PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

HEADLINE: A Year in Review: Thank You for Being Part of the Academy’s Success

When I assumed the office of president for the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM), I took up the personal charge to “Get the Job Done.” Now that my term is coming to a close, I would like to review areas in which the organization has moved forward and what remains to be accomplished in the future.

Guided by strategic plans developed by the board of directors, the Academy realized several goals this past year. To increase funding sources, the AAPM Foundation was created. I am pleased to say that the Foundation is up and running with the mission of expanding the Academy’s vital work with an overarching focus to advocate for patient safety by providing funding support to expand and enhance education and research. The AAPM Foundation’s Campaign Executive Committee is comprised of thought leaders who are actively involved in outreach efforts to raise awareness as well as significant funding to support AAPM’s continuing medical education and research goals. I encourage you to visit the Foundation’s website at http://aapmfoundation.org and consider a donation to this significant work.

Another goal area includes the Academy’s continued efforts to expand its education initiatives, which has been realized in part through the introduction of the Safe Opioid Prescribing course at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Palm Springs, California. Survey results released November 2012 demonstrated the value of the Safe Opioid Prescribing course as 93% of respondents reported that they changed their practice after taking the course. In addition, more than half of the respondents to the survey reported that they have improved their practices related to prescribing extended release or long-acting opioid therapy, by taking the following actions: monitoring and maintaining patients on these medications; conducting risk assessments and overall evaluation of patients who are potential candidates; and communicating with and counseling patients and caregivers about their safe use and accessing and utilizing a Prescription Monitoring Program. The course was also presented live at the Florida Academy of Family Physicians Meeting this past December.

Additional advocacy efforts included meeting with several members of the board of the American Chronic Pain Association to discuss meaningful ways collaboration can be achieved to improve care and communication between pain physicians and clinicians and the people they seek to help. To assist your advocacy efforts for pain medicine, AAPM has developed pertinent advocacy tools you can use to bring visibility and credibility to the specialty of pain medicine in the advocacy section at http://www.painmed.org.

As President of the Academy, my mission was to complete items that were initiated by former leadership and explore new areas for future perusal. Although we have accomplished much this past year, there are still goals to accomplish. AAPM will continue to pursue training and certification in pain medicine and has developed phased strategies to obtain this goal. The Academy will continue
to move forward in raising funds through the AAPM Foundation, as well as diversifying our revenue streams. Core to AAPM’s mission, the development of a medical student education curriculum will remain in the forefront of our efforts. And finally, I realize the need to improve the functionality of AAPM’s committees and what they can offer back to members. Your involvement brings strength to the organization as you effectively serve and contribute in your areas of expertise and interest, providing critical contributions to AAPM’s mission.

I would like to thank Phil Saigh, the Executive Director and the AAPM staff, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, as well as you, the members, who were all instrumental in this past year’s accomplishments. I also want to thank my fellow colleagues at Baylor who afforded me the privilege to dedicate time to my role as President. And finally, thank you to my wife, Ellen, who has given up so much to allow me to pursue my career, to which I am very thankful.

As my term closes, AAPM welcomes Lynn R. Webster, MD, as its 29th President. Dr. Webster is one of the nation’s leading researchers and experts in the field of prescription drug abuse and overdose deaths. He advocates that pain therapy be accessible to patients, safely prescribed by medical professionals, and that patients safely use medications. Dr. Webster actively works within the industry to develop safer and more effective therapies for chronic pain and addiction. He is also a leading researcher in exploring the relationship of medications and sleep, with particular interest in analgesic-induced sleep-disordered breathing. I am confident that Dr. Webster’s tenure as AAPM’s next President will continue to move the Academy forward in its mission and vision.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President—it has been an honor and a privilege.

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