

President's Message

 by Peter M. Knapp, Jr., MD

2011 Pre-Convention News



Peter M. Knapp, Jr., MD

The 85th Annual NCS Meeting is ready for you in sunny Palm Springs, California, October 18 – 22, 2011. NCS Secretary, Dr. Patrick McKenna, has worked diligently with the program committee to organize an exciting and innovative meeting for North Central Section members.

The meeting starts Tuesday, October 18th with two live surgery broadcasts of robotic partial nephrectomy and robotic sacrocolpopexy. The remainder of the day is dedicated to the first North Central Section Practice Management and Health Policy Symposium with presentations from Mr. Mark Painter, Dr. Neal Shore and Dr. Jeffrey Kaufman. Considering today's difficult healthcare environment, the first NCS Practice Management and Health Policy Symposium is designed to benefit NCS members in all practice settings including academic, independent and hospital based practices.

The academic portion of the program will begin on Wednesday, October 19th. Dr. McKenna has organized academic sessions covering all areas of urology with presentations from the best of the NCS. Guest speakers, Dr. Craig Comiter and Dr. Peter Carroll, will deliver state-of-the-art lectures covering male and female urinary incontinence and the latest advancements in the management of prostate cancer. Dr. Larry Einhorn will deliver the John P. Donohue Memorial Lecture on Friday, October 21st, honoring the accomplishments of Dr. Donohue while he was a North Central Section member and chairman of the Department of Urology at Indiana University.

My wife, Barb, and I would like to welcome everyone to beautiful Palm Springs. Local Arrangements Chair Couple, Dr. James and Elise Ulchaker, worked to provide an exciting social and cultural event calendar to take advantage of the climate and activities available in beautiful Palm Springs.

We look forward to seeing all of you in Palm Springs October 18 – 22.

Secretary's Report

by Patrick H. McKenna, MD



Patrick H. McKenna, MD

Be sure to attend the quickly-approaching 85th Annual Meeting of the North Central Section in beautiful Rancho Mirage, California. Remember, this meeting will feature a **new format**. The conference will be held at the Westin Mission Hills which is one of the nicest resorts we have visited. It has excellent meeting facilities, three golf courses in the area and is close to the airport and Palm Springs.

As mentioned above, there will be a **new meeting format**, borrowed from the Western Section. The meeting will start with a full day of activity on Tuesday, October 18th, so plan to arrive in Rancho Mirage on Monday. The meeting will start with live robotic surgery being brought to us by Dr. Indy Gill and locally moderated by Dr. Arie Shalhav. This will be followed by a full day devoted to

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practice management and health policy. Our President, Dr. Peter Knapp, will moderate the morning session which will feature Mark Painter providing a “practice tool kit.” This session serves to update us on the latest issues related to coding and billing. Dr. Neal Shore will discuss the integration of medical services into your practice, while Dr. Jeff Kaufman will update us on the RUC audit process. Lunch will be provided as Lisa Ohrin, JD, a leading authority on medical regulation and health policy, tells us how changes in health policy and regulation impact urology.

Dr. Herbert Riemenschneider will moderate the afternoon session dedicated to health policy. Dr. Jeff Kaufman will provide a national urology health policy update and Joe Arite will follow with a state update. Our own Dr. Gary Kirsh will provide practical implications for our group and private practices, while Dr. J. Quentin Clemens will do the same for academic practices. Dr. Kirsh will end the session with a short section discussing how urologists can stay involved in the process of changing health policy.

We received over 275 abstracts this year and the program committee worked hard to include as many of the outstanding abstracts as possible. Our section continues to have superb clinical and academic productivity. We have retained many of the successful components of our past meetings with some new additions. Therefore, we will have a combination of state-of-the-art lectures, panel discussions, early morning breakfast courses, abstracts and posters. We will draw on many of our own talented and nationally renowned clinical and academic leaders to contribute to the meeting.

Dr. Knapp has chosen several outstanding speakers who will cover a variety of topics. Innovation is the theme of the meeting. Dr. Knapp has also organized a tribute to Dr. John P. Donahue and Indiana Urology. Dr. Lawrence Einhorn will provide the Honorary Donahue Lecture. Dr. Craig Comiter from Stanford and Dr. Peter Carroll from UCSF will provide state-of-the-art lectures and be involved in early morning sessions as well as panel discussions. Dr. Steve Wilson, a leader in use of prosthetics, will discuss new frontiers in that area.

Dr. Matthew Gettman, chair of the Young Urologist Committee, has organized an outstanding Young Urologist Symposium on financial planning for the young urologists. Two outstanding financial planning counselors will discuss investing and several NCS physicians will join them in the last section in a round table discussion of the financial advantages of different practice models. This will be held Thursday morning.

Dr. Robert Bahnson will provide a summary of changes occurring at the American Board of Urology. He will specifically cover Maintenance of Certification and changes in the format of the recertification test. We are lucky to have Dr. Dennis Pessis join us as AUA President-Elect. He will provide an AUA update and participate in a panel that includes our other AUA representatives: Dr. Richard Memo, AUA treasurer, and Dr. Steven Nakada, our AUA board representative.

Do not plan to leave early because the Saturday program is full of exciting sessions, including state-of-the-art lectures by Dr. Peter Carroll and the Resident GU Quiz Bowl!

Throughout the meeting we will have both breakfast and lunch medical education seminars covering key topics organized by our industry sponsors. The exhibit hall is in direct proximity to the meeting and there will be ample time to visit the displays. Our industry sponsors play an important role in supporting our annual meeting.

October is an excellent time to be in Rancho Mirage, California! Elise and James Ulchaker have put together an exciting social program. “Bring the Kids” should be the theme, since the hotel is close to the airport and our major social event will be right on the property. Peter and Barbara Knapp will host the Friday night banquet, also on the property. We are looking forward to mingling with old friends and making new friendships at the social functions. The area boasts many interesting outings whether you want to travel the Palm Springs aerial tram up Mount San Jacinto, see the San Andreas Fault by dune buggy, or visit the local zoo. This is a meeting not to be missed!

The NCS Board was busy at the interim meeting tackling many subjects. The meeting format change represents one of the biggest changes approved by the Board. The changes will go into effect with this meeting and continue with the Chicago meeting in 2012. The NCS Visiting Professor Program was instituted and the Board Representatives were challenged to get 100 percent participation. This program identifies the top urologic talent in our section and provides a grant to state urological societies to have a renowned NCS speaker at their annual meeting. I am happy to report that 100 percent state participation has been achieved this year.

Our Young Urologist Committee continues to actively represent young urologists and made several solid suggestions to improve the meeting to support younger members’ attendance. Many of these suggestions have been incorporated into our upcoming meeting. Our resident group has also been active and is working to have a program for residents at each of our annual meetings. The Board approved waving the registration fee to allow residents that are not presenting papers to attend the scientific meetings.

We are pleased that another NCS member was selected by the AUA to be the Gallagher Health Policy Scholar. Congratulations, Dr. James Ulchaker!

Several bylaws changes were approved and will be presented at the annual meeting. The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the AUA Board Alternate position which will be selected by the membership at the annual meeting.

It is a privilege to serve as your secretary and I appreciate the work done by Wendy Weiser and her entire staff. Sue O’Sullivan, our managing director, has made my job easy as I transitioned into the position. Our president, Dr. Knapp, and the entire Board have been very supportive and actively work to improve our Section.

Linda and I are looking forward to seeing and meeting new friends in Rancho Mirage, California.

Treasurer's Report

by Gary M. Kirsh, MD



Gary M. Kirsh, MD

More meeting registrations are coming in as we get closer to the NCS 2011 Annual Meeting, October 18 – 22, 2011, in Rancho Mirage, California, and we are looking forward to another profitable and successful meeting.

The 2011 financial report includes both the annual meeting cash surplus and the Educational Fund annual performance. The Educational Fund of the NCS has a balance of \$2,424,651 at June 30, 2011. NCS investment guidelines suggest a distribution of low liquidity with long-term growth goals.

The NCS fund balance, as of June 30, 2011, totals \$2,639,608. The year to date surplus is \$193,247. As of June 30, 2011, NCS has one active money market operating account that is held at Merrill Lynch in Baltimore, Maryland. Robert W. Costos of Kelly Group is managing the account. This account is used for NCS general operating transactions and convention related transactions. As of June 30, 2011, the operating account has a balance of \$208,757.

NCS President Dr. Peter Knapp and Secretary Dr. Patrick McKenna are working together to plan another outstanding NCS Annual Meeting in Rancho Mirage, California. Their combined creativity and skillfulness will ensure another outstanding NCS Annual Meeting that will provide additional value to NCS members and meeting attendees. The Local Arrangements Chair Couple, Dr. James & Elise Ulchaker, are working to ensure an excellent meeting site in Rancho Mirage and are anticipating everyone's presence at the meeting.

I await an exciting and successful 2011 Annual Meeting for NCS with many state-of-the-art presentations. I look forward to seeing each of you at our annual meeting October 18 – 22, 2011, in Rancho Mirage, California.

From the NCS Representative to the AUA Board of Directors

by Stephen Y. Nakada, MD



Stephen Y. Nakada, MD

Greetings fellow section members! It has been a brisk and rich experience joining the AUA Board of Directors this spring with Dr. Dennis Pessis ascending to become the AUA president-elect. Congratulations to Dennis and Amy on this great honor! It is indeed an honor and privilege for me to represent the North Central Section on the AUA Board and I look forward to reporting many exciting initiatives to all of you in this role.

This past AUA meeting in Washington D.C. proved to be well-attended and AUA President Datta Wagle presided over a strong scientific and social program. Congratulations go to our Section's own Dr. David Uehling who received the Gold Cane Award at the awards banquet.

The AUA Health Policy Committee, led by Dr. Steven Schlossberg, functions in impressive fashion and successfully supports urologists in a challenging healthcare environment. I urge you to attend the Joint Advocacy Committee (JAC) in early March 2012. The JAC provides urologists the opportunity to "take to the hill" to voice their concerns and ideas on healthcare to leaders of Congress. At this point in time, the work of this group remains paramount to all practicing urologists.

Regarding research, Dr. Johannes Vieweg continues to be a proactive AUA research chair. At this stage, Dr. Vieweg has put forth the NURA (National Urologic Research Agenda) and begun a full-fledged effort to promote and support physician-scientists in urology via the expanding AUA Scholars Program. Our section is fully vetted supporting fellows in this program.

NCSAUA INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Industry Partnerships are a vital part of our success. The NCS is currently seeking Industry Partners who share our commitment to growth and excellence in the field of urology.

The partnership packages we offer include additional marketing opportunities and enhanced exposure throughout the meeting. Through this program, we hope to work in tandem with our industry colleagues to identify ways to enhance our current member programs and implement new projects that will lead to improved patient care through better physician education and mentoring. Please invite your industry contacts to become NCS Industry Partners. Partnership packages are promotional opportunities and, unlike educational grants, are appropriate to discuss with your sales representatives. Please ask them to contact Donna Kelly at donna@wjweiser.com for more information. If you have vendors you do regular business with, please ask them to become more involved with NCS. Thank you for your help!

Dr. Elspeth McDougall, director of Office Education, has expanded and improved CME courses both at the annual meeting and throughout the year. The AUA Ultrasound Course and AUA Course of Choice have been brought to our section meetings with success in the past, and I urge you to look into the many strong CME programs offered.

This past spring, Dr. Robert Flanigan completed a memorable term as AUA secretary. Of the many contributions made by Dr. Flanigan during his tenure as secretary, producing the Core Curriculum and his involvement in international urology are two that stand out in my mind. As many of you know, this fall the AUA treasurer-elect will be selected. Officer selection is now both a Nominating Committee and board process. Our own Dr. Rich Memo has served most admirably in this role to date.

My wife, Deanna, and I (and our little Sarah) are looking forward to the North Central Section Meeting in Palm Springs in October, and we hope to see many of you there. We know President, Dr. Peter Knapp, and Secretary, Dr. Patrick McKenna, will put on an outstanding scientific program. Moreover, we know the social program will be great fun under the usual excellent direction of WJ Weiser & Associates and the Local Arrangements Committee Chairs, Jim and Elise Ulchaker.

Lastly, please feel free to talk to me or email me (nakada@urology.wisc.edu) with any questions or concerns regarding issues involving our great section and the AUA. Once again, I am most honored to serve as your representative to the AUA.

Federal Affairs Update:

Imaging under Attack

by Joe Arite - Associate Director of Government Affairs



Joe Arite

If the impending 30 percent cut to physician reimbursements wasn't enough to contend with, physicians around the country will also be fighting for their right to utilize advanced diagnostic imaging in the best interest of their patients, and be reimbursed properly for performing this service.

The proposed physician fee schedule released in early July does not look good for physicians across the board. Because of the current payment formula, the Sustainable Growth rate (SGR), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are required to implement cuts unless Congress steps in and prevents them. In addition to these cuts, CMS also would expand its multiple procedure payment reduction policy to physicians who interpret the results of certain advanced diagnostic imaging scans.

Over the past several years, legislative and regulatory changes have led to significant cuts in Medicare payments for advanced imaging and other diagnostic imaging procedures. Payments for some services have been reduced more than 60% between 2006 and 2013. Continued reductions to imaging services cannot be absorbed by physician practices without impacting quality and access to high quality care. The volume of outpatient diagnostic imaging services began trending downward in 2007, and in 2010, volume for both standard and advanced imaging services per fee-for-service beneficiary actually fell below the 2009 levels. Not surprisingly, some of these services also had begun to shift out of physician offices and into more expensive hospital outpatient departments, suggesting that another round of imaging cuts is not only unnecessary but also counter-productive.

We do have some allies in Congress though. Recently, Senators Kerry, Kohl, Alexander, Vitter, Cantwell, Brown and Wyden sent a letter to President Obama asking for no more cuts to imaging. This was in response to seven rounds of cuts referenced earlier in this article. The Senators are very concerned about what these cuts will do to this technology. The letter states, "These cuts are stifling this home-grown medical innovation and leaving seniors and disabled Americans without access to care they need to diagnose and treat life threatening diseases."

The recent CMS proposal on imaging emulates some of the recommendations of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). MedPAC recommended that Congress reduces the professional component for multiple imaging tests performed on the same patient during the same session. Physicians would be paid a reduced rate for interpreting the second scan and those thereafter. In addition, MedPAC recommends reducing the physician work component of imaging and other diagnostic tests that are ordered and performed by the same practitioner.

Urology, along with our coalition partners, is actively engaged in dialogue on this issue. We believe these provisions would worsen an already challenging situation for physicians who serve Medicare patients by taking additional dollars away from Medicare, all while doing nothing to address the broken and unsustainable Medicare physician payment system.

We want to make sure any future policy changes affecting diagnostic imaging take into account the substantial changes that already have been implemented, and ensure that patients retain access to diagnostic services performed in physicians' offices.

State Government Affairs Update:

AACU State Society Network for the North Central Section of the AUA

by Ross Weber - State Affairs Manager



Ross Weber

While nearly all legislatures across the United States adjourn before summer, three AUA North Central Section states remain in session year-round and another will consider significant issues for two weeks this fall.

The three “Year-Round” outliers are similar in at least one other respect—physician apology measures are making waves in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio. The Wolverine State approved “I’m Sorry” legislation earlier this year (SB 53) and Badger State officials considered their own version after Democrats

came out of their burrow (AB 147, SB 103). Unfortunately for Buckeye State physicians, the Ohio Court of Appeals recently ruled that the state’s 2004 apology statute protects expressions of sympathy but does not protect statements admitting liability.

Illinois is the fourth North Central state to schedule official legislative business after Labor Day. One issue lawmakers addressed earlier in the year may return to the agenda—Medicaid Reform. This spring, the legislature approved a series of measures to reign in Medicaid costs that included a requirement that applicants prove their income and residency eligibility. The federal government stepped in to say this violates federal rules prohibiting states from changing criteria for those seeking Medicaid.

Various other North Central states took divergent paths to shore up their Medicaid budgets. Iowa cut provider rates for services delivered in facility settings (HF 649), while Michigan imposed a 1% tax on all health insurance claims (SB 348). North Dakota officials attempted to establish a mechanism simulating a state RAC “bounty” for any overpayments made by a state agency (HB 1448).

The security of special state funds drew attention in Wisconsin and South Dakota. In Wisconsin, the legislature restored \$235 million to the Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund, which Governor Doyle had raided to fund Medicaid (AB 148). South Dakota lawmakers, on the other hand, actually increased the amount of money taken from health care trust funds to pay for general obligations (HB 1227, HB 1239).

Legislators in Indiana and Minnesota considered measures that impact private practices’ ability to provide integrated and patient-centered care. The Hoosier State approved legislation to restrict billing for pathology services. While favorable exemptions were secured at the last minute, it is uncertain how the state will implement the new law. Minnesota lawmakers will wait until next year to consider the fate of the state’s moratorium on construction of new radiation therapy centers in 14 Minnesota counties, which is scheduled to expire August 1, 2014. Competing bills to either extend or eliminate the moratorium failed to secure approval before the legislature adjourned in late May.

Of course, myriad other measures that impact the practice of urology have been considered this year. From non-physician provider scope of practice, certificates of merit in medical liability cases, doctor databases, physician-insurer contracting and out-of-network reimbursement, urologists must support the campaigns and organizations that promote the interests of their patients and practice.

Interim Activities:

Illinois

Committees meet infrequently. The legislature will resume its 2011 session the last week of October. Visit the Illinois General Assembly website (www.ilga.gov). Under both the Senate and House, click on Schedules and then “Committee Notice of Hearing Postings”.

Indiana

Special interim committees and commissions meet regularly. Visit the Indiana General Assembly website (www.in.gov/legislative). Begin by reviewing the Interim Schedule and Full Calendar in the right column to see which committees are meeting. Follow links in the Full Calendar to review upcoming meetings. For in-depth information, select “Study Committees” from the left column and review the activity of those panels impacting the practice of medicine.

Iowa

Committees meet infrequently. The 2012 Session of the 84th General Assembly will convene January 9, 2012. Visit the Iowa Legislature website and view “Interim Calendar & Briefing” on lower right column (www.legis.iowa.gov).

Michigan

The legislature will resume its 2011 session Sept. 7 with ongoing legislative and committee work through Dec. 15.

Minnesota

Committees meet infrequently. The 2012 Session will convene January 24, 2012. Visit the Minnesota State Legislature website and view “Scheduled Meetings” on upper right column (www.leg.state.mn.us). On the left column, select “All Upcoming Meetings”.

North Dakota

The North Dakota Legislative Branch website features comprehensive information concerning interim activities (www.legis.nd.gov). Under Legislative Assembly on the upper right, click on 62nd (2011). From there click “Interim Information: 2011-12” on the left column to review calendars, agendas, minutes and more.

Ohio

The legislature will resume its 2011 session Sept. 13. Committees continue to meet throughout the summer. Visit the Ohio General Assembly website (www.legislature.state.oh.us). On the top menu, click “Legislative Schedules” and then follow links to Senate and House Committee Calendars on the left column.

South Dakota

The South Dakota Legislature website features comprehensive information concerning interim activities (legis.state.sd.us). Hover over “Interim Information” on the left column and select either option.

Wisconsin

The legislature will resume its 2011 session Sept. 13. Committees continue to meet throughout the summer. A comprehensive committee calendar may be viewed online. Visit the legislature’s website and click on “Committee Schedule” in the right column (legis.wisconsin.gov).

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