



when minutes count

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Keeping Informed - The CAL/AAEM News Service

Things are really heating up in California and across America. As we approach the national elections, the specter of change is in the air: Change in our financial services sector, in our energy policy, and yes, hopefully, in our beleaguered healthcare system.

As emergency physicians (EPs), we are the canaries in the coal mine – keenly aware of the effect of state and federal healthcare policies as they displace patients from the rosters of their insurers and into our already crowded waiting rooms. More than any other specialty, we have a front row seat in this theatre of the absurd. We should never forget the uniqueness of our role in the house of medicine, because it extends far beyond medicine and peers deeply into the very nature of our society and its values.

In California the crisis is especially acute. Just to remind ourselves, 42 emergency departments in our State have closed in the past 10 years, ten of these in Los Angeles County alone since 2003. Reimbursement for our MediCal patients is at the very bottom of the nation, and most consultants refuse to see them in their offices, let alone see them in our departments at three o'clock in the morning.

Needless to say, we have to stay informed. And we need to be active. If we do not, other stakeholders with far less insight and working knowledge of the current healthcare crisis will intercede in our place. So far, we are doing pretty

well – our colleagues in the CAL/ACEP leadership, with your help, have had one of their most successful legislative sessions ever this past year and were able to avert

some key pieces of legislation that would have been bad for our patients and bad for our departments. But as big change is contemplated in Sacramento and in Washington, we must keep our eye on the ball.

For almost a decade, the CAL/AAEM News Service has been keeping our members informed of key events that affect our practices and our patients. Founded by Dr. Antoine Kazzi, our first president, the service currently has over 550 subscribers, including not only practicing emergency physicians, but the residents and students who will soon enter the workforce informed and be ready to stand up for positive change.

CAL/AAEM board member Dr. Brian Potts has been the managing editor of the service since 2001. He was assisted by Dr. Cyrus Shahpar, currently an EM resident at Johns Hopkins, for several years, and is now assisted by Abid Mogannam, a medical student at the University of California, Irvine. Every week, they comb



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the electronic news lines, national and local lay media, and discussion forums to bring you the most important news that matters to the practicing EP.

The service is free. If you do not already subscribe, I encourage you to do so – you can unsubscribe at any time. To become part of the CAL/AAEM News Service mailing list, or if you have any questions, please send your name and email address to our News Service Managing Editor at: calaaem_news@yahoo.com.



Stuart Swadron, MD, FAAEM
University of Southern California

SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

President's Statement for the Society of Orange County Emergency Physicians

I have had the distinct honor of being president of the Society of Orange County Emergency Physicians for the past two years. It has been a pleasure working with our executive director Shirley Pulliam, our past President Mike Contino, Vice President Shahram Lotfpour, John Apthorpe (SOCEP bulletin editor), Steve Groth (government affairs liaison), Chris Kahn (SOCEP EMS director), Warren Wiechmann (SOCEP Webmaster) and current board members Nak Chhiv, Richard Oxman, and James Truong.

The idea for SOCEP was first formed during a social gathering of emergency physicians to discuss the issues of their specialty. The founding board included Robert Bade, Steve Jennings, Carolyn Nelson, Greg Super and Myron Wacholder. From that first meeting they went on to expand their mission of giving back to the community which has included education by creating the annual symposium. For the past twenty years the SOCEP Southern California Symposium has provided an opportunity for learning while obtaining CME and renewing friendships.

Orange County has always been in the unique position of not having a county healthcare system as its safety net, which soon made SOCEP's mission of government activism the crux of the organization. Leading the charge on the political front was Michelle Revelle, an independent

lobbyist who contracted with us to reach our emergency care funding goals. She is now the CEO of the Orange County Medical Association (OCMA), and continues to advocate for patients and emergency medicine.

With the end of my term brings what could be the end of this 25-year-old organization as well. SOCEP has been the springboard for greater political participation by our members in statewide and national arenas, as well as in the greater family of organized medicine. Fortunately, we have a strong beacon in CAL/ACEP, CAL/AAEM and OCMA. My hope is that the waning participation in SOCEP reflects an increase in participation in those organizations. There is no shortage of work to be done. It is just a question of who will do it.

Thank you for your continued support,

Anar Patel, MD
President
Society of Orange County
Emergency Physicians

