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CAL/AAEM

President's Message

By Paul Windham, MD, FAAEM, CAL/AAEM
President

October 2002

Governor Davis has signed the budget for this fiscal year, but has several trailing bills yet before him. Our expectation is that we will maintain the \$24.8 million augmentation to the Maddy Fund, but will lose at least part of the increases in MediCal reimbursement we received two years ago. Perhaps the best news to come out in this legislative session is the high regard our legislators have for emergency physicians. I think they truly understand the critical situation facing the safety net. The proposed increases in fines for DUI and reckless driving convictions to fund emergency services (SB 807) show that they are trying hard to find ways to help.

Even so, we face a tough battle ahead, and our only real hope at the state level is a ballot initiative. I propose that we lend our good name to the Coalition to Preserve Emergency Care, and join with CHA, Cal/ACEP, firefighters, and others in this coalition. We need to stand united in the house of medicine at this critical point in time. CPEC considered a ballot initiative last winter along the lines of SB 807; although they did not fund such an initiative, we got the legislature's attention and they did it for us. Next year, I expect we will have to go further and actually ask the taxpayers of California whether emergency services are truly essential to their well-being, and what they are willing to pay to keep EMS from collapsing.

In some areas of the state, EMS has already collapsed. The physicians in Butte County, God bless them, have put a measure on that county's ballot this year to force their county to use the tobacco settlement money for health care. They deserve our full and unwavering support. If you can contribute to their cause, whether help with donations, legal advice, or even just moral support, please contact me and I'll put you in touch with them.

I am very excited about the upcoming 19th annual AAEM/Navy Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD) Emergency Medicine Symposium. It will be held November 7-10 at the San Diego Marriot Mission Valley Hotel. Diku Mandavia, MD, FAAEM will be giving a hands-presentation on the Focused Abdominal Ultrasound in Trauma (FAST) exam; Ghazala Sharieff, MD, FAAEM and Maureen McCollough, MD, MPH are giving an excellent hands-on Pediatric Procedures Workshop. These two courses alone make attending the Symposium worth your while, but sign up soon before space runs out.

During the Symposium, we will be holding a Cal/AAEM board meeting and a Business Forum. Anyone interested is welcome to attend these events.

I always welcome comments and ideas from our members. Please contact me at any time at pcwindham@bigfoot.com if you have any thoughts you'd like to share.