

## The 2006 Donald M. Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum

January 5-8, 2006 - Fairmont Scottsdale Princess - Scottsdale, AZ



The AAN held its fourth annual Donald M. Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum January 5-8 in Scottsdale, Arizona. The Forum, which was launched in 2003, is a competitive, prestigious, and award-winning program that focuses on cultivating neurologists who demonstrate a genuine interest in advocating for their profession and their patients. As of 2006, 120 neurologists from 37 US states and nine countries have completed the training and are committed to advocacy initiatives around the globe. The program blends media skills development with grassroots legislative advocacy training. Rather than centering the training on specific political issues, participants are asked to develop an advocacy "action plan" based on healthcare challenges they perceive as important where they live and practice.

The action planning process asks participants to identify specific goals as well as the target audiences, resources needed, success measures, and target dates that relate to each goal. The action plan becomes a road map for the advocate to follow over the course of the year, making seemingly daunting goals more manageable.

This year, 29 talented neurologists from throughout the United States, Guatemala, India, and the Philippines developed action plans on a wide number of priority Academy issues. Physician reimbursement, stroke prevention, patient safety and patient access to care emerged as key interests among attendees.

Ten previous Palatucci graduates returned as mentors to help coach the new advocates throughout the action planning process. As a new addition to the agenda this year, the mentors also participated in a Master's Class in Advocacy. Their training included a group problem-solving session on the advocates' proposed action plans and discussions on higher-level strategic advocacy. The mentors began the process of developing a group action plan to strategically tackle the issues of cognitive reimbursement and building public awareness about the challenges facing neurology.

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