

ASA Interim Board of Directors Meeting

A New Organizational Improvement Initiative for the ASA

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ASA Director for California



The interim meeting of the ASA Board of Directors was held on August 18 and 19, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois. California members who attended this meeting were Drs. Linda Mason, ASA Director from California; Mark Singleton, ASA Alternate Director from California; Virgil Airola, CSA President; Michael Champeau, CSA President-Elect; Kenneth Pauker, Chair of LPAD; Patricia Kapur, First Vice-Chair ASA Annual Meeting; and Ms. Barbara Baldwin, Chief Executive Officer.

The four review committees that met on Saturday morning were Administrative Affairs, Professional Affairs, Scientific Affairs, and Finance.

Committee on Administrative Affairs

The major discussion in the Administrative Affairs Review Committee was the special report about the organizational improvement initiative that was submitted by the ASA Executive Committee. Because of the complex organization of the ASA, which currently has over 42,000 members, an external consultant was engaged to review and assess in-depth the organization's management process, policies, practices, and leadership effectiveness. The key findings were that the ASA has a number of strengths, and that its Executive Committee is committed to building ASA's capability to meet its member needs while remaining financially sound. Opportunities to improve include providing adequate staffing with employees, creating all of the work processes needed to operate the organization effectively, and creating one ASA staff organization, identifying synergies and integrating the Park Ridge and Washington offices.

One of the subsequent accomplishments was to hire a director of Human Resources, Karen Buehring. Another of the recommendations was to have two executive vice-presidents, one in charge of the Park Ridge office (search ongoing), and one for external affairs and general counsel who would be based in Washington, this position being held by Mr. Ron Szabat. It was also stated that both of these vice-presidents would report to the president who, according to the bylaws, is the CEO of the Society. The ASA also has hired a new Director of Communications, Dawn Glossa.

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The Committee on Bylaws has recommended that the ASA establish a medical student component, which would consist of five delegates. The Reference Committee recommended that these delegates not have voting rights.

The Committee on the Anesthesia Care Team report was discussed regarding the supervision requirements of nurse anesthetists and perfusionists. It was recommended that perfusionists should not be included in this equation because perfusionists usually work under the direction of surgeons. Additionally, there was much discussion about the safety of using nurse anesthetist students alone in a room with an anesthesiologist supervising two SRNAs at the same time and not having a CRNA present in either of the rooms.

Committee on Professional Affairs

The Committee on Economics reported that they are working on a web-based coding product, and they are trying to determine how a form can be distributed to our members. Also, they reported that CPT codes were being modified for anesthesia payment guidelines for postoperative pain procedures—a comment period which, if approved, could result in economic benefit for ASA members.

Given the public policy initiatives undertaken by the Washington office, it was recommended that a liaison be developed between the Washington office and the Committee on Governmental Affairs to decide how the ASA should address public policy.

Committee on Scientific Affairs

The Committee on Critical Care gave a report that recommended approval of a final draft of the perioperative anesthesiology-centered ACLS module. The Committee on Transplant Anesthesia presented a sample policy for organ donation after cardiac death. This is an approved committee work product that medical staffs now may use as a model if they are performing these procedures.

The Committee on Annual Meeting Sites reported that they had met and recommended that the 2014 Annual Meeting be moved from New Orleans to Atlanta. However, there was much testimony supporting a return to New Orleans in 2014, especially since we will be there in 2009. After the testimony, it was recommended that the meeting be kept in New Orleans.

Committee on Finance

The ASA funding for the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research was discussed at this meeting. Reasons were discussed for maintaining the

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2007 level of funding from the ASA to FAER, some of which were based on the need for funds for the organizational improvement initiative. The current donation of \$1,750,000 that is given to FAER by the ASA will not be changed, but the ASA has approved a restricted grant to FAER for \$500,000 next year for Brain Functioning Monitoring Research. The Wood Library contribution from the ASA will decrease from \$400,000 to \$200,000. It was noted that both of these foundations have significant reserves, and the board did not feel that these decisions would affect the functioning of these foundations. They reiterated their support for scientific research that is so necessary for the advancement of anesthesiology practice.

Board of Directors Session

Candidates for upcoming elections for ASA officers presented brief statements on their qualifications. The only contested election for next year will be between Dr. Robert Johnstone and Dr. Eric Mason for the office of Vice-President for Professional Affairs.

A legislative report was given on national and state issues. Ron Szabat, J.D., presented several issues that are important to anesthesiology. First was the anesthesia conversion factor. The rules that will be finalized in November propose that the anesthesia conversion factor will increase by a net amount of \$3.30 per unit (after accounting for various technical negative adjustments). This regulation, which was proposed on July 2, 2007, would result in an increase of 32 percent in the anesthesia conversion factor if approved.

The next important issue was the Sustainable Growth Rate relief. Absent Congressional intervention, Medicare Part B will cut 10 percent of the reimbursement for anesthesiology for Medicare patients and 5 percent for several years thereafter. A new initiative, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007, HR 3162, avoids the 10 percent to 15 percent cuts in 2008-2009, adds 0.5 percent positive update for two years, and will take inpatient drugs out of the SGR formula. However, there is no such Medicare provision in a bill in the Senate.

The Medicare teaching rule is still an ongoing problem. HR 2053, which is sponsored by Representative Becerra, a Democrat from California, already has 88 sponsors signed on. A Senate bill will be sponsored by Senators Rockefeller and Kyl. Increasing the payment to anesthesiologists to supervise two residents at a time will avoid the cuts of 50 percent that are occurring now. This would probably cost about \$40 million a year for the government. Mr. Szabat also stressed how important it is for ASA members to support the ASA PAC.

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Lisa Percy, J.D., then discussed issues occurring at the state level. The last opt-out was two years ago. An opt-out is pending in Wisconsin and is currently at the medical board level. Attempts at expanding scope of practice have failed in Utah, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, and Louisiana. Also, some office-based regulations have been adopted in 22 states now. The AAs have become licensed in North Carolina and there is a new school of AAs forming in the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

Committee Appointments

Active and resident members who are interested in becoming more involved in the CSA and would like to start by serving on a committee need to contact Michael W. Champeau, M.D., President-Elect, at m.champeau@comcast.net or the CSA office at (800) 345-3691 or csa@csahq.org by February 1, 2008, indicating interest in the following divisions and committees. For more information about the committees and the two divisions, call the CSA office or refer to the CSA Bylaws at http://www.csahq.org/pdf/csa_bylaws.pdf.

Divisions

Educational Programs
Legislative and Practice Affairs

Standing Committees

Committee on Bylaws
Committee on Finance and Administration
Committee on Peer Review
Committee on Public and Professional Communications

Special Committees

Committee on Physicians Health and Well Being