

A photograph of a graduation ceremony. A large group of graduates in black gowns with red and green stoles are seated in an auditorium. A microphone stand is visible in the foreground. The graduates are looking towards the front of the room.

## Patients at the Heart of New Presidential Year

In his convocation address at ACC.09, incoming President Alfred Bove, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.C., said that one of the most important areas in which the physician community can influence change in the health care system is by partnering with patients to improve access and ensure value.

“I call this year the ‘Year of the Patient,’” said Bove. “It’s a year in which we must become more patient-centered. It’s a year to empower patients to participate in their health care and to educate them about their cardiovascular disease. It’s a year to encourage patients to communicate with their physicians regarding their illness, the quality of their care, and their role as a part of the health care team.”

According to Bove, the patient theme will resonate throughout national leadership and into the state chapters — not only in 2009, but as a long-term theme for the College. Educational programs and tools will be developed to strengthen the patient-physician relationship. In addition, the College will work with lawmakers to implement policies that encourage patient empowerment, as



well as find ways to establish and maintain effective communication and collaboration within and across care teams and care settings.

Bove stressed that the “greatest challenge will be our commitment to do what is right for patients as we participate in the great effort to reform health care.” Health care reform will likely require physicians and care providers to adjust the way they practice, he said. Key among the expected changes will be the use of electronic data systems to record and communicate patient data.

“There will be a period of discomfort as we create new work habits,” he said, “but accurate, reliable health records will significantly improve patient care by minimizing miscommunication and by seamlessly populating clinical registries.

The long-term rewards will be feedback on quality of care and practice performance measures in real time at the point of care.”

Bove closed his speech by saying, “the year ahead will be full of challenges, but also full of promise.” He urged new fellows to set aside time to be politically active and to participate in the design of a better health care system. “As physicians, we live in the health care trenches with our patients,” he said. “We have the best understanding of the barriers — and the opportunities — for providing optimal high quality health care.”

“Be proud to be a part of this great specialty,” he said. “Be proud to be a part of the new health system we will have a hand in shaping. Be proud to be a part of the American College of Cardiology.”