President's Message

Advancing the Academy's Mission

Kevin Rodgers, MD FAAEM
AAEM President

I want to thank the membership for the opportunity to lead and serve the premier organization in emergency medicine, AAEM, as it continues to fight for the individual, board-certified, emergency physician. At the Scientific Assembly (AAEM16) in February — from our town hall session to the numerous committee, task force, and interest group meetings I attended — I saw the tremendous passion our membership has for advancing AAEM's unique agenda. During the town hall session I implored each AAEM member to take every opportunity to remind colleagues, residents, medical students, and hospital administrators that AAEM is not "just another organization" like ACEP, CORD, or SAEM. Our focus on protecting the rights of BC/BE emergency physicians and advocating for fair and equitable practice environments makes AAEM unique. No other EM organization has that focus.

Over the next two years as your president, my passion will be to advance the Academy's mission and insure that AAEM's future is a bright one. AAEM must steadfastly concentrate on supporting our members, identifying and counteracting threats to our practice and our future. As the influence and control of contract management groups (CMGs) continues to grow, as more illegal joint ventures invade the practice of EM, and as states and the federal government threaten appropriate and fair reimbursement for EM services with the elimination of balance billing and the bundling EM professional fees into a global hospital payment, AAEM must diligently address each and every threat.

One of the most exciting events at the Scientific Assembly, and probably the one with the most potential impact, was the launch of the AAEM Physician Group (AAEM-PG). It will maintain the stability and support the growth of existing EM groups that provide equitable and fair practice environments, as well as provide the infrastructure for new groups to develop. Based on the restoration of physician autonomy and the creation of group practices bound to the principles of the Academy, the AAEM-PG offers EM groups and hospitals a desirable and viable alternative to CMGs and the corporate practice of medicine. By providing a nationally recognized name, expertise, economies of scale, professional management, and bench strength the AAEM-PG is the answer to maintaining group longevity and physician autonomy and an antidote to physician burnout. This is a major and innovative step in the right direction, aimed at securing that bright future for our specialty.

I would also like to recognize a cadre of individuals whose tireless efforts support AAEM's mission and serve its members. First, tremendous thanks to the board of directors (BOD). Under the leadership of President Mark Reiter, the BOD has been instrumental in the Academy's recent successes. Although we must unfortunately say farewell to departing BOD members Bill Durkin (Immediate Past-President), John Christensen, Dave Lawhorn, Joe Lex, and Andy Mayer, I hope these incredibly productive individuals will continue to provide leadership to the Academy in other ways. I would also like to welcome new members of the BOD: David Farcy (President-Elect), Lisa Moreno-Walton (Secretary-Treasurer), Robert Stuntz (YPS Director), Megan Healy, Jonathan Jones, Terry Mulligan, Brian Potts, Joel Schofer, and Tom Tobin. Each of these individuals has been a tireless advocate for the Academy, and they will now make AAEM even stronger.

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I would also like to recognize and thank co-chairs, Chris Doty and Evie Marcolini, and the 16 members of the Scientific Assembly Sub-Committee, for once again developing and implementing the best EM educational meeting in the world. The meeting broke AAEM's previous Las Vegas attendance record and provided a diverse lineup of cutting-edge presentations that will change practice and have a positive impact on our patients. And the Scientific Assembly is still free to Academy members! Of course the Scientific Assembly would not be a success without the incredible support of AAEM staff members Kathy Uy, Emily DeVillers, Laura Burns, Madeleine Montony, Tom Derenne, Ginger Czajkowski, and Darcy Welsh — led by Janet Wilson and Kay Whalen. Hats off to everyone who contributed to this incredible and innovative meeting.

Keeping our members informed will continue to be one of my top priorities. We continue to improve and update our website at www.aaem.org. We now have thousands of members communicating with AAEM via social media. Our new podcast program has been very successful, and we are always looking for new ideas and new speakers. Andy Walker, winner of the 2016 James Keaney Award, has done an exceptional job of developing *Common Sense* into a top-notch platform for the Academy.

If you are not already a member of an AAEM committee, please consider joining one of our 16 committees (www.aaem.org/about-aaem/leadership/committees).This is a great way to support AAEM, get involved, learn something, meet new colleagues, and help increase the productivity and impact of the Academy. Also, let us know if you have an idea for a project you would like to work on with AAEM. I want to make sure we involve as many interested members as possible.

I love to hear feedback from our members — feel free to email me at kgrodger@iu.edu. ■