



Fall 2009  
Vol. 1, No. 3

### Visit the WIC Website

Click [here](#) to visit our web site, filled with information just for the practice female cardiovascular physician. Find out about upcoming events, network and participate in our online virtual mentoring forum, where fellows in training can connect with established cardiologists willing to share their experience and knowledge.

### WIC Section Visiting Professor Program:

The WIC Visiting Professor Work Group of the WIC Section is in the process of targeting institutions for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. The goal of the WIC Section Visiting Professor program is to encourage female medical students and Internal Medicine residents to enter the field of cardiology. This is a great opportunity for an **Internal Medicine Program** to have a top female cardiologist visit their institution, give grand rounds, and meet with interested female students.

If you know of an Internal Medicine Program that would benefit from the Visiting Professor Program please contact Kelly Ventura at [kventura@acc.org](mailto:kventura@acc.org) with the following information:

- Your Name
- Name of Institution
- Contact Name and Phone number in the Department of Internal Medicine
- Name of Chief Resident (if different) and Contact Info

### WIC Section Chapter Networking Grants:

Is your chapter interested in hosting a networking event for Women in Cardiology? The WIC Section has a limited number of grants available to support such programs. If interested in applying, please contact Kelly Ventura at [kventura@acc.org](mailto:kventura@acc.org).

### Member Get a Member Program

Participate in our new recruitment program and recruit a new member to the cardiovascular care team today. For every CCA you recruit to ACC membership, you'll receive \$20 in discounts good toward ACCF educational products and programs. Top recruiters are eligible for additional prizes. For more information, visit [www.acc.org/CCArecruitment](http://www.acc.org/CCArecruitment).

Managing Editor: [Kelly Ventura](#).

Current WIC Council Chair:  
Carole Warnes, M.D., F.A.C.C.



## Summer program sets high school girls on path to cardiology career

When 16 high school girls from the south side of Chicago arrived at Northwestern University for its first Cardiology Summer Academy, they were full of high spirits and ready for an adventure. All of the girls had just finished their junior year at the Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago, a public school with a curriculum emphasizing math, science and technology. Each day as they slipped into their lab coats, they had a new chance to see what their future could be.

"This is a good age group for us to target, to encourage their interest in science and cardiology," says program leader Martha Gulati, MD, MS, FACC. "They're very open to the world. They're very excited about their future."

The summer program was a collaboration between Northwestern's Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute and the Feinberg School Medicine's Institute for Women's Health Research. It offered the girls an intense week of immersion in cardiology, with activities that included:

- Learning about basic cardiovascular anatomy and physiology
- Dissecting a pig heart
- Observing cardiac surgery
- Learning about the epidemiology of heart disease, including current statistics on race and gender
- Exploring various cardiac imaging techniques
- Exploring the behavioral risk factors for heart disease
- Learning about cardiac arrhythmias and their treatments, including pacemakers, defibrillators, and ICDs
- Earning CPR certification

The girls were also encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices themselves. Each day they were served a heart-healthy breakfast and lunch that not only provided fuel for their busy schedule, but also introduced them to new foods and a more adventurous way of eating. They kept a food diary, analyzed it for nutrient content, and developed a plan for healthier eating. And, as part of the program, they participated in a daily one-hour cardio and strength-training work-out.

To mark the end of a remarkable week, families were invited for a graduation ceremony that included a healthy meal prepared by the hospital's chef. Dr. Gulati told the group that she hoped at least one of them would become a cardiologist. As the evening drew to a close, one of the girls gave her a hug and whispered in her ear, "I'm going to be that one."

## WIC Section and Council goals focus on mentoring, networking

*Personal relationships key to attracting more women to cardiology*

The number of female cardiologists has doubled in the last decade, but women still account for less than 20 percent of all heart specialists. Improving those statistics will require a personal touch, says Carole A. Warnes, MD, FACC, and a professor of medicine and consultant in cardiovascular diseases and pediatric cardiology at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN.

As the new chair of the ACC's Women in Cardiology Council, Dr. Warnes has several plans in the works, most of which draw on mentoring and networking to entice talented women to the field of cardiology and enhance their opportunities for career advancement.

"With the epidemic of heart disease in this country, we need women in cardiology," Dr. Warnes says. "How do we attract women to the profession? How do we provide role models? Mentorship is very important. I have a real passion for it."

One idea is to provide travel awards to selected female fellows in training (FITs) who want to attend the ACC annual scientific sessions, pairing them up with professional members for some one-on-one time. Informally dubbed "meeting buddies," the program would not only enhance the fellows' educational experience, it would foster relationships with older, more experienced female cardiologists and could sway career decisions.

Dr. Warnes wants to get female FITs involved in being mentors themselves. One way would be to identify female medical students or residents who might be considering cardiology as a career and invite them to participate in the WIC Section. FITs could begin by offering guidance on choosing a cardiology fellowship or tips on how to ace an interview before a fellowship selection committee, for example.

"These programs set the tone for the kind of networking we all need to do in the future," Dr. Warnes says. "When you're starting out as a cardiology fellow or a junior staff member, mentorship is absolutely key to your success."

Dr. Warnes is also working on funding a return of the successful "Women's Career and Leadership Development Conference." This two-day conference has been held twice in the past under the leadership of Mary Norine "Minnow" Walsh, MD, FACC, and Athena Poppas, MD, FACC. It offers workshops on everything from developing an effective communication style, to understanding politics at work, improving time management, negotiating effectively, networking with colleagues, conducting an effective job search, and winning promotions. The conference is tentatively slated for next year.

Another WIC Section initiative will focus on the dearth of women in invasive subspecialties, specifically interventional cardiology and electrophysiology. "Women are interested in these subspecialties but many are concerned about the risks of radiation exposure during pregnancy," Dr. Warnes says. "We hope to get female fellows thinking about this career choice again."

To address concerns about radiation safety, an international working group is being formed. Its purpose is to gather and disseminate data on the health of women who work in high-radiation areas during childbearing years. The project is expected to involve representatives from the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Finally, Dr. Warnes hopes to recruit more female cardiothoracic surgeons to the WIC Section and Council. As role models and mentors, female cardiac surgeons are in an ideal position to encourage young women to broaden their career horizons to include this male-dominated subspecialty, she says.

**Make sure to visit and bookmark the [WIC website](#) for news of the WIC Council and Section, virtual mentoring program, outreach materials, and more.**