

**Meeting Minutes of the Executive Committee
AANS/CNS Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and the Peripheral Nerves**

**Saddlebrook Resort, Tampa, Florida
March 5, 2003**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Nevan Baldwin

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph T. Alexander, M.D., Ronald I. Apfelbaum, M.D., Nevan G. Baldwin, M.D., Edward C. Benzel, M.D., Charles Branch, Jr., M.D., Tanvir F. Choudhri, M.D., Curtis A. Dickman, M.D., Darryl J. DiRisio, M.D., Richard G. Fessler, M.D., Ph.D., Peter Gerszten, M.D., Mitchell R. Gropper, M.D., James D. Guest, M.D., Regis W. Haid, Jr., M.D., Robert F. Heary, M.D., R. John Hurlbert, M.D., Ph.D., Larry Khoo, M.D., Daniel H. Kim, M.D., F.A.C.S., Allan D. Levi, M.D., Ph.D., Mark McLaughlin, M.D., Rajiv Midha, M.D., William Mitchell, M.D., Stephen M. Papadopoulos, M.D., Gregory Przybylski, M.D., Daniel Resnick, M.D., Christopher I. Shaffrey, M.D., Vincent C. Traynelis, M.D., Christopher E. Wolfla, M.D.

Guests: Joseph C. Cauthen, M.D. and Anthony Dwyer, M.D.

We reviewed the minutes from the September 23, 2002 meeting and these were approved.

Dr. Baldwin introduced the next item of business which was an informational presentation about the American Board of Spine Surgery by Drs. Dwyer and Cauthen. This was designed to be a purely informational session and a variety of comments were received prior to inviting Drs. Cauthen and Dwyer into the meeting room.

A. OLD BUSINESS

1. American Board of Spine Surgery. Dr. Anthony Dwyer delivered a presentation attempting to inform the Joint Section Executive Committee on the rationale behind the creation of the American Board of Spine Surgery. He indicated that this group was a multispecialty group and has developed a certification examination and a structure that ultimately gained a Board equivalency approval from the State of California. Dr. Joe Cauthen described the certification requirements and reviewed some aspects of the examination and procedures. Questions were received from the Executive Committee members and packets were distributed that provided further reference material with regard to the ABSS. At the conclusion of their presentation, the Executive Committee thanked Drs. Cauthen and Dwyer for providing this information and, once again, affirmed the position espoused by the parent organizations regarding the ABSS.

2. Future Sites. Because of scheduling conflicts, Dr. Papadopoulos requested to be advanced in the agenda. He discussed the Section annual meeting proposed for San Diego in March 2004. The recommendation was made to seriously consider the Marriot Desert Resort in Phoenix, AZ for March 2005. He also reviewed issues regarding

contract costs and attrition clauses. A proposal to consider Orlando for 2006 and Las Vegas or San Antonio for 2007 was made to the Executive Committee and was approved. Dr. Joe Alexander will participate with Dr. Papadopoulos in transition into the role as the future sites chair for the Executive Committee. Dr. Papadopoulos also indicated that there might be a benefit to offering a request for proposal for meeting services for the Joint Section meeting. A discussion was culminated with the motion to develop and send out an RFP to meeting planning and hosting services. Dr. Haid will spearhead this effort.

3. Spine Fellowships. Dr. Haid reported that three companies, DuPuy Acromed, Medtronic Sofamor Danek and Aesculap have agreed to fund spine section fellowships with the first two companies providing \$35,000 each (\$30,000 for a named fellowship and \$5,000 for an international fellowship) and Aesculap will provide a \$15,000 named fellowship. The international fellowship will ultimately provide a \$5,000 stipend to subsidize either a three-month experience for a foreign surgeon in the United States and part of the meeting expenses for the Spine Section annual meeting, as well. Dr. Mark McLaughlin will be the international fellowship director. Dr. Haid will develop a menu of research awards and fellowships and create the template that allows us to identify and track these in a more orderly fashion. He will present these to the Executive Committee in April and solicit in-put from the Executive Committee regarding further development of the fellowship program.

4. SPORT Study. The SPORT Trial was discussed by Dr. Peter Gerszten. Dr. Gerszten has been appointed to the Data Safety and Monitoring Board for the SPORT Study. This appointment is perceived to be a positive move.

Dr. Gerszten also reported on his attempts to have the outcome instruments from the section validated and HIPAA compliant.

5. Treasurer's Report. Dr. Gerald Rodts was unable to attend the meeting because of a family illness. The Treasurer's Report submitted from the AANS office was included in the agenda book. The total assets of the Section have grown by \$67,000 over the prior year.

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Annual Meeting. Drs. Joe Alexander and Daniel Reznick reported on the Section annual meeting. At the time of the meeting, the exact registration numbers remain somewhat uncertain. There is a concern that there are an increasing number of spine related meetings that are competitive with the Section and may impact attendance. The attendance and critiques of the special courses for this year's meetings were quite good. Dr. Reznick raised the concern regarding waiving of the registration fee for invited speakers. Dr. Christopher Wolfla indicated that, according to the ACCME guidelines, The Section cannot waive the registration fee for speakers who attend and receive CME credit. A motion was made to waive fees for any special course speaker but this motion did not pass on Executive Committee vote. Dr. McLaughlin made a motion that any AANS or CNS member that attends the Spine Section meeting or part of the meeting

would be subject to the registration fee. This motion was approved by the Executive Committee. Non-section members who are invited as speakers may have their registration fees waived.

2. World Spine. Dr. Benzel reported that the World Spine meeting will take place on August 10-13 in Chicago. The theme will be international spine health care delivery. At this time, 463 abstracts have been received and will be accepted for presentation at the meeting.
3. Exhibits. Dr. McLaughlin indicated that the exhibits space was sold out for this meeting and that we will continue to analyze the economics of the exhibit space for the subsequent meetings.
4. Newsletter. Dr. Hurlbert indicated that the CNS News has a new editor, Dr. Greg Thompson. There were no other significant issues regarding the newsletter. Dr. Hurlbert will transition editorship of the Section newsletter to Dr. Larry Khoo.
5. Education. Dr. Bob Heary reported on the continued efforts to relate with the CSRS in a joint educational venture. There was also an acknowledgment that in the AANS and CNS afternoon sessions, the Spine Section will have an educational presentation.
6. Rules and Regulations or Nominating Committees. There were no reports at this meeting.
7. Publications. Dr. Traynelis offered a brief update on publications.
8. Web Site. Dr. Chris Wolfla invited submissions for content for the Web Site from the Section members.
9. Guidelines for Lumbar Fusion. Dr. Reznick reviewed the proposal included in the Agenda Book on pages 39-45 for the development of guidelines for lumbar fusion. This will be an effort similar to the guidelines for treatment of spinal cord and spine injury previously supported and developed by the Section. The proposed budget for production is \$35,000 and the budget for publication will be in the \$50,000 range. It was agreed that the Section would be the sole funding source for the production of this set of guidelines. Further discussion ensued regarding solicitation of industry support for publication of the guidelines. At this time, it was not felt that a motion regarding this was necessary. A motion to fund the production of the fusion guidelines with a budget of \$35,000 was approved.
10. CPT Coding Subcommittee. Dr. Greg Przybylski introduced Dr. William Mitchell as the newest member of the CPT Committee. He then reviewed the new CPT code changes and discussed the need for new CPT codes. It was felt by the Executive Committee that incorporating minimally invasive approaches into existing codes was the most

appropriate path for that. Dr. Przybylski was directed to pursue the development of a laminoplasty code.

11. Peripheral Nerve. Dr. Rajiv Midha reported on continued educational efforts for the peripheral nerve group interests in the Section. In response to the survey regarding neurosurgery involvement in peripheral nerve care, the meeting planners for future Section meetings will consider this very limited involvement in peripheral nerve activity when allocating a time for educational symposia at these meetings.

12. Washington Committee. Dr. Richard Fessler reported that the Medicare reimbursement had been modified and actually led to an increase in the potential neurosurgical reimbursement. Tort reform appears to be passing in the House but will not likely be passed in the Senate. This mandates a very grass roots or active involvement at the State level. Dr. Fessler recognized the reality of the HIPAA implementation in at least somewhat modified form from the original bill. He indicated that the Society of Neurological Surgeons has at least addressed and will continue to address the resident work hours issue. He also indicated that there was a bill in progress to prohibit stem cell research.

13. Spine Fellowship Programs. Dr. Joe Alexander will meet with the Directors of Spine Fellowships in Neurosurgery at the AANS meeting to review a synopsis of the NASS proposal and discuss how to move forward with the CASS Fellowship Accreditation initiative from the Society of Neurological Surgeons.

There being no further business, Dr. Traynelis made the motion to adjourn and this passed.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee of the Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerve will take place on Monday, April 28, at the AANS meeting in San Diego. All members are encouraged to attend the business meeting of the Section at 1 p.m. on April 8th.

Minutes submitted by:

Charles L. Branch, Jr., M.D., Secretary

CLB/bw