

Charles Fiegl: Hello and welcome to our CAP Advocacy Update podcast. I am Charles Fiegl, the director for CAP Efficacy communications. The 2024 Pathologist Leadership Summit took place in mid-April and featured the Spring House of Delegates meeting educational courses, advocacy programming, and our annual Hill Day. In previous podcast episodes, we reviewed the features of the Pathologist Leadership Summit, and our Hill Day asks of Congress to stop Medicare cuts and address physician workforce issues. For this episode, we revisit the Pathologist Leadership Summit with two CAP leaders. Dr. Sang Wu is Speaker of the C'S House of Delegates, and Dr. Mary Le is the vice chair for the CAP, federal and State Affairs Committee.

Dr. Wu, you had fantastic attendance and engagement at the House of Delegates meeting. What were some of the highlights and key takeaways?

Dr. Sang Wu: Thank you, Charles. We certainly had a very exciting and an engaging meeting in Washington dc Spring House of Delegates meeting was a great success. We had over 161 delegates attending, and that's a record high. We had an overall attendance is of over 260 members. House delegate meetings are open to both delegates and all FCAP members, so we had they both, both numbers are all time highs for our spring meeting and we're really excited that there's momentum, there's enthusiasm, and we have a lot of folks who are interested in becoming, working more for our profession. And with the spring meeting, being in DC and being in conjunction with the Hill Day visit and the pathology leadership summit, there was this great synergy between the house meeting and also PLS and the subsequent Hill Day visit. This has been a great experience for all participants, certainly for all of us who were present.

Dr. Sang Wu: It was exciting. We had a lot of great sessions. All of our discussion sessions, both in the morning and in the afternoon, were related to agendas and items that are at the forefront of all pathologists. In the morning, we had a panel discussion on workload distribution for pathology groups in different practice settings, and that was, we had an excellent session of interaction, of sharing ideas. And this is a topic which has risen to the forefront of everybody's minds as to how groups are distributing workload amongst pathologists. We also had a very successful candidates forum where candidates who are running for the board of governors had a chance to introduce themselves, and then our delegates had a chance to ask questions and get to know our candidates better. In the afternoon, we had our second very important topic on the shortages in laboratories and histology, lab shortages, and it's kind of sharing different ideas and how to mitigate some of these lab shortages that are taking place all over the country. So, these were the highlights and everybody that certainly has attended and been a part of the house can sense the energy and enthusiasm and how much many of us want to do for our profession and to advance our specialty.

Charles Fiegl: Great. Thank you Dr. Wu. Yeah, certainly there is lots of engagement and robust discussion. What are you going to do with all this information that you've gathered growing forward? Will it help inform the house's next meeting in October in Las Vegas?

Dr. Sang Wu: Absolutely. Yeah, it's never too late to get started and plan for our fall meeting, which will take place in Las Vegas. The HOD fall meeting will take place October 19th, and this is going to be at the win in Vegas. It's a great setting. It's nice to be back in Vegas. And

we will also certainly kick off and be a major part of our annual meeting, our CAP annual meeting, which will be excellent as well. So, we look forward to seeing everybody. I think all of our discussions will catapult and help us plan for an even more engaged, even more interesting session as we look towards our fall meeting.

Charles Fiegl: Thank you. And I'll turn to you Dr. Lay. For our annual hill day, we had three important main asks of Congress concerning Medicare physician payment reforms to the clinical laboratory fee schedule and support for the physician workforce. What response did you receive from the congressional offices you spoke to?

Dr. Mary Le: Yeah, thank you. First, I should mention that in total we had 129 cap members participate in 172 total meetings with the congressional offices. That's an astounding turnout. Of these, there were 21 meetings with pathologists and a member of Congress in the same room together. And overall, I would say that it was a fun experience. I've heard the feedback from others, especially first-time members. They felt invigorated and excited that they got to have this experience when we entered the offices, the legislative assistants, they're eager, they're intelligent, and I would say that they had a variable level of knowledge on the subject. Now, for the most part, many of them have heard of the issues re-raised because other societies, other medical groups have also come to them, especially with budget neutrality for Medicare. And so, they are receptive. They've heard of the issues. Now, some offices they said straight out that their bosses aren't interested in adding to the government debt. But in those cases, they still took in our information and said they'd discussed with their boss. Now, we did have one office representative, Luke Korea. He had already signed onto a bill, so that made that part of the ask very easy, and then we just moved on to the next asks. So overall, I would say it's a fun experience, it's a valuable experience, and it moves our mission forward.

Charles Fiegl:: Thank you. And I'd be remiss if I didn't ask Dr. Wu, I know you were up on the hill as well, advocating for the specialty. What was your experience like on Capitol Hill?

Dr. Sang Wu: Thank you, Charles. It's a surreal experience and I think a lot of times, this is not my first time on the hill, but every time I go, you get a feeling of civic duty, of patriotism, of being able to talk directly to your congressional office. And a lot of times early on there was a little bit more intimidation where you're wondering what to do or am I supposed to be here? But the coaching and all of our sessions that prepare us ahead of time have been very helpful. We have demystifying the hill, we've got a lot of leadership training, and then our staff in dc, our CAP staff, they do an excellent job in preparing everybody. But I think the best way to explain it is that when you walk down the halls of your congressional leaders and you're on Capitol Hill, it's just a very American experience.

Dr. Sang Wu: And then when you actually talk to your representative or talk to the staff members, that further it gives you more a level of comfort in knowing that you're part of the process of being of democracy and of advocating for our profession. And then you walk out and you feel really good about what you've done, that you had a chance to share important issues, you had a chance to educate, and then it's up to your elected officials to carry on some of the messages that are important to you. And it's just a very surreal, overall, just comforting and I'd say very pleasant and certainly a very memorable

experience. Every time I am on Capitol Hill. And this time around, actually, I've moved states, so I'm in Oklahoma, and I had the good fortune of meeting with my state representative district one of Oklahoma, Mr. Kevin Hearn. And he was very open to hearing, and he was listening, knew quite a bit about some of our agenda and some of our issues, and was very receptive and just a very overall, very pleasant experience. And I certainly encourage it for everybody that all of us should do the same. And if we don't do it, then certainly all other professions, other specialties, there are a lot of folks who are advocating for their agendas. So, it is our time. It's important to advocate for what's important for pathologists.

Charles Fiegl: Great. Thank you. Dr. Le. What will be some of the follow-up from the CAP on these issues we spoke to Congress about?

Dr. Mary Le: Yes. So, for our members, they should be on the lookout for some action alerts being emailed to them on these topics. And when they get the email, please respond, please click send. They make it very easy where the letters are already pre-populated, so just hit send and they pre-populate to the representatives and senators to your area. So again, everything is very easy. It's just about two clicks and you're done. So, our CAP staff, they look for opportunities to move things through Congress. Sometimes vehicles move quickly though. Usually, our issues in our space move at the end of the year. The cap lobby team will continue to advocate for these issues on the hill. They will review member feedback from the PLS and follow up with the offices based on the feedback we received. If you haven't completed your evaluations for the PLS overall as well as the evaluations for the offices you visited, please do that.

Dr. Mary Le: It's still on the app. Also, as noted above, our issues tend to ride on the things at the end of the year. So because of the things we are advocating won't pass for this year, we will need to press Congress to pass legislation mitigating or stopping cuts, for example, preventing the PAMA cuts from being implemented until Sasa is passed and mitigating the impact of the looming Medicare cuts in 2025 will be an issue that we're looking out for. And when we do pivot, we will maintain our underlying message of long-term reform and we will inform the membership as we move along so they can engage.

Charles Fiegl:: Great. Thank you very much. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about the Pathologist leadership summit?

Dr. Mary Le: Yeah, so as Dr. Wu alluded to, the Pathology Leadership summit not only prepares us for our major asks on the Hill Day, there are also educational sessions in between our asks. So, the Sunday we had multiple sessions that offer CME, for example, some of the topics were team building. A very well received topic was how to present the pathology reports to make it readable for patients because the patients are receiving our pathology reports and what are the data points we need to keep in? What are the data points that may be left out? What are the data points that are potentially confusing to patient readers? So that was a great topic. We had informal sessions about artificial intelligence, and then some of the other highlights are the lunchtime and the networking highlights. Now, during the lunchtime, we had speakers coming in and they just spoke about the political pulse of the nation.

Dr. Mary Le: And it's comedic because sometimes you just have to laugh at the situation that we have in our politics nowadays. And so, when we're thinking about the candidates for presidency and the open seats for senates, et cetera, and which party might overtake the Senate versus the house, our speakers were able to inject some comedic relief. And I just find that that sort of elevates the experience because politics can be very frustrating, but at the same time, if you are just looking at it as a machine that we all play our part in, it lightened things up a lot. And then every evening we had our networking sessions where light refreshments were served, and let me just tell you, they were really delicious refreshments. You almost didn't need to eat dinner afterwards. But it's a highlight for me because I get to connect with my other colleagues from other states and connect with colleagues that I interact with from my state society. So, we all share the same issues as pathologists, but then each state also has its own individual issue. So again, the networking opportunities at the PLS was fantastic, and I highly encourage, for those who haven't gone before, please consider going next year.

Dr. Sang Wu: Charles, there are two excellent opportunities that we have coming up both in our fall meeting for the HOD in conjunction with the CAP annual meeting. And then it's not too early start thinking about next year's pathology leadership summit, which our data has already been set. It's still going to be in DC of course, and it's going to be April 26th through 29th of 2025. So, with some forward planning, I look forward to seeing everybody there where anybody in the audience who's thinking about how do I get more involved? How can I make a bigger impact? How do I connect with people who are interested? How do we make our profession better? I'd say these two opportunities, both in the annual, in our house fall meeting and also in next year's PLS, these are excellent opportunities. Everybody who's attended has been excited about it. They felt like they've learned something, they made a difference, and these are things to look forward to.

Dr. Sang Wu: So, we've got young pathologists out there, more seasoned pathologists, anybody who's thinking about how can I make a greater impact on my field, on the profession whom I chose to go into? How can I make a greater impact in pathology and how can I make this specialty one in which will thrive and continue to do better for generations to come? It's really attending these important meetings and making a difference and being on Capitol Hill and advocating for our specialty. These are all the opportunities are out there, and you can speak to anyone who's been a part of the PLS, anyone who's been a part of Hill Day and all of our delegates who've been a part of our spring and fall meetings. There's great enthusiasm, passion, excitement, and we want everybody to join us. I think this is our call and our plea to our FCAP members out there who, especially those who want to do a little bit more, this is where all the action is.

Charles Fiegl: Thank you both for joining me. That's all the time we have for this CAP Advocacy update podcast. For more news and information about CAP advocacy activity, please be sure to read our weekly newsletter or check out the My CAP app.