updated. The task force stands ready to assist our membership in navigating this phase of the pandemic – which, I hope, will progress to decreasing cases and deaths in the US and the world.

I look forward to sharing more examples of the good work of your organization in the coming year. As the world continues to develop at a rapid pace, we will continue to develop resources to help meet your needs as practitioners.

Connect with us at [acaai.org](http://acaai.org) or through:



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American College of Allergy,  
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85 W. Algonquin Road, Suite 550  
Arlington Heights, IL, 60005  
Phone: 847.427.1200  
[info@acaai.org](mailto:info@acaai.org)

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## ADVOCACY ADVANTAGE

By James L. Sublett, MD, FACAAL, executive director, advocacy and governmental affairs

# 2020 – Noted!

## Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Advocacy Council continued to work for practicing allergists

Early on the morning of Dec. 9, 2020, the news media began reporting that “anaphylactoid” reactions had occurred with the much-anticipated rollout of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in the United Kingdom. Recognizing the potential impact on the public’s acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S., the ACAAL leadership, the College’s Advocacy Council, staff, and Washington advisors leaped into action. The news was dire...a warning that anyone who had allergies (as expressed at the time) “to anything” may be at severe risk if they received the vaccine. By late morning, the College had released its first statement on the incidents.

This is a typical example of the Advocacy Council and College leadership working together to provide timely information to our membership, enabling them to quickly respond to issues that arise in our specialty.

The year 2020 was to be a special year for the College and the Advocacy Council -- the culmination of Vision 2020. Never could we have visualized the payoff of this five-year-long strategic initiative. For the Advocacy Council, it resulted in the reorganization of the College’s governance to include the Practice Management Committee and the House of Delegates (HOD). The HOD’s mission is to become the grass roots advocates for allergists at the local and state level.

The Advocacy Council and the Practice Management Committee were able to develop and offer, very early in the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of webinars to help practicing allergists navigate the rough waters of the pandemic. The College joined a bulk-purchasing consortium of medical specialties - in partnership with Project N95 (PN95) - a non-profit that matches suppliers of personal protective equipment with providers who need it. We launched the weekly COVID-19 Newsbrief, and the online COVID-19 Resource Center, providing the most up-to-date information on the pandemic.

Later in the year, a series of regional House of Delegate Town Hall Meetings allowed state and local delegates to present and discuss issues relevant to the practicing allergist as was never done before. We advocated to Congress, the Department of Health and Human Services, and major third-party payors for the inclusion of telehealth services as a covered benefit during the public health emergency and beyond, with parity to in-office evaluation and management visits. And we asked the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to relax criteria regarding prior authorization and step therapy, as well as advocated against narrow networks and surprise billing.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Advocacy Council continued to work for practicing allergists in many other ways. We wrote, signed on to or directly contacted Congress and/or HHS about more than 50 letters advocating for various important issues affecting the practicing allergists and their patients, including The School-based Allergies and Asthma Management Act. The College worked with the bill’s sponsors, Representatives Hoyer (D-MD) and Roe (R-TN), to craft language strengthening the role of allergists in the care and management of our school-aged allergy and asthma patients. Our efforts paid off, as it was recently signed into law.

Among all of these crowning achievements, in addition to our work on COVID-19 issues, we achieved a review of the College’s Advanced Payment Model by the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC). This HHS committee unanimously recommended that our Asthma APM receive special attention and further consideration. The Asthma APM is the first PTAC recommended specialty-focused model for a chronic condition.

As you read this we are well into a new year, the pandemic is approaching twelve months, we are in the midst of the largest public vaccination campaign since polio, and the Advocacy Council continues to work for you, the practicing allergist.

**The year 2020? Noted!**



James L. Sublett, MD

# COVID-19 support continues

The COVID-19 pandemic has evolved in many ways over the past year - some more predictable than others. The College has been at the forefront of responding and providing help, resources and advocacy for our members and patients, and that will continue unabated as long as there is a need.

College leaders include many top national experts who have remained ready and able to provide expert advice and information during this pandemic. Most recently, we convened a special COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force to provide timely recommendations and support in communicating with patients about the vaccine products as they become available. The task force is working effectively with other medical organizations on this effort, while ensuring that information is responsive to the concerns of A/I patients and practices.

College activities, resources and communications around COVID-19 will continue to adapt and respond to emerging concerns. Below is a recap of services and resources provided in 2020, which will continue to be offered as long as the medical community is challenged by this virus.

**COVID-19 Resource Center on the College Learning Connection** - Continually updated information about the virus and its spread; prevention tips; advice for keeping medical offices safe for patients and staff; financial help for businesses; PPE sourcing; communication tools; and up-to-date information about vaccines, tests and treatments. Find it at [education.accai.org/coronavirus](http://education.accai.org/coronavirus).

**Federal Response Updates** - Weekly roundups of COVID-19 developments in federal agencies and Congress

(available in the COVID-19 Resource Center and on the College home page).

**COVID-19 NewsBrief** - Weekly e-newsletter delivering the most relevant information and opportunities for members.

**COVID-19 Patient Page** - Information for the public, including recommendations about face coverings, vaccines, asthma medication and more. Find it at [acaai.org/news/important-covid-19-information-those-asthma-and-or-allergies](http://acaai.org/news/important-covid-19-information-those-asthma-and-or-allergies).

**Advocacy Activities** - The Advocacy Council has submitted many requests to CMS and Congress in an effort to protect allergists and patients during the pandemic. Watch for updates in your email box.

The College also works actively with the media to ensure timely and accurate information about the virus is shared with the public. Recent stories featuring our recommendations and experts have appeared in Newsweek; US News and World Report; CBS News; HealthDay and many other national outlets.

Continue to watch your email and College social media feeds for ongoing updates on information and resources related to COVID-19.

## Share your pandemic experience

Last summer, we published a story on College members' experiences during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Readers were moved by the personal stories shared by allergists and clinical staff.

As the pandemic continues, the College would like to share more member experiences now that we are many months into the pandemic. Have you or your loved ones tested positive or become ill from the virus? How has

your practice adapted? Have you been on the frontlines of treating COVID-19 patients? As a physician, what has been the most challenging aspect of this protracted public health emergency? Please consider sharing your experiences by emailing Amy Romanelli, member communications manager, at [amyromanelli@acaai.org](mailto:amyromanelli@acaai.org) by Feb. 19. The article will appear in the spring issue of Advantage.





# Beyond Vision 2020: Charting the course for 2021-2023

**The College has developed its new strategic plan that builds on the success of Vision 2020. It will further advance our mission, elevate our profile and offerings, engage members and educate the public about the specialty of allergy and immunology.**

“Vision 2020 was truly transformational for the College, and we are keen on continuing to build on the momentum gained over the last five years,” says Michael Blaiss, MD, FAAAAI, chair of the College’s Vision Advisory Group. “An important aspect of our 2021-2023 strategic planning process was to use a grassroots approach where every entity – from committees to councils to our board – has had an opportunity to contribute.”

The plan is based on an extensive discovery process that was conducted in 2020 to ensure we’ve heard from all of our key stakeholders. We’ve taken into account the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on our practices (as gleaned from our surveys) to develop goals, strategies and tactics that will help the College to meet immediate member needs as we adjust to our new normal.

The same principles that guided our goals under Vision 2020 are also at the core of the new plan:

- Leadership: Foster a strategic, adaptive, sustainable and data-driven organization.
- Education: Develop tailored and member-driven educational offerings for every career stage and learning style.
- Membership: Enhance the member experience and deliver superior value.
- Advocacy: Serve as the leading voice for the profession and individual practitioners.

We’ve introduced our 2021 goals, strategies and tactics in January, and we’ll continue to build on these as we flesh out

the plan for 2022 and 2023 with input from relevant councils and committees. By creating a “living” document that is refined from year to year, we’ll ensure the College continues to stay responsive to immediate member needs, particularly in light of the evolving medical practice landscape amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following are a few highlights of our strategic priorities for 2021:

- Better understand the demographics of the modern practicing allergist; develop tailored resources to support distinct member/practice types and needs.
- Continue to position the College as the leading organization advocating on behalf of the practicing allergist and safeguarding the specialty.
- More effectively communicate the College’s value and accomplishments, including advocacy wins for the specialty.
- Continue to raise public awareness of the specialty and of ACAAI as the preeminent resource for patient education on allergies and asthma.
- Build on the successes of the College’s Annual Scientific Meeting, and provide more learning and networking opportunities for members throughout the year.
- Explore how the College can further its efforts related to inclusiveness and diversity in order to: ensure members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives participate in the College’s activities, committees and leadership; and support members in understanding and addressing health disparities in their practices.
- Look for opportunities to enhance the College’s governance structure and reduce unnecessary internal bureaucracy that limits our responsiveness and efficiency.



COMMUNITY ADVANTAGE

*Spotlighting health equity*

## New College resource on racial disparities aims to improve care for A/I patients

**The College recently launched a new web-based resource with an interest in health equity. The new ACAAI Racial Disparities Resource Center provides a central location on our website for curated College information, assets and resources about racial disparities affecting our patients and their treatment.**

With a strong focus on asthma and allergy patients, the goal of this new resource is to explore the factors and challenges that contribute to gaps in care for patients based on racial and ethnic considerations. In addition, it serves to provide training, education and recommendations to help address these gaps and promote health equity in the field of allergy/immunology. The resource center is accessible on the member website at [college.acaii.org/racial-disparities-resource-center/](https://college.acaii.org/racial-disparities-resource-center/). College members can access the resources and many are also available to the public.

Visitors to the resource center will find articles and studies from the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*; webinars and recorded sessions from the College's Annual Scientific Meeting; messages from College leaders; information about grant opportunities and much more. Thoughtfully curated reports and program information from external organizations, including government agencies and lay organizations, also are included.

Just as important, members can find updates on what the College is doing to promote diversity in our membership and to improve awareness of our specialty among all medical students so that all population groups will be well represented throughout the profession. This enhances culturally competent care for all patients. You'll also find information about the Allergists' Foundation work to fund projects addressing community health.

Many organizations have projects underway to improve health equity, and this means that the College will have frequent opportunities to add new assets and information to the Center, as well as to connect with other groups who can help improve care for A/I patients.

*The ACAAI Racial Disparities Resource Center is supported by Sanofi Genzyme and Regeneron.*

# The College's member website has a new look

Our new design highlights the resources you need in an easy-to-navigate format.

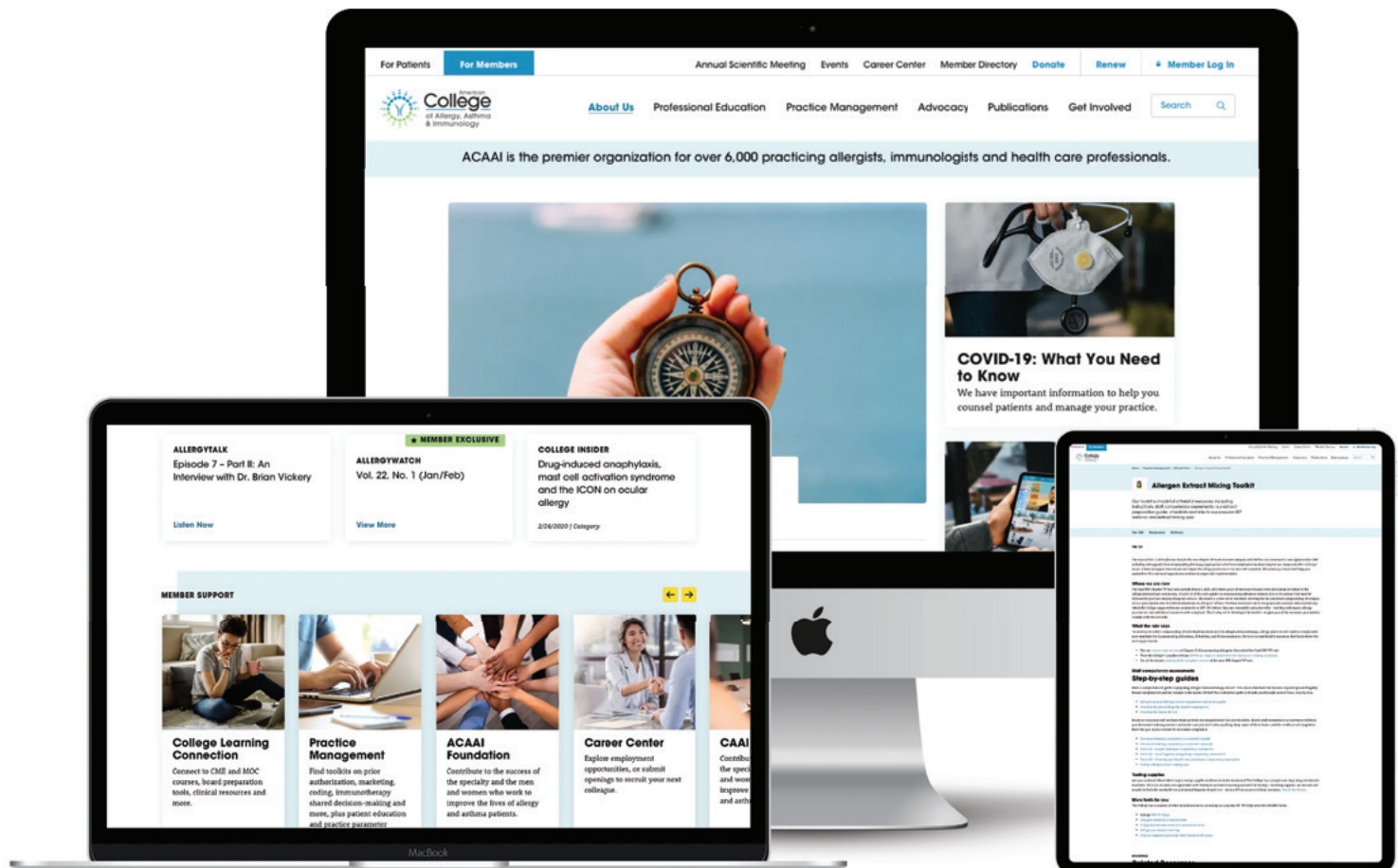
Last fall the College unveiled a new member website. We've refreshed our look with a clean, modern design that emphasizes the content and resources you come to the site to find. And it's not just a new look! We've made improvements to the site to ensure a user-friendly experience.

Here are some highlights:

- **Improved search capabilities.** The new search engine delivers a more relevant list of results than ever before. We'll use search engine data to help improve your results in the future.

- **Better menus.** New expanded dropdown menus offer quick access to more key information, from committee and council rosters to ways to get involved with the College.
- **A completely redesigned homepage.** Our curated selection of timely content helps you more easily stay up to date with important information and the newest resources.
- **Read more.** Links to related content appear at the bottom of many articles and other pages, so you can easily dig deeper into the topics that interest you.
- **Share with your friends!** Did you read something in Insider that you'd like your colleagues to see? Look for the social share icons on articles from College and Advocacy Insider to quickly share them via email or your favorite social network.

Our member website features hundreds of valuable practice management resources, professional development tools, and the latest advocacy news. Now they're easier to access! Visit the member site at [college.acaaai.org](http://college.acaaai.org). We're working on an improved public website to be launched this spring. Stay tuned!





# Communicate, engage and educate: How to use social media to boost your practice.





**If you think of social media as just a way to advertise your practice, you need to think again. Allergy practices are now using these channels to communicate with, engage, educate and care for their patients. A recent Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) Stat poll showed that 53% of 448 respondents use social media to engage patients to improve health outcomes. That's a win-win for practices and patients!**

There are lots of ways allergy practices can engage and educate patients through social channels. Here are some ideas:

- Communicate practice COVID-19 information, including safety protocols, mask requirements, virtual check-in options if available, waiting room alternatives, changes in clinic days/hours and telemedicine options.
- Provide daily local pollen and mold counts.
- Remind patients of available services.
- Highlight seasonal allergies and how to treat them.
- Remind patients of importance and availability of flu shots and other immunizations.
- Direct patients to your portal for direct communication with the office/allergist.
- Explain how to prepare for an office visit (ex: allergy testing).
- Provide educational videos and articles.
- Spotlight individual diseases/treatments and educate patients. For example, October is Eczema Awareness Month, Sept. 28 is National Penicillin Allergy Day and May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. Use these events as opportunities to educate patients and promote your services.
- Create short videos featuring your allergists addressing a clinical topic.
- Use patient-focused videos from the College's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/user/allergists](https://youtube.com/user/allergists) featuring top allergy experts addressing a wide variety of topics.
- Share and retweet posts from the College's Facebook ([facebook.com/TheACAAI](https://facebook.com/TheACAAI)) or Twitter ([twitter.com/ACAAI](https://twitter.com/ACAAI)) feeds.
- Provide information on product recalls specific to allergy and asthma patients.

Want to see what this looks like in practice? Check out the Facebook pages of Carolina Asthma & Allergy Center or Atlanta Allergy & Asthma.

"We consider social media an essential tool for reaching our patients and potential patients," explains Robin Panethere, director of marketing and practice development at Atlanta Allergy & Asthma. "Of course, we use it to communicate

general practice information like office moves, closings and special circumstances. But we also use it in a variety of ways that help us engage with and educate our audience." Their practice uses social media in the following ways:

- To share new research and treatment options.
- To share patient testimonials that highlight positive outcomes.
- To encourage adherence to therapies and reinforce the benefits of specialty allergy and asthma care.
- To highlight their providers' involvement in community events and leadership roles in professional organizations and share their public relations efforts. All of these help position them as the experts in their field.
- To remind patients to schedule visits in advance of the season and push out information for back-to-school, flu season, end of year extract orders, etc.
- To promote partner organizations' events and education programs that interest, engage and add value for patients.

"We also utilize paid social features like Facebook ads and boosted posts that allow us to reach beyond our own followers," notes Ms. Panethere.

Have we piqued your interest? The College has the tools to get you started in our Marketing and Patient Materials toolkit at [college.acaaai.org/toolkits/marketing-and-patient-materials-toolkit/](https://college.acaaai.org/toolkits/marketing-and-patient-materials-toolkit/). We have seasonal article templates, patient education FAQs and more. For more details on using social media, check out our webinar "Social Media Strategies for Allergists" found on the College Learning Connection at [education.acaaai.org](https://education.acaaai.org).



# Call for leaders

## Apply for leadership positions of vice president, treasurer and regent.

We're looking for leaders who will help drive the College forward. If you're a College Fellow, consider applying for the following Board of Regents positions: vice president (2021-22) and treasurer (2021-22) and regent (2021-24).

Fellows who have served on College committees or have substantially contributed to other College activities are strongly encouraged to apply. Candidates interested in the positions of vice president and treasurer must have previously served a three-year term on the College Board. Those interested in becoming a regent must have been a College Fellow for at least three years before nomination.

Interested candidates can find the application at [college.acaai.org/regentapp](http://college.acaai.org/regentapp). Completed applications should be emailed to [miriamstandish@acaai.org](mailto:miriamstandish@acaai.org) or mailed to the ACAAI Executive Office. A curriculum vitae and a cover letter indicating any special, professionally relevant information not in the application should be included.

The Nominating Council will review all applications and nominate candidates for the open positions.

**The deadline for submission is Friday, Feb. 12.**





# 2021 – New year, new learning opportunities!

It's time to plan the new year ahead and spotlight some new learning opportunities that are available now or will be in 2021!

## AIM Self-assessment

This first Allergy & Immunology Medicine self-assessment module is designed to help allergy/immunology providers obtain new knowledge, as well as reaffirm existing knowledge. It also helps allergists/immunologists evaluate and maintain their clinical competence. The module consists of 108 case-based, multiple choice questions. Comprehensive discussions provide evidence-based explanations regarding all answer options, as well as provide supporting references from the current literature. The questions address two areas of study (basic science and clinical science) and nine categories (immune mechanisms, cells involved in immune response, immunological disorders, nondisease specific pharmacology/therapeutics, anatomy/physiology/pathology, research principles, hypersensitivity disorders, specific diagnostic modalities, and allergens/antigens). Find the self-assessment at: [education.acaai.org/aimselfassessment](http://education.acaai.org/aimselfassessment).

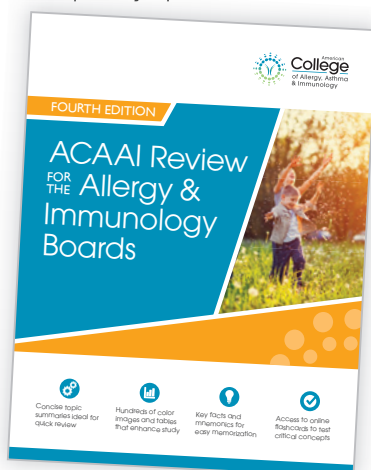
## ACAAI Review for the Allergy & Immunology Boards, Fourth Edition

The College has released the completely updated book, "ACAAI Review for the Allergy & Immunology Boards, Fourth Edition."

This board review book is directed to allergists and immunologists of all levels.

Highlights include:

- A study guide for ABAI examination preparation.
- Concise topic summaries ideal for quick review.



- Hundreds of images and tables that enhance study.
- Key facts and mnemonics for easy memorization.
- Interactive, e-flashcards.
- Availability in in print or online.
- Anaphylaxis Toolkit

The office-based anaphylaxis toolkit was created to offer downloadable resources such as checklists; examples of office policies and procedures regarding management anaphylaxis in the clinic setting; and tools to plan and run a mock anaphylactic event in the clinic setting, including a checklist and three scenarios that can be used by practitioners for mock reactions and trainings.

Order the PDF or print book at [education.acaai.org/brbook](http://education.acaai.org/brbook).

## On Demand ACAAI 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting

Did you miss the first ever virtual ACAAI 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting? No worries! We have collected some of the best sessions from the weekend and are making them available to members who did not register for the virtual meeting.

Review some amazing sessions, test your knowledge, and get CME credit. Find on demand options at: [education.acaai.org/ondemand](http://education.acaai.org/ondemand).

2021 is shaping up to be a great year. Keep visiting the College Learning Connection to see these and other new learning opportunities all year long!



ANNUAL MEETING ADVANTAGE

# A record-breaking Annual Meeting

The College's virtual 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting was the largest U.S. allergy meeting of the year, and a record breaker for the College!

The College's virtual 2020 ACAAI Annual Scientific Meeting last fall broke records! More than 3,200 physicians, nurses/allied staff and other medical professionals registered for the meeting. The meeting was free of charge to College members.

Attendees could participate in a variety of sessions on a wide range of allergy/immunology topics. Many sessions were live and others were simulive, where a pre-recorded lecture was followed by a live question and answer session. Bobby Q. Lanier, MD, FAAAAI, noted there were "a ton more questions answered than would occur in a live setting. Major good job!" During the virtual meeting, there were more than 39,000 views of live/simulive sessions.

Scheduling wasn't an issue during the virtual Annual Meeting. Attendees could access all sessions - even those

that premiered as live lectures - during the meeting. Attendees expressed their enthusiasm for the virtual format.

"I could attend the presentations I wanted to hear, when normally I spend my time in meetings and miss many of them," said Jay Portnoy, MD, FAAAAI. "I could listen to concurrent presentations via the recordings."

During the Annual Business Meeting on Nov. 14, award recipients were recognized and Luz Fonacier, MD, FAAAAI was installed as ACAAI president. In her remarks she said, "It is an honor to be selected as the fourth female and first Asian American president of the College. You can't imagine what this means to me and every under-represented allergist in the world. My theme for the upcoming year is to innovate, diversify and expand."



## ANNUAL MEETING ADVANTAGE

The Presidential Plenary titled “The Changing Payment System - Challenge Accepted” recorded the highest attendance ever for a Presidential Plenary. More than 1,100 people tuned in live to hear Harold Miller, President and CEO of the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform. Other top sessions included:

- Guiding Patients Through Peanut Immunotherapy Options
- It’s Time to Individualize Our Approach to Diagnosis and Testing
- Hot Topics in Immunotherapy
- What’s That Rash? Doctor? What’s Wrong With My Skin? JEOPARDY!
- Vaccines: The Good, the Bad and the Scary
- Approach to Diagnosis and Management of Nasal Polyps in the Biologic Era
- COVID-19 and Its Impact on Our World, Our Patients and Ourselves
- Opening Ceremony and Welcome Announcements

College members who did not register for the meeting can view sessions at no charge on demand at [education.acaa.org/ondemand](http://education.acaa.org/ondemand).

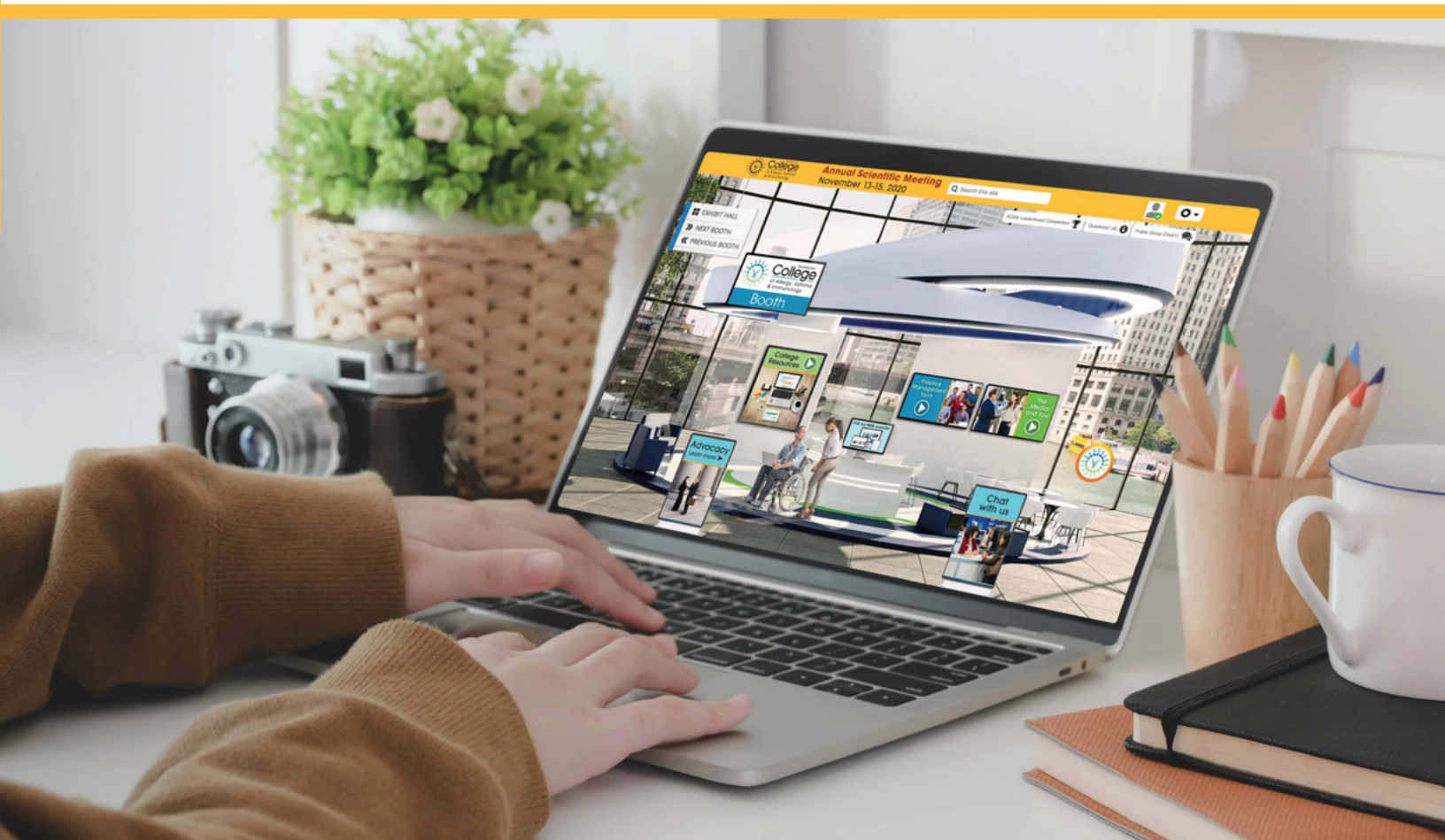
The virtual exhibit hall was a major draw, just like at a live meeting. There were more than 29,000 visits to virtual booths. Even though it wasn’t a live meeting, there was still

plenty of interaction among attendees. In the Networking Lounge, attendees used the chat to interact with other attendees, ask questions and share what they were learning from sessions. The Networking Lounge also featured fun magic tricks and a recipe for a signature cocktail/mocktail.

Fun and games were a part of the 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting. The FIT Bowl on Saturday evening was a fast-paced, exciting competition! While 19 teams competed in preliminary rounds before the meeting, four teams advanced to compete for the coveted FIT Bowl trophy. The teams were tested on their knowledge, cleverness and ability to listen and quickly respond to questions. The College congratulates FIT Bowl champions Drs. Jun Mendoza and Samuel Weiss from Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center.

The Leaderboard Competition challenged meeting attendees to visit and participate in various parts of the meeting and click on tokens found on the site. Points were accumulated as participants completed these actions throughout the meeting. And the social media influencers for the meeting vied for daily prizes as they amplified the learning and discussion from the sessions.

The College is looking forward to this year’s meeting, Nov. 4 - 8, 2021 in New Orleans.



FELLOW-IN-TRAINING ADVANTAGE

By Timothy Chow, MD, PhD, senior FIT representative

# Combating burnout

The College has resources for FITs to feel connected.



Timothy Chow, MD, PhD

Even before the challenges that many physicians have faced in 2020, there has been a growing awareness of physician burnout as an evolving crisis. Burnout can be defined as a combination of features including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

According to Medscape's 2020 physician burnout report<sup>1</sup>, the rate of burnout is around 40% across medical specialties. To address this issue, the ACAAI formed a Physician Wellness Taskforce in 2017. One of their first actions was to evaluate the features of burnout within College membership. A membership-wide survey revealed that the rates of emotional exhaustion in practicing allergists and fellows-in-training (FITs) were around 50 - 60% respectively<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that a significant number of FITs are at risk for possible burnout, and this has only been exacerbated by the upheaval in medical training and practice over the past year.

Even in this setting, there are measures we can take to practice self-care and address risk factors leading to burnout to buoy ourselves. One risk factor is isolation. While the era of social distancing has transformed many of our social interactions, the College has resources to

help with the transition. Your FIT Executive Committee comprises your peers who seek to advocate for you within the College, giving you a voice to the issues and needs as a trainee during this unique time. Please reach out to us at [timothy.chow@phhs.org](mailto:timothy.chow@phhs.org).

Additionally, ACAAI provides access to DocMatter, a secure forum for allergists to discuss clinical and practical challenges they are facing. Another protective measure to counter burnout is that of quality mentorship. The College has helped to foster many informal mentoring relationships. Beyond this, formal leadership training is provided through the College Leadership Summit to empower allergist leaders to be able to create meaningful changes in their practice and communities. The next summit will be in Spring 2021. Watch for details on how you can participate.

Together, we can face the challenges of completing our medical training and starting our practice as allergist/immunologists, empowering one another as we pursue satisfying and emotionally sustainable careers.

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**References:**

- <sup>1</sup> Medscape Report: [medscape.com/slideshow/2020-lifestyle-allergist-6012483#1](https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2020-lifestyle-allergist-6012483#1)
- <sup>2</sup> Marshall GD et al. Risk of Physician Burnout in the North American allergist-immunologist workforce. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.* 2020; 125:235-243







## THE ALLERGISTS' FOUNDATION

of the American College of  
Allergy, Asthma & Immunology



### **The Allergists' Foundation goal:**

to support College members  
by funding projects that  
lead to improvements and  
positive change in the practice  
of allergy at the community level.



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American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

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