

ASA Director's Report

The ASA Looks to the Future

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Many highlights of the October 2011 ASA Annual Meeting in Chicago already have been made available to CSA members through various communications from the ASA and the CSA (as in the “CSA Online First” blog posting shortly after the meeting by Dr. Karen Sibert). Perhaps of greatest interest, the House of Delegates (HOD) elected Dr. Jane Fitch, Chair of the Anesthesia Department at the University of Oklahoma and a former nurse anesthetist, President-Elect of the ASA. She is well known and a friend to many of us, and also has served as Chair of the ASA Committee on Governmental Affairs. Another highlight was the Rovenstine Lecture by UCLA Chair of Anesthesiology Dr. Patricia Kapur, in which she boldly challenged anesthesiologists to re-envision our profession, reaching for ever-higher responsibilities in the care of the most complex and difficult-to-manage patients.

Two Reversals

The HOD reversed the thrust of two projects that already had been underway within the Committee on Quality Management and Departmental Administration (QMDA). The “Seal of Quality” initiative, which sought to bestow a distinction of excellence on hospital departments of anesthesiology meeting a matrix of measures, was soundly disapproved, despite a generally positive demonstration project conducted at several volunteer sites around the country. It was clear from the debate that a majority of delegates believed either that the concept was unrealistic and without meaningful value, or that the merit of such an award would not receive sufficient value or recognition from key administrative and regulatory bodies, which had been one of the intended purposes of the project.

Another QMDA project, led by its new chair, Dr. Beverly Philip, and initiated by immediate Past President Mark Warner, M.D., was to develop an educational product on deep sedation by non-anesthesiologist physicians. It was referred back to committee rather than being advanced on the basis of the work that the committee’s task force has presented thus far. There remains vigorous philosophical division regarding the basic notion that non-anesthesiologists should administer deep sedation under any circumstances, or that the ASA should endorse such practices. It is unclear at present where this project is headed, yet

by referral back to committee, the HOD voiced at least some recognition that these practices are taking place, and that ASA must address them.

Four New Measures

The Committee on Performance and Outcomes Measurement (CPOM) submitted four new measures to the HOD, three of which were approved:

- Post-Anesthetic Transfer of Care Measure: Procedure Room to Intensive Care Unit
- Preoperative Use of Aspirin for Patients with Drug-Eluting Coronary Artery Stents
- Registry Participation Measure

The fourth proposed measure, Prevention of Postoperative Vomiting (Pediatrics)—Multimodal Therapy, was referred to the Committee on Pediatric Anesthesia so that it, appropriately, would have an opportunity to review and comment on this document.

Practice Guidelines, Advisories and Recommendations

Four submissions from the Committee on Standards and Practice Parameters were approved. Two were Practice Guidelines: “Central Venous Access” (which had been disapproved last year) and “Acute Pain Management in the Perioperative Setting.” Two were Practice Advisories: “Perioperative Visual Loss Associated with Spine Surgery” and “Preanesthesia Evaluation.”

The Committee on Pediatric Anesthesia submitted for formal adoption as an ASA Statement a revised and updated version of a decade-old committee work product, “Practice Recommendations for Pediatric Anesthesia.” This was approved and will hopefully provide guidance to departments in privileging for different categories of pediatric and neonatal care.

Future Development of the ASA

Administrative issues of importance that generated discussion at the HOD this year had to do with the future development of the society in both its physical needs and areas of administrative staff structure. It has become clear that the present headquarters in Park Ridge are insufficient to meet the growing needs of the ASA. The city of Park Ridge intends to remain a mainly residential community and will not invest in the infrastructural improvements necessary to meet the electronic and communications needs of the ASA in the coming years. In this context, what several years ago may have seemed prudent—the purchase of a commercial property adjacent to the HQ building—may indeed not have been a wise decision. A task force on land use and development

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has identified a property 15 miles northwest of O'Hare Airport in an active industrial/high-tech complex that would meet the anticipated needs of the ASA in the coming years. Further proposals regarding this property are expected.

An ongoing debate exists as to how to best dismantle the dual Executive Vice President (EVP) structure (Park Ridge and Washington, D.C.) that has been ASA's working model for most of the past decade. The intent is to replace it with a more effective structure featuring a single executive in the Park Ridge office. There has been continuing debate about whether the current EVP in Park Ridge (Mr. John Thorner, who this past year addressed the CSA HOD) should assume the position of interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or if the position should even be termed "CEO." The following language was adopted at the HOD after impassioned and lengthy debate: "The CEO shall be evaluated by the Board of Directors and shall be under the direction and supervision of the President and the Administrative Council. The BOD shall approve the selection of the CEO."

In December, ASA President Jerry Cohen called a special meeting of the ASA BOD by telephone conference call, to inform the board that Mr. Ron Szabat (the current EVP in Washington, D.C.) had indicated that he desired to be considered as a second internal candidate, in addition to Mr. Thorner, for the CEO position. The Administrative Council felt that this situation required the initiation of a national search in order to best serve the interests of the ASA. The BOD voted to approve such a search, although there were some dissenting votes. It is interesting that both the CSA and the ASA are concurrently moving through the difficult process of restructuring senior staff positions and searching for the right person(s) to lead the organizations into the future.

CSA Bulletin Cover for Volume 61, Number 1 "Late Winter Storm Wonderland"

The cover photograph of this *Bulletin* issue was taken in mid-March 2011. A late winter snowstorm blanketed the Lake Tahoe area, turning a usual scene into a quiet wonderland. The image was captured with a Canon 7D DSLR and processed in Photoshop and Silver Efex Pro.

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