



Dear Fellow Alliance Members,

Tamar Hosansky's June 1, 2007 article, "Campaign for CME," in *Medical Meetings* really disturbed me because it made me see that the Alliance Board has not done a very good job of communicating with our members about the advocacy issues that are being addressed on your behalf. So let me correct this right now and assure you that advancing CME as a profession and advocacy for CME Professionals has been identified as an imperative of the organization's strategic plan. *We have and will do this!*

I am sure you can appreciate that advocacy for the Alliance's members is not without challenges. Our membership is diverse and our constituents may not be unified in their perspectives on various issues. The Alliance must assure that in our advocacy role we represent the CME profession as a whole.

The Alliance does not yet have in place a well-honed communications/advocacy operation, though we have asked our new Executive Director, Paul Weber, to address how to get this up and running. In the meantime, there will likely be tension in deciding whether to act quickly or take a more measured approach in responding to issues.

That said, I want to inform you that we have not been sitting back waiting for the Alliance advocacy infrastructure to be built. Both volunteers and staff have devoted countless hours addressing issues facing the CME profession. Let me tell you about three of these:

Certification of CME Professionals: Advancing CME as a profession requires us to reexamine the Alliance's role and function in recognizing competency of CME professionals. Some have suggested that certification is the answer but this is not the only way to achieve this goal. The Alliance must responsibly assess what is best for our members as a whole and examine all options. To that end, we have initiated a critical analysis of how best to do this. This has included initial discussions with education experts, the ACCME, and the National Commission for Certification of CME Professionals. We plan to bring other perspectives into the conversation by convening a CME stakeholders meeting this fall.

ACCME March Call for Comments: In March, the ACCME issued a call for comments related to "Written Agreements for Commercial Support" and "Expanded Definitions of a Commercial Interest." Alliance leadership spoke with ACCME CEO, Murray Kopelow, MD, and acknowledged ACCME's critical role in setting sound policy direction related to the separation of education and promotion. We have recommended several options for sharing the results of the call for comments and obtaining further input from CME professionals. (See letter to ACCME [<http://www.acme-assn.org/home/AllianceCFCtoACCME.pdf>]). We trust that the ACCME will agree that sharing of information and an open dialog within the CME community will only enhance the development of strong policy in this critical area.

Senate Finance Committee (SFC) Report: Within two days of the release of the SFC report the entire Alliance Board conferred with Murray Kopelow to discuss the report findings. This discussion concluded with the Alliance's offer to collaborate with the ACCME to improve professional practices in CME and to make the public and government officials aware of those efforts. (See letter to ACCME [<http://www.acme-assn.org/home/AllianceSFCtoACCME.pdf>])

In addition, we commissioned a task force to study the SFC Report and determine how to best address issues raised by the findings. The work of that task force is just now wrapping up and we are now communicating with SFC staff contacts to request a meeting where we can provide a more balanced view of the CME profession and help them to better understand the manner in which CME activities are planned and executed. We will keep you posted on how this proceeds.

Let me end then by reaffirming that the Alliance is committed to being the voice of the profession and being an advocate for CME. As a public relations expert we recently consulted pointed out, in framing advocacy positions we must always be able to state *how what we are advocating for helps patients and improves healthcare*. We must keep this in mind as we look at each and every issue.

Thank you for allowing me to share this information with you and please share your thoughts with the Board on these or any other issues of concern. The Alliance has set up an email address (acmeboard@acme-assn.org) for members to communicate with us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Sue Ann Capizzi
President