



# College Advantage

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

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## Promoting innovation and diversity

Get the education, research and Podium to Practice™ takeaways at the 2021 ACAAI Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans

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American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology



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

# Excitement is building

After a highly successful virtual Annual Scientific Meeting last year, I'm excited that the College's 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting will be an in-person event in New Orleans, Nov. 4 - 8.

"Promoting Innovation and Diversity" is a fitting theme for the wide range of sessions, events and networking you've

come to expect at College Annual Meetings. The Program Committee has created a fantastic educational program featuring top-notch, expert speakers engaging in topics tailored to the practicing allergist and immunologist. As you begin to plan for the meeting, be assured that the College will follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with any state and local government mandates in place at the time of our meeting.

Make sure your travel plans include Thursday, Nov. 4 and Monday, Nov. 8 so you can experience all the meeting has to offer! Set aside time for:

- **Thursday** - Don't miss a dynamic full day devoted to dermatologic allergy and atopic dermatitis. Skin is in!
- **Friday** - Our perennial favorite, the Annual Literature Review, returns! Also plan to attend the House of Delegates' Town Hall for an update on our advocacy efforts.
- **Saturday** - attend the Presidential Plenary on innovating, diversifying and expanding the A/I practice. The plenary includes the Bela Schick lecture, titled, "The Three Ps: Revisited," presented by Kathleen R. May, MD, FAAAAI. It will also feature Susan Bailey, MD, FAAAAI, past president of the

American Medical Association, whose presentation is titled, "Innovation in Medicine: How Physicians Have Adapted Their Practices During the COVID Crisis."

- **Sunday** - join our Keynote speaker Dr. Peter Hotez, Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology & Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine for his plenary on vaccine hesitancy and preventing the next pandemic. Learn the ins and outs of the College at our business meeting Sunday afternoon.
- **Monday** - Monday's plenary on implementing guidelines into practice includes the Edward J. O'Connell Lecture titled, "Drug Allergy Parameter," presented by David A. Khan, MD, FAAAAI.

Social events will be back! You won't want to miss the Welcome Reception at Mardi Gras World. The FIT Bowl is back for another exciting competition! Fellows-in-Training test their knowledge in this fun, light-hearted and educational event. It has become one of the events many look forward to.

Make sure you check out the Annual Meeting program at [annualmeeting.acaaai.org](http://annualmeeting.acaaai.org). As College president, I am proud of the hard work of both the Annual Meeting Program Committee and the College staff, and I am certain you will be invigorated by the 2021 ACAAI Annual Meeting this fall.



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



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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)

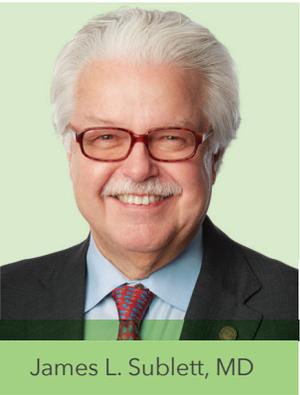
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## ADVOCACY ADVANTAGE

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



James L. Sublett, MD

# Washington Services – They have our back!

I sometimes compare the Advocacy Council to air conditioning on a hot summer's day – only noticed when it's not working. For more than thirty years, two extremely important services, working in the background, have

advised and supported the College's Advocacy Council (and before us, the JCAAI). We call them, collectively, our Washington Services: **Capitol Associates, Inc.** a bipartisan government relations firm specializing in health care policy and our legal advisors, **Powers Pyles, Sutter & Verville, PC.**

## Capitol Associates, Inc. (CAI)

CAI guides the Advocacy Council in regulatory and legislative areas as they monitor and keep us abreast of any actions from the administration, Congress or governmental agencies that could impact allergy/immunology. Their strong relationships with House and Senate committees provide the connections and information to which others may not be privy. Capitol Associates helps coordinate the Allergy Strike Force, a team of College members who travel to Washington, DC to advocate on your behalf on topics that are most urgent at the time.



**Bill Finerfrock**, president and owner, is a frequent presenter at ACAAI Annual Meetings, webinars and advocacy training sessions. Bill is always willing to share his knowledge on a wide array of legislative and regulatory topics in a very nonbiased way. Prior to joining Capitol Associates,

Bill worked for two U.S. Senators. He was the principal advisor on health policy to Senator Roger Jepsen (R-IA) and was involved with the first efforts by Congress, in the early 1980s, to examine the impact of rising health care costs on the U.S. economy.



**Matt Reiter**, vice president, joined Capitol Associates in 2014. Matt works on legislative and regulatory health policy issues including provider reimbursement, value-based payment systems, administrative simplification, and efforts to reform the U.S. health care system.

Over the past year, Matt has written the weekly COVID-19 Federal Response Updates, providing updates on the

activities of the White House, Congress, and federal agencies during the pandemic.

## Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville, PC



**Rebecca Burke, JD**, has served for more than 25 years as the general counsel to the Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. Then, with JCAAI's reorganization to become the Advocacy Council of the ACAAI, she continued in that role. Becky advises us on our interactions

with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – physician fee schedule; the Food and Drug Administration – biologics; the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) – compounding; and the American Medical Association – coding. Becky serves as the legal advisor for the College to the AMA's Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) Editorial Panel and the RVS Update Committee (RUC). Becky specializes in federal laws and regulations governing health care and the private insurance marketplace. Her voice is respected, not only by the College, but with other specialty societies when we work collaboratively to reach a common goal. She was instrumental in alerting the Advocacy Council of proposed changes in USP Chapter <797>, allowing us to bring in and work with other organizations to obtain the allergy exception in the revision.



**Leela K. Baggett, JD**, is an associate at Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville, PC. While at George Washington University Law school, Leela served as an intern at the Department of Health and Human Services and as a health policy intern at the Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)

Committee. Her range of experience includes advising on compliance with Medicare coverage, assisting with coding matters, including navigating the coding verification process administered by the Pricing, Data Analysis and Coding contractor.

In my five years serving as the Executive Director of the Advocacy Council, these four individuals have repeatedly served the allergy community quietly, in the background. Organizations are only as good as their people! I'm writing this on the afternoon of a scorching summer day... I'm very thankful for air-conditioning... and for our Washington Services.



ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING ADVANTAGE

## Welcome Back!

**We're excited to offer an in-person meeting this year! Join us in vibrant New Orleans Nov. 4 - 8.**

The College is geared up for an in-person meeting this November in New Orleans, Nov. 4 - 8. The compelling educational sessions, top-notch research and Podium to Practice™ takeaways will carry out the meeting's theme "Promoting Innovation and Diversity."

"Experts in the field of allergy/immunology, dermatology, pulmonology, and otolaryngology will cover a broad range of topics to choose from. There is something for everyone!" said Annual Meeting Program Chair Brian Kelly, MD, FAAAAI.



### What's new?

New offerings this year include sessions to address the growing epidemic of secondary immunodeficiency and how to start an OIT Program from the ground up in your practice. Plan to attend Thursday's program on dermatologic allergy and atopic dermatitis. Stay through Monday for a special 7 for 11 session - seven experts will have just 11 minutes to report on the latest dermatological science.

### Returning favorites

The College's Annual Meeting wouldn't be complete without sessions attendees look forward to every year. Perennial favorites such as the Annual Literature Review Course, CAP

## ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING ADVANTAGE

Review and the Pediatric 7 for 11 rapid-fire update will return. The interactive JEOPARDY session will again test attendees' ability to identify dermatologic conditions. Learn about new A/I research by visiting our ePosters. Our exhibit hall is also back, and companies are ready to welcome you.

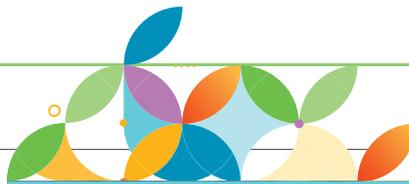
### Something for everyone

Include your team in the meeting. Our Allied Health, Practice Management and Advanced Practice Health Care Providers programming has impactful instruction for your entire team.



### Connect with experts

The Annual Meeting provides a unique opportunity for you to interact with clinical and research leaders and network with colleagues. From plenaries to clinical conundrums and more, you'll learn from top A/I experts.



### Get social

Get a taste of New Orleans during the President's Welcome Reception at Mardi Gras World on Friday evening. Don't miss the popular FIT Bowl competition on Saturday evening.

### Your meeting, safely

We're planning the meeting with your safety in mind. The College will follow protocols from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the State of Louisiana, the city of New Orleans and the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

### Live streaming

If you can't attend the meeting in person, you won't miss out! Selected sessions will be livestreamed to offer real-time access wherever you are. Registration opens in early August! Check the College's Annual Meeting website at [annualmeeting.acaai.org](http://annualmeeting.acaai.org) for details.

## Be alert!

Beware of unauthorized websites posing as travel and registration sites for this year's Annual Scientific Meeting. Official ACAAI registration and sleeping room information will be sent to you directly from the College in early August. This information also will be posted to our website at that time.

Any site offering registration or housing is a scam and is not affiliated with ACAAI in any capacity.

The College's official Annual Meeting site is [annualmeeting.acaai.org](http://annualmeeting.acaai.org) and our official/authorized housing provider is OnPeak. No other company is affiliated with or endorsed by the College, and no other company is authorized to confirm your registration or hotel sleeping room reservation on behalf of the College.

Meetings like the College's are often targeted by scammers and unauthorized companies who can put you at risk. Please do not fall victim to the costly consequences of doing business with them. To register for the meeting and to secure hotel reservations with our official housing provider, check the College's official Annual Meeting site beginning in early August.



ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING ADVANTAGE

# Maximize your experience

Plan to come early and stay late! You'll want to take in as much as you can this November at the College's Annual Scientific Meeting.

New Orleans - and the College's Annual Scientific Meeting - have a lot to offer this fall! Plan your travel so you can experience it all from Thursday, Nov. 4 through Monday, Nov. 8. Get it all - timely, topical, up-to-date information from experts!

## Thursday's sessions are timely and topical

With a focus on dermatologic allergy and atopic dermatitis, plan to attend a full day of sessions devoted to dermatologic allergy and atopic dermatitis. Learn from a dynamic lineup of experts, who will discuss cutting-edge aspects of diagnosis, management and research. The Thursday Program will end with the Battle by the Bayou: Three allergists enter, one allergist leaves. Attendees must register for this program separately and there is a separate registration fee.

The morning begins with **Expanding Into Dermatologic Allergy** and sessions include:

- **Integrated Allergy and Dermatology Rash Diagnostic TBD**
- **Across the Globe: 2021 Updated Urticaria Guidelines of the EAACI/GA2LEN/EDF/WAO**  
Sarbjit S. Saini, MD
- **Non-IgE Cutaneous Drug Reactions: New Mechanisms and SCARS**  
Elizabeth J. Phillips, MD
- **Contact Dermatitis: Local and Systemic**  
Joseph F. Fowler, Jr., MD
- **How to Workup and Manage Occupational Dermatitis**  
Jeff Yu, MD
- **Reactions to Biomedical Devices**  
Karin A. Pacheco, MD, MSPH



- **Luncheon program - Shared Decision Making in the Management of Moderate to Severe Atopic Dermatitis**  
Michael S. Blaiss, MD, FAAAAI

The afternoon continues with Modern Treatments for **Moderate to Severe Atopic Dermatitis**. Sessions include:

- **Current and Future Topical Therapies for Atopic Dermatitis: Understanding the Microbiome**  
Donald Y. Leung, MD, PhD, FAAAAI
- **Influence of JAK/STAT Pathway in Atopic Dermatitis and How New JAK Inhibitors Modulate the Disease**  
Jonathan I. Silverberg, MD, PhD, MPH
- **New and Emerging Biologic Therapies for Atopic Dermatitis**  
Mark Boguniewicz, MD, FAAAAI
- **How Atopic Dermatitis Differs Among Various Age Groups**  
Jonathan M. Spergel, MD, PhD, FAAAAI
- **Ethnicity and Atopic Dermatitis: Differences, Similarities, and Gaps in Knowledge**  
Ama Alexis, MD
- **Effect of Atopic Dermatitis on the Quality of Life, Psychological, and Behavioral Health of Patients**  
Kelly M. Maples, MD, FAAAAI

Stay for the **Battle of the "Biologics" by the Bayou**. Three allergists enter, one allergist leaves. Competitors include:

- **Dupilumab**  
Mark Boguniewicz, MD, FAAAAI
- **Small Molecule Inhibitors**  
Jonathan I. Silverberg, MD, PhD, MPH



## ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING ADVANTAGE

- **New Biologics (Choose One or Many)**

David R. Stukus, MD, FAAAAI

Get it all in one day – timely, topical, up-to-date information from experts. Don't miss it!

### Monday's sessions have variety

Stay at the meeting through Monday to experience a wide variety of sessions. From new guidelines to allergen mixing and food allergy, we've got you covered! Monday's schedule includes:

- **Implementing New Guidelines Into Practice** – This plenary includes sessions on drug allergy guidelines, Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE) and NIH asthma guidelines.
- **Allergen Mixing in the Allergist's Office** – The Changing Environment in Allergy and Immunology Extract Mixing – This session explores allergy's changing environment, trends in immunotherapy, standardization and a thorough review of the media fill/glove tip test.
- **7 for 11: Hot Topics in Dermatology** – In this fast-paced session, seven presenters have just 11 minutes to explore different dermatological topics.
- **The Growing Epidemic of Secondary Immunodeficiency** – Learn about malignancy and B-cell depleting agents, immunodeficiencies in other specialties and therapeutic approaches.
- **Continuous Assessment Program (CAP) Review** – Morning and afternoon sessions are literature-style reviews covering most of the articles chosen by the ABAI for the July – December cycle of the CAP program.
- **Starting an OIT Program in Private Practice From the Ground Up** – Thinking about adding oral immunotherapy to your practice? This session covers the basics and more.
- **Allergen Mixing in the Allergist's Office** – The Changing Environment in Allergy and Immunology Extract – Learn current allergen mixing guidelines, safety issues, and more!
- **Addressing Non-IgE Mediated Food Allergy** – This clinical conundrum session explores diagnosing, managing, shared decision-making and nutritional challenges of FPIES and EOE patients.

Plan to come early and stay late so you don't miss these essential learning opportunities!

Registration opens in early August – stay tuned to College Insider and [annualmeeting.acaai.org](http://annualmeeting.acaai.org) for further details.



## ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING ADVANTAGE

# It's a team meeting

## Make your practice thrive! Annual Meeting sessions make sure your staff is up to date on new regulations, codes and more.

Take care of your team! The College's 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting, Nov. 4 – 8 in New Orleans has programs for everyone in your office. Registration as an allied health practitioner includes access to the Allied Health Professionals Course and the Advanced Practice Health care Providers Course, as well as all general sessions and other non-ticketed events.

The **Practice Management Program** on Nov. 5 is geared toward office practice administrators, nurse managers, other staff and allergists. The full day session covers issues your staff deals with on a day-to-day basis. There is a separate fee for this course. Managers may register for only this course to avoid the general meeting registration fee. Registered physicians can attend at no additional charge. Session topics include:

- Coding.
- Buying or leasing your property.
- Staff recruitment strategies.
- Medical insurance contract negotiation.
- Washington regulatory update.
- Ask the practice management experts.

The **Advanced Practice Health Care Providers** course on Nov. 5 is a perfect fit for nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other health care providers with extensive experience. Allergists would also benefit from attending! This full-day course features:

- Biologics.
- Impact of food allergy on daily life.
- Introducing allergenic foods.
- Laboratory diagnostics.
- Prescribing pearls.

Registered and licensed practicing nurses, registered respiratory therapists, medical assistants and other allied health professionals would benefit from the **Allied Health Care Professionals** course on Nov. 6, featuring sessions on

- Asthma.
- Environmental allergies.
- Getting a practice ready for OIT.
- What we learned from COVID-19.
- Hot literature topics.

Registration opens in early August. Don't miss the opportunity to strengthen your staff's skills!

# 2020 Allergist/immunologist compensation data yields surprising results

2020 was a year filled with challenges for practicing allergists/immunologists, as COVID-19 shutdown orders and safety concerns strained College members' ability to serve patients. Many pivoted to telemedicine and leveraged government programs to help cover staff and overhead costs. Given all the turmoil, one might expect a disastrous impact on allergist compensation, but the data from Medical Group Management Association's (MGMA) Provider Compensation survey show otherwise. **Although patient volumes and work relative value units (wRVUs) - a measure of physician productivity - were down considerably across the board for allergy/immunology practices, median total compensation was flat or down just slightly over the prior year.**

The College appreciates our partnership with MGMA, which enabled us to collect allergy-specific provider compensation data for our specialty. Those of you who participated in the MGMA Provider Compensation survey have direct access to the detailed survey results and made it possible for the College to report this important information.<sup>1</sup>

## Allergist/immunologist MGMA survey participation

Allergist/immunologist participation in the MGMA Provider Compensation Survey increased in 2021, continuing a five-year upward trend.

A total of 439 nonacademic allergists/immunologists participated in the 2021 survey (based on 2020 data), a 3.8% increase over 2020. Participation among academic allergists also increased slightly in 2021 to 169. The total number of participating allergists increased by 3.8% to 608 in 2021. Additionally, allergists from across the country participated in the survey this year, with a generally even mix across all four geographic sections (Eastern, Midwest, Southern and Western).

For full-time physicians, the median nonacademic total compensation (including provider wages, bonus/incentive payments, research stipends, honoraria and profit distributions) for 2020 was \$324,530 when allergy/immunology (A/I) and pediatrics A/I were combined. This was a very slight decrease over the prior year, following a three-year consecutive increase. However, median work relative value units (wRVUs), which measure physician productivity, had a double digit percentage decline, as did median

total patient encounters. These results were consistent with MGMA's overall findings for nonsurgical specialists<sup>2</sup>, which experienced a decrease in median total compensation of 1.29% but a more significant decline in wRVUs.

MGMA PROVIDER COMPENSATION SURVEY PARTICIPATION  
ALLERGIST/IMMUNOLOGIST COUNTS BY REPORT YEAR

Non-academic	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Allergy/Immunology	354	370	418	322	303
Pediatrics: Allergy/Immunology	85	53	39	41	45
<b>Total Allergy/Immunology</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>348</b>
Academic	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Allergy/Immunology	96	103	68	85	45
Pediatrics: Allergy/Immunology	73	60	54	77	39
<b>Total Allergy/Immunology</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Total Allergy/Immunology</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>432</b>

Source: 2021 MGMA DataDive Provider Compensation. Used with permission from MGMA Copyright 2021. <https://www.mgma.com/data>. Data is protected by MGMA copyright and is prohibited to be shared or published without MGMA's consent.

We saw a similar result with academic allergy/immunology compensation. The median academic total compensation for the combined A/I and pediatrics A/I in 2020 was \$200,874, up slightly over the prior year. Median wRVUs, however, declined more significantly, although the number of academic allergists reporting wRVUs continued to increase. A total of 65 academic allergists reported this data for 2020, which is the highest number participating to date.

So how could total compensation remain essentially flat for allergists and other nonsurgical specialists when wRVUs and total encounters declined so significantly? The answer is likely due to the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which provided much needed cash infusions to practices during the pandemic. Back in August of 2020 when the College surveyed members about government financial assistance, 65% of those surveyed said they received or expected to receive a PPP loan, and 35% said they received or expected to receive funds from the PRF. It's likely those numbers grew as the pandemic continued and additional rounds of the PRF were approved.

For comparison purposes, Medscape's 2020 allergist compensation data (reported in 2021) showed average A/I

<sup>1</sup> Note: due to COVID-19 and the burden it placed on allergy practices, we did not participate in MGMA's practice cost and revenue survey this year. We fully expect to participate in 2022 and look forward to reporting this data next fall.

<sup>2</sup> MGMA Provider Pay And The Pandemic, an MGMA Data Report based on 2021 MGMA DataDive Provider Compensation.

compensation of \$274,000, with approximately 179 allergist participants. This was a 9.0% decrease over the prior year and followed a consistent increase in A/I compensation over the previous three years.

**2020 MGMA PROVIDER COMPENSATION SURVEY  
FULL-TIME ALLERGISTS/IMMUNOLOGISTS**

Non-academic data	# Reporting	Combined A/I and Peds A/I
Median total compensation <sup>1</sup>	339	<b>\$324,530</b>
Median work RVUs <sup>2</sup>	243	<b>3,798</b>
Median total encounters <sup>3</sup>	72	<b>2,287</b>
Academic data	# Reporting	Combined A/I and Peds A/I
Median total compensation <sup>1</sup>	149	<b>\$200,874</b>
Median work RVUs <sup>2</sup>	65	<b>2,398</b>

Source: 2021 MGMA DataDive Provider Compensation, based on 2020 data. Used with permission from MGMA Copyright 2021. <https://www.mgma.com/data>. Data is protected by MGMA copyright and is prohibited to be shared or re-published without MGMA's consent.

- <sup>1</sup>Total compensation = provider wages, bonus/incentive payments, research stipends, honoraria and profit distributions.
- <sup>2</sup>RVUs = relative value units. Work RVUs are a measure of physician productivity and are calculated by multiplying the number of services for each CPT code times the specific wRVU value for that code based on the CMS fee schedule.
- <sup>3</sup>Total encounters = total direct provider-to-patient interactions, regardless of setting. Includes televisits and e-visits.

However, the number of allergists participating in the Medscape survey is considerably less than those participating in the MGMA survey: 179 for Medscape's 2020 data versus a total of 608 for MGMA. In addition, Medscape's survey does not break out academic vs. non-academic compensation. Finally, the MGMA data shown is **median** compensation, compared with **average** compensation from Medscape; the median is typically a better representation for salary data. For all these reasons, it is difficult to compare MGMA and Medscape data.

**MEDSCAPE ALLERGIST/IMMUNOLOGIST COMPENSATION DATA<sup>1</sup>  
FULL-TIME ALLERGISTS/IMMUNOLOGISTS**

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Average A/I compensation	\$274,000	\$301,000	\$275,000	\$272,000	\$257,000
Approximate # reporting	179	175	193	293	192

<sup>1</sup>Medscape survey data for each year was reported in the following year. For example, the 2020 data shown here was reported in the 2021 Medscape survey.

In the Medscape survey, 55% of allergists reported some decline in compensation in 2020. However, average income for all physician specialties combined didn't change much in 2020. Most physicians in the Medscape survey saw a drop in patient volumes due to COVID-19, and allergists were no exception. Allergists reported an average decline of about 12%, from 74 to 65 patients per week.

MGMA reported 2020 A/I total compensation by ownership type for nonacademic practices. 2020 median compensation

for both physician-owned and hospital/integrated delivery system (IDS) owned practices decreased slightly from 2019. The 2020 median total compensation for physician-owned practices was 12.3% more than the median total compensation for hospital/IDS owned practices. Work RVUs were also higher, but only by 3.3%. While median work RVUs declined in 2020 for both physician-owned A/I practices and hospital/IDS-owned A/I practices, physician-owned practices saw a much larger decline.

**2020 MGMA PROVIDER COMPENSATION SURVEY  
FULL-TIME ALLERGISTS/IMMUNOLOGISTS**

Non-academic data	Combined A/I and Peds A/I	
	Physician-Owned	Hospital/IDS Owned
Median total compensation <sup>1</sup>	<b>\$339,502</b>	<b>\$302,219</b>
# Reporting	168	149
Median work RVUs <sup>2</sup>	<b>3,798</b>	<b>3,675</b>
# Reporting	109	114

Source: 2021 MGMA DataDive Provider Compensation, based on 2020 survey data. Used with permission from MGMA Copyright 2021. <https://www.mgma.com/data>. Data is protected by MGMA copyright and is prohibited to be shared or re-published without MGMA's consent.

- <sup>1</sup>Total compensation = provider wages, bonus/incentive payments, research stipends, honoraria and profit distributions.
- <sup>2</sup>RVUs = relative value units. Work RVUs are a measure of physician productivity and are calculated by multiplying the number of services for each CPT code times the specific wRVU value for that code based on the CMS fee schedule.

For practices planning to hire a new allergist this year, 23 allergists reported starting salary guaranteed compensation data in MGMA's 2021 Provider Placement Starting Salary survey. The median guaranteed compensation in 2020 for combined A/I and pediatrics A/I was \$226,000. This represented a slight increase over the prior year.

**2020 MGMA PROVIDER PLACEMENT STARTING SALARY SURVEY**

	Combined A/I and Peds A/I Provider Placement	
	# Reporting	Starting Salary
Median Guaranteed Compensation	23	\$226,000

Source: 2021 MGMA DataDive Provider Compensation, based on 2020 survey data. Used with permission from MGMA Copyright 2021. <https://www.mgma.com/data>. Data is protected by MGMA copyright and is prohibited to be shared or re-published without MGMA's consent.

Please help us continue to provide this important data for allergy and immunology practices by participating in MGMA's surveys in 2022. Participating practices get free, direct access to the survey results, and all survey data is completely confidential and is never seen by any College member or staff. The Provider Compensation survey will open next year in January, and the Cost & Revenue survey will open in March. Watch your email and College Insider for announcements.



COMMUNITY ADVANTAGE

# Meet our 2021 Community Grant recipients!

Earlier this year, The Allergists' Foundation launched its new Community Grant Program to inspire practicing allergists to develop creative solutions for challenges related to allergy care within their communities. We are pleased to announce our grantees and their outstanding projects that have been selected for funding in 2021.

"Today more than ever, practicing allergists play a critical role in ensuring the health and well-being of our communities. The Foundation is awarding nearly \$100,000 in grants this year to support innovative means for addressing challenges faced by community practicing allergists, including health disparities in communities of color. These projects exemplify the creativity and resourcefulness of the College's membership and have the potential to make an important difference in our efforts to improve the care for allergies and asthma in every community," said Stanley Fineman, MD, MBA, FAAAAI, president of The Allergists' Foundation.

## Marcella Aquino, MD, FAAAAI



### **Multi-level Contributing Factors to Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Urban Children with Asthma and Atopic Dermatitis**

Marcella Aquino, MD, FAAAAI, will lead a two-year study that offers an innovative approach to identify multilevel risk and resource factors that may contribute to asthma and atopic dermatitis outcomes in urban minority children. The project will focus on behavioral processes, such as adherence to AD and asthma medications and clinical processes such as asthma severity, AD severity, asthma quality of life and dermatologic quality of life. Outcomes that will be assessed include lung function via daily spirometry measurements, asthma control, AD control, and asthma and AD health care utilization via questionnaire and confirmation from electronic medical record. This novel approach will shed light on specific contributors that may increase morbidity in urban minority children with asthma and AD and will inform future tailored interventions.

## Juan Carlos Cardet MD, MPH



### **Impact of Telehealth vs. In-person Appointments on Asthma Outcomes Among African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx Adults with Moderate to Severe Persistent Asthma**

Juan Carlos Cardet MD, MPH, will lead a 12-month study to determine how telehealth versus in-person appointments impact asthma-related

## COMMUNITY ADVANTAGE (CONTINUED)

outcomes among Black and Latinx patients with moderate to severe persistent asthma across the U.S. This project builds on a large pragmatic trial (PREPARE) to determine whether a patient-guided intervention can improve asthma outcomes in these populations, drawing on extensive clinical and phenotypic data collected at baseline, and prospective asthma outcome data collected through monthly questionnaires during 15 months of follow-up. Results from the study will inform community practicing allergists whether transitioning to telehealth platforms provides adequate asthma care.

### Timothy Chow, MD (Fellow-in-Training)



#### **Shouldering the Burden of Pediatric Penicillin Allergy Labels: Delabeling in the Primary Care Setting**

Timothy Chow, MD, will lead a 12-month study to explore the feasibility of implementing a penicillin allergy de-labeling protocol for low-risk pediatric patients. The primary aim of the study is to evaluate the number of patients for whom risk-stratification and direct amoxicillin challenge are successfully completed in an outpatient pediatric primary care clinic and assess barriers for implementation and their impact on referrals for outpatient allergist evaluation.

### Kelsey Kaman, MD (Fellow-in-Training)



#### **Preschool Atopic Diseases: Expanding Knowledge Gaps (PAD-EKG)**

Kelsey Kaman, MD, will lead a 12-month project to explore the role daycare centers and preschools may play in preventing adverse outcomes related to atopic diseases, including anaphylaxis, among children of color. Her team will collaborate with Head Start, Code Ana, The Allison Rose Foundation and Food Equality Initiative to identify barriers that early childhood educators face in caring for Black and Hispanic food-allergic children. The project team will be supported by partners experienced in providing education, emergency anaphylaxis plans and access to allergen-free foods. They will explore means to collectively address barriers to care and foster long-term relationships between community allergists and early childhood educators.

### Anil Nanda, MD, FAAAAI



#### **Development of Educational Modules Regarding Cannabis Questions for Intake Forms for Community-based, Large Practice and University-based Allergists**

As cannabis use continues to rise in the general population due to its legalization in the U.S. and around the world, community

practicing allergists need to be up to date on the nature, potential benefits, and adverse effects of cannabis use, including cannabis allergy. Anil Nanda, MD, FAAAAI, will work with a team of experts to develop educational modules that will address these topics as well as recognizing and diagnosing cannabis allergy. Additionally, they will develop a module specifically focused on how practitioners can discuss cannabis with their patients, i.e., what questions to ask on intake forms to gather the information necessary to start a conversation about cannabis use and its potential benefits and harms among allergic and asthmatic individuals. The project is a collaborative effort with a professionally diverse group of experts consisting of physicians and scientists with extensive background in cannabis basic and clinical research, including cannabis allergy.

### Michael Pistiner, MD, MMSc, FAAAAI



#### **National Needs Assessment for Infant and Toddler Food Allergy Curriculum for Pediatric Residents**

While the prevalence of infant and toddler food allergy is on the rise, there is a shortage of community physicians who are properly trained and comfortable to provide the most current standard of care. Michael Pistiner, MD, MMSc, FAAAAI, and his team will develop and implement an educational needs assessment to determine and characterize the need for a standard infant/toddler food allergy curriculum for pediatric residents at a national level. The assessment will specifically focus on gaps that lead to discomfort in the management of infant/toddler food allergy and anaphylaxis, lack of implementation of early peanut feeding guidelines, and ineffective comanagement of infant/toddler food allergies alongside primary care physicians. In addition, the assessment will provide an opportunity for medical residents to learn more about the field of allergy and potential to pursue a career in the specialty.

"The Allergists' Foundation received 27 letters of inquiry in response to our call for proposals under the Community Grant Program, which made our job of selecting projects for funding very challenging," said Todd Mahr, MD, FAAAAI, the chair of the Foundation's Grants Allocation Committee. "After a thorough review and deliberation, we were able to select six outstanding projects. We were very much impressed with the quality and creativity of the proposals we've received in this first round of our new grant program. We look forward to seeing more project ideas again in 2022."

**Do you have a project idea you'd like to have funded? Visit [college.acaaai.org/grants](https://college.acaaai.org/grants) to learn more or email us at [foundation@acaai.org](mailto:foundation@acaai.org).**



Timothy Chow, MD

## FELLOW-IN-TRAINING ADVANTAGE

By Timothy Chow, MD, senior FIT representative

## Acknowledging and addressing the harms of racial bias

**There is a role for all of us in the actions of combating racism, as we listen, learn, advocate for, and defend one another to produce a health care system that supports every one of its members.**

The past few years have raised a wider awareness of racial disparities across society, including in health care. Many health inequities in our society have their roots in race. This reality has played a complex and integral role in forming the society in which we live today. As we strive to combat these influences at every level, it is appropriate to continue to acknowledge and mourn the hurts that we and our patients have borne.

Acts of violence are but one manifestation of the destruction racial bias continues to wreak. Racial bias also manifests in other physical, mental, emotional, and financial ways. We lament the participation of the field of medicine in perpetuating racial bias through both action and inaction<sup>1</sup> and the long-standing history of health inequity in the United States that continues today<sup>2</sup>. Racial bias is a multifaceted harm to our patients, resulting in the loss of trust patients have in their physicians<sup>3</sup> and ultimately leading to inequitable outcomes for conditions within our own field of allergy and immunology<sup>4</sup>.

ACAAI President Luz Fonacier, MD, FAAAAI has made addressing health care disparities in allergy/immunology a priority during her presidency, as she noted in columns in

previous issues of College Advantage and College Insider. The College has stepped up its efforts to raise awareness of disparities in access to and quality of care for A/I patients. Our foundation has awarded grants for community projects related to barriers to care. Activities are planned for outreach to historically Black medical schools and universities about the career of allergy, as well as public/professional education about allergic conditions that are exacerbated by various cultural and social determinants.

There is more to be done, on institutional and personal levels. We can start by examining the detrimental impacts of our own implicit or explicit biases to ourselves and others<sup>5</sup>. As we reflect and remember, let us be reminded that there is a role for all of us in the actions of combating racism, as we listen, learn, advocate for, and defend one another to produce a health care system that supports every one of its members.

<sup>1</sup> Bailey ZD et al. Structural Racism and Health Inequities in the USA: evidence and interventions. *Lancet*. 2017 Apr; 389(10077):1453-1463

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham TJ et al. Vital Signs: Racial Disparities in Age-Specific Mortality Among Blacks or African Americans – United States, 1999–2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2017;66:444–456.

<sup>3</sup> Armstrong K et al. Racial/Ethnic Differences in Physician Distrust in the United States. *Am J Public Health*. 2007 Jul; 97(7):1283-89

<sup>4</sup> Davis CM et al. Health Disparities in Allergic and Immunologic Conditions in Racial and Ethnic Underserved Populations: A Work Group Report of the AAAAAI Committee on the Underserved. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2021. In press.

<sup>5</sup> Hall WJ et al. Implicit Racial/Ethnic Bias among Healthcare Professionals and its Influence on Healthcare Outcomes: a Systematic Review. *Am J Public Health*. 2015 Dec; 105(12):e60-76

## EDUCATION ADVANTAGE

## Preparing for the Board exam?

**From study help for the Board exam to videos on allergy-related topics and statistics, we have you covered!**

The College is rich in resources for Fellows-in-Training. This year the College published the new **4th Edition of the ACAAI Review for the Allergy & Immunology Boards** book. This 550-page essential preparation tool for the exam comes complete with hundreds of images and tables, key facts and more than 600 e-flashcards. Go to [education.acaai.org/brbook](http://education.acaai.org/brbook) for ordering details.

Another new study tool is the **AIM Self-Assessment** program. This online module consists of 108 case-based multiple-choice questions. Comprehensive discussion provides evidence-based explanations for all answer options as well as supporting references from current literature. Test yourself today! For more information, visit [education.acaai.org/AIMselfassessment](http://education.acaai.org/AIMselfassessment).

Start your board prep process with the **Board Review Corner** questions that are published monthly by FITs for FITs from current textbook content. There are more than 400 questions available in the Board Review Corner from selected allergy and immunology textbooks. Find the questions at [education.acaai.org/content/board-review-corner](http://education.acaai.org/content/board-review-corner).

And there's more!

Throughout the **College Learning Connection** (at [education.acaai.org](http://education.acaai.org)) you will find content to extend your exam preparation. There are webinars, microlearning modules and interactive tools on a full of array of clinical topics.



## EDUCATION ADVANTAGE

## Meeting patient needs

**The College adds Spanish language resources**

Approximately 41 million people over the age of 5 speak Spanish at home. Chances are, you have patients who would appreciate allergy and asthma information in Spanish. The College has provided several articles on our public website at [acaai.org/resources/espanol](http://acaai.org/resources/espanol). Recently, to better meet the needs of these patients, the College has translated more of our resources.

Created for in-office use, our patient guides enable allergists to work with patients to find relief from allergic conditions. The guides are available in both English and Spanish on the topics of asthma, children's asthma and atopic dermatitis. Last spring, two copies of the three guides in Spanish were sent to practicing members for use with Spanish-speaking patients. Translation of the guides was supported by Sanofi Genzyme and Regeneron. If you need more guides for your practice, visit our web page at [college.acaai.org/patient-brochures](http://college.acaai.org/patient-brochures).

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the College provided pandemic-related information in Spanish, including COVID-19 vaccine guidelines and FAQs for patients. Find these at [acaai.org/news/archive/2021](http://acaai.org/news/archive/2021). In addition, we added Spanish subtitles to important COVID-19 videos on the College's YouTube channel: "COVID-19 vaccine update" and "How to breathe if you have a respiratory infection like COVID-19." Find these and other College YouTube videos at [youtube.com/user/allergists](http://youtube.com/user/allergists).

The College's redesigned patient website, launched this summer, features a Spanish version of the College's eczema page, supported by Sanofi Genzyme and Regeneron.

The College plans to translate more resources moving forward in order to provide accurate, evidence-based information to those who speak Spanish and suffer from allergies and asthma.

# What was it like being AMA president during the COVID-19 pandemic?

We asked Susan R. Bailey MD, FACAAl, who finished her term as American Medical Association president in June. As an allergist, Dr. Bailey brought a unique perspective to the AMA presidency. She has a rich history with the College. She is a long-time College Fellow, former member of the Board of Regents and former speaker of the College House of Delegates.

## What was it like being AMA President during a pandemic? How did it change your agenda?

I have been working toward being AMA President for many years and expected it to be the pinnacle of my career. My inauguration was scheduled to be at the end of our annual House of Delegates meeting in June 2020 – and for a while last spring, we weren't even sure we were going to have a meeting because COVID-19 was shutting everything down. The AMA was able to organize a greatly abbreviated virtual meeting, so I was sworn in virtually instead of at a large gala celebration.

The role of the AMA President is to be the spokesperson of the organization, and in previous years that meant 200 – 300 days of travel giving speeches, lobbying, and developing relationships. I did my entire term virtually. It made me realize how much time is wasted with travel, and I was able to do multiple events in different places in a day. My theme was going to be "Let Doctors Be Doctors," focusing on the many impediments to taking care of our patients – from prior authorizations to EHR improvements to payment issues. I was able to still focus on that theme, albeit through a pandemic lens, by helping physicians get PPE, federal relief funds, and information about dealing with the pandemic (including vaccines).

## Have there been particular insights in your role as AMA president that come from being an allergist?

My allergy-immunology credentials were incredibly valuable during the pandemic in my role as spokesperson. I had instant credibility with the media, regulators, and legislators. My understanding of the immune response to COVID-19, antibody testing, and vaccines was quite helpful; I never dreamed that I would spend most of my presidency talking about immunology and vaccines. I was able to continue seeing patients via telemedicine during the pandemic, so

that experience was helpful in sharing the message of how we need to continue to be able to provide this service.

## Top 3 favorite accomplishments:

- 1 I moderated a series of live webinars with the FDA and the CDC entitled "What Physicians Need to Know" about COVID-19. Many important issues were discussed, many for the first time in public, spanning the possibility of using the Emergency Use Authorization process for COVID-19 vaccines to the management of complications from adenoviral vector vaccine thrombosis.
- 2 I actively participated in the Ad Council campaign "It's Up to You" to improve COVID-19 vaccine confidence nationwide.
- 3 I had a live online discussion with Doris Kearns Goodwin during the AMA National Advocacy Conference about U.S. Presidential history. She is a world-renowned presidential historian, public speaker and Pulitzer Prize-winning, New York Times best-selling author.



Susan R. Bailey, MD

## Other thoughts to impart to College members:

Getting big things done in this world requires big groups of people. All of our medical organizations, from county medical societies to state medical societies to our multiple specialty societies to the AMA, have to work together to make a difference. Each society plays a crucial role: county societies may be best positioned to deliver PPE; state medical societies are vital in scope of practice issues; and the College and other specialty societies are key in payment issues. Every allergist cannot be intimately involved in multiple situations at once, so it takes us all to make sure we are well represented. All of your organizations need and deserve your membership.

## COMMUNITY ADVANTAGE

By Deb Mahr, president, Alliance

# Looking forward to New Orleans!

**There is so much to do in The Big Easy! As you plan your busy schedule for the Annual Scientific Meeting, remember to include Alliance activities.**

The Alliance is so excited the 2021 ACAAI Annual Scientific Meeting will be in-person in New Orleans! Since the Annual Meeting was virtual in 2020, as president-elect, I was not able to do any planning for that meeting. I would like to thank Michelle Hedberg for allowing me to help plan the 2021 Alliance programs in New Orleans. We have been able to put together three mornings of fun and education.

We will begin Friday morning, Nov. 5, with "Let's Get Reacquainted and/or Make New Friends." Everyone has stories about their COVID-19 experiences. Let's share our uplifting and challenging moments.

On Saturday Nov. 6, we have a speaker planned who will give us some of the history of New Orleans. He loves being asked

questions about his city! He'll start with how New Orleans was settled, who was already here, and how the river played a major part of the settlements.

Sunday, Nov. 7 will be about "All That Jazz." We will hear about jazz in the Big Easy. The presentation includes Q & A followed by a performance.

There are so many places of interest and things to do in New Orleans. I have investigated cooking classes, walking tours of Jackson Square, the French Quarter, Garden District and the National World War II Museum. In addition to our planned activities, the Alliance will put together a list of places and activities Alliance members can meet at and do together on our own.

More details about Alliance events will follow in the coming months.



Deb Mahr





## NOLA has a lot to offer

Take a break from the Annual Meeting's world-class education to visit this historic city. From famous neighborhoods to nature and museums, New Orleans has plenty to do! Here are some great sites to visit in your free time.

- 1 French Quarter:** your visit to New Orleans wouldn't be complete without a stop in the French Quarter, one of the city's most historic neighborhoods. See the old-world architecture, Bourbon Street, Jackson Square and more.
- 2 Frenchman's Street:** This four-block area features live music, bars, restaurants and galleries.
- 3 Garden District:** Take a walk around this historic residential neighborhood to view some of the city's most beautiful homes.
- 4 City Park:** This popular site includes the New Orleans Botanical Garden and the Museum of Art. The park itself features beautiful trails and is the home of the world's largest grove of mature live oak trees.
- 5 National World War II Museum:** See an impressive display of artifacts and educational films documenting all aspects of World War II.
- 6 Cabildo:** Located in the French Quarter, this building once served as Louisiana's city hall and the Supreme Court and was the site of the Louisiana Purchase. It houses many rare artifacts of American history.
- 7 St. Louis Cemeteries:** Visit these beautiful above-ground, historical chambers through a guided tour or on your own.
- 8 New Orleans Museum of Art:** See more than 40,000 works of art. Don't miss the famous outdoor sculpture area!
- 9 Golf:** New Orleans offers a course for every level of play. There are a number of public courses, including two at City Park.