

Surgeon general honors health education work

Three young family physicians were honored for their health education work by Surgeon General of the United States C. Everett Koop at the AAFP Convention.

Dr. Koop presented the Surgeon General's Medallion of Honor to Dr. John W. Richards of Augusta, Ga., and Dr. Alan Blum of Houston, Texas. A third recipient, who was unable to be in New Orleans for the presentation, was Dr. Thomas Houston of Wichita, Kan. All three AAFP members are leaders of Doctors Ought to Care, or DOC, a health activist group that works to provide health education to young people.

The surprise presentation occurred at an impromptu ceremony prior to Dr. Koop's keynote speech at the meeting.

DOC is known for its outspoken ads and television public service announcements ridiculing cigarette smoking and other forms of tobacco use.

Dr. Blum is assistant professor of family practice at the Baylor School of Medicine in Houston. Dr. Richards is associate professor of family medicine at the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta. Dr. Houston is director of the family practice residency at Wesley Medical Center, Wichita. They are, respectively, founder and chairman, president, and national coordinator of the DOC organization.



Miller photo

U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop (center) honored Dr. Alan Blum (left) and Dr. John Richards (right) for their health education work with Doctors Ought to Care (DOC) in a surprise ceremony at the AAFP Convention.

In his address, Dr. Koop called the audience's attention to the work with young people of the three FPs and DOC. This kind of effort, he said, was very crit-

ical because of the desperate need to educate young Americans and others all over the world to the danger of AIDS, as well as smoking and other health hazards. □

Outgoing president: Continue opposing differentials

The Academy should continue to urge the Health Care Financing Administration to end specialty and geographic fee differentials contained in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement policies, outgoing AAFP President Harry L. Metcalf recommended during his address to the AAFP Congress of Delegates.

"If necessary, we must institute legislation and incorporate the positive aspects of the Harvard Resource-Based Relative Value Scale study to accomplish this end," he told delegates. That study addressed apparent inequities in reimbursement for some physician services in comparison with others. (See stories on page 4.)

The AAFP Congress reaffirmed its long-standing concern about inequitable reimbursement by adopting his recommendation.

The outgoing AAFP president called

for strengthening of liaison with other primary care organizations, such as the American College of Physicians, the American Society of Internal Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

"We have far more in common with these primary care groups than we do differences," he observed. And now is not the time to indulge in parochialism, he added.

"There are too many proposals currently melding in the legislative arena which have strong and favorable implications for primary care physicians," he explained. "We must work in unity to safeguard our interests as these proceed through the legislative machinery."

This has been a year of success for the Academy and family practice, Dr. Metcalf told the Congress.

"There is no question that the course

set for the Academy and the specialty . . . by our early colleagues is responsible for the success we enjoy today," he said. "They overcame great difficulties to bring us to this point of success in our history, and there are greater difficulties yet to be surmounted in the future if we are to sustain our current position of prestige in medicine."

Dr. Metcalf recommended some advice from the Chinese philosopher Confucius lest anyone be tempted to rest on the specialty's laurels: "The man of virtue makes the difficulty to be overcome his first business, and success only a subsequent consideration."

"So while we are justified in allowing ourselves the joy of success," he said, "we should remember that success is a journey, not a destination." □