

Making Point of Care Ultrasound Accessible for All

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Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS)

has an accessibility problem. This statement is plain, it's simple, but it is the truth. Physicians in the community may be aware of the potential uses of POCUS but may be unable to access

One of the core missions of the AAEM Emergency Ultrasound Section (EUS-AAEM) is addressing the needs of community physicians. Meeting you in your community is one of the ways we are attempting to do so. This year we implemented emergency ultrasound courses located in communities, with an inaugural course held in Queens, New York. In the future, we plan to expand this to other communities with local AAEM chapter divisions and to continue to offer lectures and small

support you need. There are multiple resources available to address the exams commonly performed by emergency physicians, such as current resident training guidelines and various policy statements.^{2,3} In addition, there are also guides for approaching credentialing and discussions with other departments with tiered levels of credentialing based on prior training and practice-based pathways to credentialing.⁴ One way we plan to help our members is by offering targeted teaching with a credentialing certificate for the E-FAST at the 2021 Scientific Assembly. We plan to expand this endeavor to incorporate other imaging studies in the future.

For those physicians who may have concerns regarding legal liability of performing exams, some may argue that they should be more concerned about not performing an ultrasound. In a 2012 review of lawsuits filed against emergency physicians, no cases were identified where an emergency physician was found liable for performing a POCUS exam within our scope of practice.⁵ However, physicians could be found liable if they were unable to diagnose free fluid on an E-FAST for an unstable trauma patient or a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm. Physicians in academic centers may wish to perform advanced modalities, but

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equipment or teaching. Perhaps they have difficulty communicating to their hospital the importance of this imaging modality or face conflict about credentialing from other departments in the hospital. Lastly, physicians may also have concerns regarding legal liabilities.

Beginning in 2012, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) began requiring point of care ultrasound education for emergency medicine residency graduates. Recent graduates are confident and capable when performing point of care ultrasound. Left unaddressed however, is how to expand this teaching to those who graduated before 2012. Over the last several years, many in-person ultrasound courses have become available nationally. However, these courses are often expensive and require time away from work.

groups during the yearly AAEM Scientific Assembly. Lastly, in response to social distancing requirements in the COVID era, we plan to bring you increased online educational opportunities over the next year such as lectures, forums and e-learning courses.

Physicians may also have concerns regarding credentialing and scope of practice. Currently, physicians are more likely to be credentialed if they work at a clinical site with an ultrasound fellowship.¹ While understandable, this current state of affairs is not satisfactory given the potential improvement in patient care POCUS can provide. Physicians at non-academic sites should feel capable of performing these exams and we in the EUS-AAEM are committed to providing the

until we are all capable of performing the basic exams, we must focus on reaching all emergency physicians and providing the education and support needed to perform point of care ultrasound. To protect you and your group, it is not only important to be able to perform the basic exams but to also have good documentation and an organized ultrasound system. Over the next year, we plan to publish newsletter articles, blog posts, and forums about correct documentation and qualitative assessment of ultrasound studies.

The AAEM Emergency Ultrasound Section (EUS-AAEM) is committed to meeting the need of our community emergency medicine colleagues and the ultrasound accessibility problem. We publish a bi-annual newsletter, the POCUS report, with articles on performing ultrasound as well as addressing common administrative concerns. Consider joining the section and becoming the champion for point of care ultrasound in your community. And for those current EUS-AAEM members, we would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions for this upcoming year. ●

References:

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THE EUS MISSION IS TO FOSTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATE MEMBERS ON POINT OF CARE ULTRASOUND.

EUS-AAEM POCUS Report

We are proud to publish the POCUS Report, our e-newsletter with original contributions from many of our members. We encourage all members to submit for future editions. Topics include but are not limited to educational, community focus, interesting cases, resident and student section, and adventures abroad. Catch up on issues and submit an article at: www.aaem.org/get-involved/sections/eus/newsletter



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