

**Bill Branch, MD**  
**October 2007**

I am still energized by the amazing, exciting International Conference on Communication in Healthcare held in Charleston. What was wonderful about this meeting? It had a feel of wholeness, of being together, of being small enough to see everyone, but large enough--more than 350 attendees--to be exciting, of high quality science mixed with imaginative teaching sessions, and of wonderful young new attendees presenting their work alongside old friends, many with the Academy since its inception.

The ICCH experience was especially rich because AACH members rubbed shoulders and interacted constantly with colleagues from Europe, Canada, Middle East, South America and Asia.

Carolyn Clancy's wonderful keynote address showed to me that we are an audience that counts in the US health policy area. Richard Seltzer spoke so movingly I think there were few with dry eyes and most of us will find his story reverberating periodically in our thoughts. Theo Schofield's erudite address brought us the wise perspective of a senior scientist who has contributed for many years to high quality care in the British health system.

Mack Lipkin, the Academy's Founding President, received the Engel Award.

Richard Frankel and Howard Beckman shared the Payer Award. These three awardees brought a sense of history and continuity.

We have so many to thank for planning. I will single out for special praise again Shak Rehman and Greg Makoul. Shak tells me he received a steady stream of helpful suggestions from Sandra van Dulmen, Wolf Langewitz and Theo Schofield representing EACH.

I started to say we are coming of age--in the sense of holding an internationally prominent research and educational forum. But I'd rather think we are still young and innovative as we develop this part of AACH. It feels better to believe that we are growing fast and anticipating bigger things to come, and that we retain our joie de vivre.

All the best,  
Bill Branch, President, AACH