



THE VIEW FROM THE PODIUM

by Kevin Rodgers, MD FAAEM

I am very happy to say that my prediction came true. The Academy's 12th Annual Scientific Assembly was a tremendous success!

Nearly 600 board certified emergency physicians attended our most recent session in San Antonio. I am confident that everyone went home as better practitioners because of the excellent presentations that covered everything from effective communication skills, to disaster planning and pediatric conscious sedation.

We were incredibly fortunate to have the Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Richard Carmona, deliver the keynote address, which was both informative and humorous. The pre and post conference courses were well received including two new presentations, the EMS Medical Director course and the Trauma Resuscitation for the Community Doc course. It is worth mentioning that one of the top rated speakers was Jonathan Davis, a "graduate" from our Open Mic presentations from the 2005 Assembly. Finally, congratulations to Mike Lambert for the Educator of the Year Award, Michelle Lin for the Young Educator Award and to Amal Mattu who was named the RSA Program Director of the Year.

It is apparent, based on evaluations, that each speaker put an incredible amount of energy into developing and presenting their individual sessions. Once again I believe we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Joe Lex and Ghazala Sharieff for their efforts. I would also like to thank the AAEM staff (Kay, Janet, Helen, Tom, Miko and Kate) for their tireless efforts in making our conference the premier educational event for board-certified emergency physicians.

I would like to take a moment to discuss a "hot topic." Many of you have closely followed the debate surrounding the use of pharmaceutical industry support to fund the Scientific Assembly (SCIASS). Three hundred eleven members (18% of our voting members) responded to the on-line survey that AAEM conducted. This is clearly a controversial topic that ultimately splits physicians into two camps, the pros and the cons. It is a difficult topic for me personally depending on which "hat" I am wearing. As a program director (and in my own personal viewpoint) I believe

that the pharmaceutical industry should not fund, nor provide speakers for any educational event involving physicians due to their undue influence on prescribing practices which affect our patients. As "draconian" as that may appear, the three major national organizations that govern medical education, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) have all recently written policy statements that significantly restrict the involvement of the pharmaceutical industry in medical education.

However, when I put on my Board of Directors "hat," I hear many pro voices among my constituents. Indeed, looking at the results of the survey, a majority of our members (79%) were against *prohibiting* industry support but believed that pharmaceutical funding should be *restricted* (62%). Results were relatively split when members were asked if they would be willing to pay additional dues or a registration fee (\$100-400) to support the SCIASS if industry support was abolished. Impassioned individual comments voiced every imaginable pro and con argument and spanned six single-spaced pages. Controversial indeed!

There are many questions and no perfect solution. What does *restrict* mean? How can we maximize the use of AAEM's funds? Is there a difference between funding from the pharmaceutical industry versus medical equipment/administrative support companies? Are unrestricted education grants acceptable? In order to answer these questions, Tom Scaletta has appointed a task force to formulate a policy which governs industry support.

The Education Committee now focuses on making the 13th Annual Scientific Assembly even better, a difficult challenge considering the multitude of distractions that Las Vegas offers! We are considering several new presentations including the first iteration of the AAEM Resuscitation Course. Do not hesitate to share with me (kr Rodgers@clarian.org) any topics, speakers, or innovations that you feel would contribute to the excellent quality of our Scientific Assembly. +

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
EMERGENCY MEDICINE PRESENTS THE

PEARLS OF WISDOM ORAL BOARD REVIEW COURSE

September 9 – 10, 2006

Philadelphia Chicago
Orlando Los Angeles



Registration Opens June 5, 2006

Designed to meet the educational needs of Emergency Medicine
practitioners preparing to take the ABEM or the
AOBEM oral board examination

For More Information: www.aaem.org