

## Executive Director's Message

I, too, am proud of AACAP's accomplishments in 2006. It was a year filled with forecasted and unplanned challenges. Yet, through the commitment and determination of AACAP leaders, members, supporters, and staff, we were able to make strides in improving the lives of children, adolescents, and families affected by mental illnesses.

Our biggest challenge and success was defined by our number one priority—increasing the number of child and adolescent psychiatrists in the United States.

The shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists has reached a crisis level. Currently, there are fewer than 7,500 in the United States. Several studies estimate that 30,000 are needed to treat the more than 15 million children and adolescents living with mental illnesses.

We organized our members and supporters to advocate for the passage of the Child Health Care Crisis Relief Act. This legislation will increase the number of well-trained mental health professionals by creating educational incentives and federal support for children's mental health training programs. It will authorize scholarships, loan repayment programs, training grants, and specialty training programs. The act's passage will help decrease the average post-school debt of more

than \$100,000 and hopefully persuade more medical students and general residents to enter the field of child and adolescent psychiatry.

Despite our efforts to educate policy makers about the benefits of treating mental illnesses and eliminating stigma, our legislation died in Congress in 2006. Nevertheless, each day we are gathering even more congressional support for its passing in 2007.

We were also at the forefront of a new opportunity that will support our number one priority. The "Post-Pediatrics Portal Project" opens doors for pediatricians to complete 36 months of integrated general and child and adolescent psychiatry training, which will help them meet the eligibility requirements for child and adult board certification. Traditionally, pediatricians needed five to six years of training to become a child and adolescent psychiatrist. Starting in July 2008, that time will have been cut nearly in half.

The "Post-Pediatrics Portal Project" is a step toward eliminating a major barrier in a family's decision to seek help. As pediatricians begin taking advantage of this special training opportunity, there will be more mental health professionals available to help families.

Our Annual Meeting continues to be our biggest recruitment tool. In San Diego at our



53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting, more than 360 medical students and residents participated in the exciting opportunities that the field of child and adolescent psychiatry has to offer. More than 3,400 of our members extended a warm welcome and mentorship. They also offered suggestions on which of the 300-plus scientific programs to attend. By linking our members with medical students and residents, we are encouraging our future physicians to enter a field that strives to help children and adolescents become healthy and productive.

Through the generosity of our supporters, the AACAP is able to develop countless programs, initiatives, and projects that work to improve the field of child and adolescent psychiatry so our members and other physicians can help the millions of children who need their skills and knowledge. In

2006, we received more than \$1.6 million in private and corporate donations. We extend our thanks to AACAP members like **Ron Filippi, M.D.**, who donated \$200,000 to support our opening plenary at our Annual Meeting by establishing the Karl A. Menninger, M.D., Opening Plenary. We also thank **John F. McDermott, M.D.**, for funding the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* Assistant Editor-in-Residence position and **John E. Schowalter, M.D.**, for establishing the John E. Schowalter Resident Member to Council with a \$50,000 gift. Drs. McDermott and Schowalter's contributions will connect residents with AACAP leadership.

We also thank the independent and corporate foundations that allow us to award research grants to our members so their discoveries can help improve practice techniques that help our children. To our *Campaign for America's Kids – Access Initiative* donors, thank you for contributing thousands of dollars to help make mental health services more accessible to children, adolescents, and families.

We have accomplished a lot with the funding we received in 2006. However, we are setting our fundraising goals even higher in 2007 because of the number of children who need help.

In 2007, the world's leading authority on children's mental health—AACAP—has the resolve to address challenges head-on. On behalf of our members, staff, and all of the children, adolescents, and families we serve, thank you to our donors for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Virginia Q. Anthony  
Executive Director



Above: The AACAP celebrates May is Mental Health Month. The Executive Committee is pictured with AACAP staff in front of the AACAP National Headquarters.

Right: At a business meeting.



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