November 10, 2019
Young Physician Report, District VI

In District VI we are lucky to have a YP council thanks to the District VI Fellow Council leadership and to Dr. Kristin Lyerly who got us up and running over the past two years. As the MN Section YP officer on this council, I spent two years working with Dr. Lyerly before taking over as the District VI YP this summer after our ADM in Lake Geneva, WI.

We have continued many of the same initiatives and goals that we first developed when the council was conceived but are also developing new exciting work and projects to further our goals around advocacy and member engagement. We meet by video teleconferences once a month and often communicate between our meetings by email, text message, and ACOG Engage.

1. Advocacy: Our council meets yearly at the Congressional Leadership Conference which sets the stage for yearlong advocacy. Our Section YPs are involved in their state’s lobby day and often work on the legislative committees within their section. We have developed a tradition in promoting monthly health topics that we highlight on social media to our members, communities, and patients. Our new goal is to post these monthly public health topics on ACOG Engage to spur discussion boards.

2. Member engagement with focus on Young Physician Involvement: We have two initiatives to this goal. The first was sending out a letter last fall to all the incoming District Junior Fellows in Practice, to welcome them to the District and be a resource for networking and collegial support. Our second initiative was to develop transition packages to graduating residents as they transition from JFT to JFP. We have expanded the second initiative to also send out personalized letters from each Section YP to the current PGY4 residents. We believe this will expand upon our mentorship and make an even bigger impact when we present gifts for the graduating 2020 classes. We also believe this could have an immensely positive impact on ACOG engagement on the JF in Practice and ultimately YP level.

3. Social Media: We continue to lead on social media platforms, tailoring our participation in platforms that are widely used by members of each individualized ACOG Section. We also lead the way in utilizing and jumpstarting ACOG Engage and continue to advocate for an application based platform to improve accessibility and use of ACOG Engage among our membership.

4. New Initiatives:
   a. Rural health access in women’s health. As a council we represent membership in a District with a large rural population. We have spent a great deal of time discussing the crisis in rural health access and brainstorming ways we can begin to tackle this huge problem. We have explored assisting in the development of a rural residency track or elective. In working with our JF Council, we believe that we must first spark interest in residents and are currently plotting a project to develop a lecture didactic session to highlight working as a rural physician. We hope to network with our members who are practicing rurally and invite them to share their experiences and promote rural practice as a viable and gratifying career choice.
b. Racism/Implicit Bias: We are brainstorming as a council how we can improve the outcomes for our patients of color by first recognizing our own implicit bias that is unfortunately cultivated by racist cultural norms. This is hard and sensitive work. We are trying to be thoughtful as a group and see how we may start this conversation amongst ourselves with the ultimate goal to further engage our membership on this issue, often the elephant in the room so to speak.

National Support:
We have truly appreciated all the support from our Fellow District and National leaders. We would love the opportunity to tap into some assistance with media support as we look ahead to developing a Rural Ob-Gyn Lecture. We furthermore have sought support from the ACOG Foundation to fund our transition gifts for graduating residents. We hope this crucial financial support will be realized and continue into the future as we expand our impact yearly.

Resources for early career ob-gyns:
I strongly believe that learning on the go has become the new standard for medical students, residents and young physicians. We would love to see a much stronger emphasis and presence in the development of audio learning tools. The explosion of podcasts and audiobooks tells ACOG where to go in the development of resources for busy young career ob-gyns who, are not only establishing their career, but are also busy in their personal lives cultivating a balanced life with hobbies and growing families. I think the development of audio resources would not only hugely benefit our membership but would engage and grow it as well.

With gratitude,
Elizabeth Slagle, MD
District VI YP