

## President's Message

# Updates from the Board of Directors

Kevin Rodgers, MD FAAEM  
AAEM President



In my last President's Message, I discussed the importance of EM physician advocacy for our patients and our specialty. The first week of June, AAEM hosted a highly successful Health Policy Symposium and Workshop (June 5<sup>th</sup>) with more than 40 people in attendance. Hats off to Janet Wilson, Terry Mulligan, Mary Haas, and Matt Hoekstra for their excellent job planning and executing this initial advocacy workshop — it was a “huge” success. Topics included Due Process; Balance Billing/Out-of-Network Fees; EMTALA/Liability; Quality Standards and Measures in Emergency Medicine; Emergency Medicine and the New Administration; AHCA/The New Health Care Law and Direction of HHS/CMS; MACRA and Physician Reimbursement; and Open Books. We followed this primer on advocacy with our most widely attended Advocacy Day on the Hill on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Our discussions with Congressional leaders focused on: guaranteed/unwaivable due process; funded access to emergency care; and protection of the prudent layperson standard. With all the fervor in DC from both parties over revisions to Obama Care and the proposed American Health Care Act (AHCA), it was a very prudent time to bring our concerns to Congress.

Since Congress began addressing the creation of a new health care act, it seems that every day brings a new controversy from both the Democratic and the Republican sides of Congress. Reporters, other organizations and our own members have repeatedly asked AAEM to comment on many of these politically fueled disputes. AAEM has chosen to remain apolitical (out of deference to our membership whose political affiliations belong to both parties) and avoid comment on most of these “political grenades.” I want us to be the best EM organization at advocacy but we need to carefully pick our battles — if a political policy has a direct effect on EM and our patients, then we need to examine it carefully and develop a well thought out advocacy plan that is not polarizing. So regardless of your political affiliations, ensuring access to emergency care and the financial viability of our health care “safety net” should be a prime concern of every EM physician. Therefore the BOD sought to create a carefully drafted statement that would clearly delineate AAEM's concerns for Congress-people as the debate continues. The BOD unanimously approved the following statement initially crafted by Mark Reiter and Howie Blumstein.

AAEM supports the following principles which we believe should be addressed in any legislation regarding health care payment or reform:

1. Every individual should have unencumbered access to quality emergency care provided by a specialist in emergency medicine.
2. Coverage for emergency care should be provided based on the “prudent layperson” standard rather than retrospective review, which penalizes patients and discourages them from seeking appropriate care.

3. As a nation, we should seek to maximize the number of people with access to affordable health care.
4. Health care reform should seek to decrease the financial pressures on our already overburdened emergency care system by eliminating measures which would allow insurers to underpay for federally mandated care without recourse for physicians to recover fair value for those services.

AAEM is proud of our unwavering commitment to the rights of both our patients and the EM physicians that provide their care. The BOD believes this position statement concisely reflects the values that AAEM was built upon.

### New Initiatives & Projects

I'd also like to take a minute of your time to highlight a variety of new initiatives/projects that the BOD and AAEM's committees have been working to develop and implement.

#### New Member Benefit: AAEM Insurance Program

AAEM has entered into an agreement with Emergency Physicians Insurance Exchange Risk Retention Group (EPIX) to provide the AAEM Insurance Program at cost savings to our members. Details on this new member benefit will be available on the website, shortly.

#### New Member Benefit: EvidenceCare

AAEM has entered into an agreement with EvidenceCare to provide AAEM members a discounted rate for use of EvidenceCare protocols (developed and continually updated by well-known topic leaders in EM) that easily interface with your EMR system. Included in the member benefit is a free 90 day trial.

#### New Logo & Website

The Marketing Task Force, following an indecisive vote at AAEM17, has completed its crowd-sourcing based design of a new AAEM logo which the BOD will consider at its next meeting. The TF has also started its update of our current website. Please feel free to make suggestions by emailing Laura Burns [LBurns@aaem.org](mailto:LBurns@aaem.org).

#### Listen to New Podcast Episodes

Be sure to check out the over 40 new podcasts developed by AAEM and RSA on a variety of topics including medicolegal, critical care, operations management as well as topics important to EM residents and new graduates.

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### AAEM Antitrust Compliance Plan:

As part of AAEM's antitrust compliance plan, we invite all readers of *Common Sense* to report any AAEM publication or activity which may restrain trade or limit competition. You may confidentially file a report at [info@aaem.org](mailto:info@aaem.org) or by calling 800-884-AAEM.

**Register for MEMC17 in Lisbon**

MEMC planning is nearly complete and the lineup of speakers and topics is phenomenal! Lisbon is renowned for its celebration of history and culture. World class beaches, a UNESCO Heritage medieval village, castles, fortresses, ancient churches, modern parks and jogging paths, a zoo, an oceanarium, and an amusement park are only a few of the available diversions within the metropolitan area. And the magnificent bodegas where delicious Port wines are produced are only a few hours away. Indeed, Portugal has been voted the best emerging wine region in the world! Consider making the trip that combines world class CME with an amazing travel adventure.

**Spread Our Message to the Next Generation**

Help AAEM spread our message to the next generation of EM physicians. Take a minute to inquire of your residency's leadership if AAEM has had the opportunity to speak to their residents on a variety of workplace fairness issues such as due process, restrictive covenants and open books. If not, please encourage them to accept our offer for FREE education on these important and often neglected topics.

**Encourage Physicians to Join AAEM**

Finally, my perpetual plea, please consider recruiting a fellow EM physician to join AAEM. Our ability to accomplish AAEM's mission is directly related to our membership ... as they say there is strength in numbers!

I love to hear feedback from our members — feel free to email me at [kgrodger@iu.edu](mailto:kgrodger@iu.edu). ■



AAEM members gathered to make your voice heard on Capitol Hill.

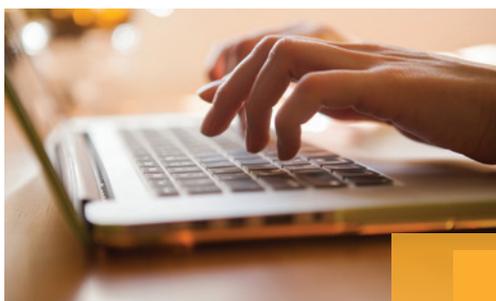


(L-R) Past Presidents Council Representative, Howard Blumstein, MD FAAEM; President-Elect, David Farcy, MD FAAEM FCCM; Board Member, Terry Mulligan, DO MPH FAAEM; Past President, William T. Durkin, Jr., MD MBA CPE FAAEM

(L-R) RSA Board Member and Advocacy Chair, Jack Storey, MD and RSA President, Ashely Alker, MD MSc



Andy Walker, MD FAAEM, leads part of the AAEM Health Policy in Emergency Medicine (HPEM) Symposium on "Balance Billing/Out-of-Network Fees." The symposium was one-day introduction to the advocacy process.



**Response to an Article? Write to Us!**

We encourage all readers of *Common Sense* to respond to articles you find interesting, entertaining, educational, or provocative. Help us stimulate a conversation among AAEM members.

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