

President's Message

Before laying out my brief agenda for my term as CalAAEM President, I must congratulate and thank our outgoing President Steven Gabaeff for his outstanding work in promoting CalAAEM. Highlighting but a few of his accomplishments, Steve created and tirelessly pushed forward the Academic Task Force (ATF), a consortium of academicians from EM residencies in California who are serving as liaisons to our state organization. Second, Steve lobbied ardently to boost CalAAEM into position alongside our CalACEP brethren in the legal and political struggles EM faces throughout the state. Finally, he continued the tradition of steadfast support of *CalJEM*, the flagship academic endeavor of CalAAEM.

So, where to go from here? The path is quite simple—the foundation for a strong (perhaps the strongest) state chapter of AAEM has been laid. My central goals are to continue to fill in the pieces around this framework and to strengthen our position in California and nationally.

Recruitment: An organization is only as strong as its membership, and the key to membership is recruiting. Like a college football team, we have to recruit them early—maybe not in the eighth grade like some outlaw Southeast Football Conference teams, but certainly during the latter years of medical school and EM internship. I believe that CalAAEM offers benefits that other EM groups do not, namely *CalJEM* and our reputation as fighters for the individual EM physician. I would like to add one more -- a regional advisory service, to which students, residents and new graduates can turn for general guidance and referrals for their future practice. Working with residents and students at a teaching hospital, I recognize that they want more than just our academic ivory tower viewpoint on all kinds of EM practice issues; they need outside community physician input. I would like to assemble a group of CalAAEM physicians who can serve

in this capacity, be it as long-time mentors or as brief resources for simple questions. Currently, when embarking on decisions about where and how to practice, residents are bombarded with a singular message presented by moneyed, non-democratic groups. The experience assembled in our ATF and general membership can temper this short-sighted draw to corporate EM. When coupled with our sincere message of physician autonomy and independence, these advisor-advisee exchanges may become a persuasive recruiting tool.

Forge a Western AAEM alliance: At the national AAEM conference in Las Vegas, the need for enhanced interaction and support between state chapters was very clear. In a meeting initiated by the Florida AAEM chapter, state AAEM presidents and officers met to discuss ways to promote AAEM's mission. Younger chapters had many questions about our growth into a large chapter and even basic queries as to what we do. To that end I would like to offer the support of California AAEM to these other groups in the hope that collaboration can strengthen our individual chapters and bolster our unified message. In addition to face-to-face meetings at national and regional meetings, we would like to ask their leadership to join us in our monthly conference calls.

Regarding other agenda: Without sounding too much like the military, we truly need your help—both in terms of assistance with the above projects and with recommendations to improve CalAAEM. It is, in the end, your chapter. If you would like to serve as a CalAAEM mentor, help with our Western Alliance, or have any suggestions, please contact me at caljem@gmail.com.

Robert M. Rodriguez, MD, FAAEM

**The California Chapter of AAEM (Cal/AAEM)
is seeking board nominations for At Large, Resident and Student Members.
Please send your nomination to Dr. Robert Rodriguez
rrodriguez@sfgned.ucsf.edu.**