

Minutes of the Business Meeting
AANS Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves
Marriott Hotel, San Diego, California
Monday April 28, 2003

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph 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., Richard G. Fessler, M.D., PhD, Peter Gerszten, M.D., Regis W. Haid, Jr., M.D., Robert F. Heary, M.D., Larry Khoo, M.D., Carl Lauryssen, M.D., Paul C. McCormick, M.D., Mark McLaughlin, M.D., Rajiv Midha, M.D., William Mitchell, MD., Stephen L. Ondra, M.D., T. Glenn Pait, M.D., Stephen M. Papadopoulos, M.D., Daniel Resnick, M.D., Gerald E. Rodts, Jr., M.D., Timothy C. Ryken, M.D., Christopher I. Shaffrey, M.D., Gregory R. Trost, M.D., Christopher E. Wolfla, M.D.
Guests: L. Behncke, M.D., R. Engelbreit, M.D., C. Koleman, M.D., J.Bean, M.D., K. Orrico, M.D., S. Hassenbush, M.D.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Haid at 1:00 p.m.

Dr. Branch reviewed the minutes of the March 5, 2003 meeting. There were no changes and these were approved.

A. OLD BUSINESS

1. American Board of Spine Surgery. Letters from Dr. Nevan Baldwin to Drs. Heros and Hadley regarding our interaction with the American Board of Spine Surgery representatives at the March meeting were addressed by both the AANS and CNS. The position statements from the Congress was available for review in the meeting agenda booklet. A similar position statement will be posted on the AANS website. After some discussion, the Section unanimously supports the position statements of the parent organizations.

2. Annual Spine Section Meeting Request for Proposal. The letter documenting the rationale for soliciting requests for proposals for management of the annual meeting of the Joint Section and a sample request for proposal were reviewed by the Executive Committee. Changes proposed included a clause requiring that the mechanics of the Continuing Medical Education Protocol approved by the AANS would have to be met by the meeting services group. A list of potential recipients of the request for proposal included the AANS meeting service, the CNS meeting service, MCJ Associates, Medisource, Carlson Wagonlit, and Slack Meeting Services. After further discussion, Dr. Heary moved that we distribute the modified RFP's to the aforementioned meeting services groups. This motion was approved by the Executive Committee vote.

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. NPHCA-C4. To facilitate scheduling, Dr. Jim Bean was invited to address the Executive Committee regarding the proposed creation of a C4 entity entitled *Neurosurgeons to Preserve Healthcare Access*. He presented organized neurosurgery's viewpoint on tort reform and the plan to create a public relations campaign to effect federal decision making. The goal is to incorporate orthopedics, emergency medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, and

neurosurgery as an entity that can muster the resources to fund a public relations campaign to influence the tort reform vote. Dr. Bean was soliciting \$1000.00 per member of both the AANS and CNS and was soliciting funding from the section treasuries as well. This entity would be under the leadership of some current Washington Committee members including Dr. Stan Pelofsky, Dr. John Popp, Dr. Stewart Dunsker, Dr. Bean, and Katie Orrico.

Questions from the Committee began with Dr. Heary asking whether Dr. Bean was soliciting a certain amount. Discussion involved the realization that it would ultimately require a sizeable fund to accomplish the public relation goal. Dr. Bean and Ms. Orrico distributed voluntary contribution cards. Further discussion was tabled until later in the Executive Committee Meeting.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Annual Meeting. Dr. Alexander reported that the annual meeting was successful both numerically and financially. While the expenses were just under \$300,000.00, the revenue of \$550,000.00 generated a margin of \$250,000.00. This was accomplished even though the registration was off by about 100 medical registrants from the previous year.

Dr. Resnick indicated that the meeting reviews were favorable. The controversy sections were well received. By and large the audience responses indicated a desire for increased question and answer periods.

Dr. McLaughlin reviewed the exhibits and discussed strategies to continue to increase revenue from exhibitors. Potential opportunities for pharmaceutical entities or other non-surgical vendors continue to be discussed. The possibility of opening the exhibition area to non-medical vendors as well will also be analyzed. At this time the meeting location and size of the hall ultimately derives the number of vendor exhibition booths and the current surgical vendor group will have priority depending on the exhibit hall size.

2. Public Relations Committee. Glenn Pait discussed section involvement with public relations efforts, not just financially but with physician input in the tort reform campaign. He will propose a plan to train spokespersons that will be designated to address the media in a public relations campaign.

3. Future Sites. Dr. Papadopoulos reviewed the San Diego 2004 meeting. The contract appears to be set for this meeting. The proposed location at a Marriott facility in Phoenix in 2005 is under negotiation. He and Dr. Alexander will transition and the future sites committee will pursue a strategic plan to cap meeting costs.

4. World Spine. Dr. Benzel reported that the exhibitor spaces for World Spine have sold out. CME will be managed by the North American Spine Society. It was reaffirmed during discussion that the underwriting with regard to profit or loss for this meeting will be shared equally with the Joint Section and the North American Spine Society.

5. Education Committee. Dr. Heary reported at the CNS meeting there will be a peripheral nerve seminar in addition to the spine section.

6. Newsletter. Dr. Larry Khoo reported that the biannual newsletter through the CNS newsletter is currently provided at no charge to the Joint Section. The understanding also is that there are four free e-blasts through the AANS e-mail system. It was mandated that the newsletter be reviewed by the section Chair and secretary prior to the distribution to any of the newsletters or to the membership. In light of the cessation of the neurosurgery on-call website, the section will plan to publish its newsletter on its own website should that be accomplished.

7. Website. Dr. Chris Wolfla reported that in fact the neurosurgical on-call website is being dissolved. He discussed creating a unique website with a unique domain name and server and web hosting. Dr. Haid indicated that this needed to be accomplished in anticipation of the fall Executive Committee meeting. Subsequent to the Executive Committee meeting in April, Dr. Wolfla was able to secure the domain name, www.spinection.org. Dr. Wolfla will report on the website development at the fall meeting.

8. Awards Committee. Dr. Haid actually reviewed the current status of Joint Section awards. He recognized fellowship contributions from Medtronic, DePuy-Acromed, and Aesculap these were listed on page 60 of the agenda book. It appears that there is also a potential contribution for a peripheral nerve fellowship in honor of Dr. David Kline through the Integra Corporation.

Further discussion acknowledged that there is significant confusion with regard to the actual nomenclature of awards and fellowships and what the actual requirements and obligations are. The Executive Committee indicated that an effort to coalesce and clarify the research awards and fellowships was necessary. An AD-HOC committee consisting of Drs. Branch, Apfelbaum, Rodts, Ryken, and Midha was formed and directed to define the Spine Section awards and fellowships and to define the criteria for the selection of the awards in addition to the eligible candidates and the obligations of the reward or fellowship recipients. This will be delivered to Dr. Haid and transmitted through the voting membership of the Executive Committee during the next two months prior to the submission deadline for awards and fellowships in August or September.

9. Guidelines Committee. Dr. Resnick reported on the progress with the fusion guidelines committee. Drs. Jeff Wong and Beverly Walters will be included in this group. He updated the time line and action plan for the project. This will also drive disbursement from the Spine Section treasury.

10. Membership Committee. Dr. Lauryssen will transition leadership of this committee to Dr. Greg Trost. The goal was to clarify the status of the resident memberships in addition to monitoring of the dues status of existing members.

11. Outcomes Committee. Dr. Gerszten reported that the SPORT trial might actually prove to be a valid study that recognized the real difference between surgery and non-operative treatment. The Executive Committee will await preliminary indications from this trial.

12. CPT Committee. Dr. Bill Mitchell introduced Dr. Sam Hassenbush who represents the

AANS Coding and Reimbursement Committee. Dr. Mitchell indicated that a laminoplasty code is being produced and requested the names of practitioners performing this technique to respond to surveys. A minimally invasive code will be included as part of current codes. There is no support for an IDET or kyphoplasty code in the section. The North American Spine Society is beginning to analyze the potential for generating these codes as well. Dr. Gerszten indicated that he wished the minutes to reflect that he did support the creating or analysis of IDET or kyphoplasty codes.

13. Peripheral Nerve Task Force. Dr. Midha solicited and proposed ideas to raise the profile of the peripheral nerve group in the section. He discussed a plan to raise awareness of neurosurgeons doing carpal tunnel surgery and hoped to increase the frequency or incidence of this disease being treated by neurosurgery.

14. Washington Committee. Dr. Fessler reported on current activity with regard to the malpractice tort reform issue. The Drugs and Devices Committee has been resurrected under the Washington Committee. Drs. Fessler and Diaz will coordinate that effort. He indicated that the Washington Committee will need volunteers to assess queries to the Drugs and Devices Committee. He went on to discuss the Washington Committee's relation or role with the C4 entity. After further discussion, Dr. Fessler moved that the Spine Section contribute \$100,000.00 from the treasury to the proposed C4 entity. Dr. Rodts seconded this motion and the vote to approve was unanimous. A second motion was made to contribute \$25,000.00 as an annual contribution to the Washington Committee. Again, this motion was approved unanimously. Dr. Rodts also requested that a resolution be included in the minutes regarding individual participation.

Be it resolved that the Executive Committee Members of the Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves are committed to personally supporting the Neurosurgeons to Preserve Health Care Access entity through their own personal contributions and endorse the personal contributions of the entire Spine Section membership.

15. Political Action Committee. Dr. Ondra again solicited individual contributions to the Political Action Committee as this is distinct from the C4 and is geared toward influencing the election of effective and sympathetic members of Congress.

Treasurer's Report. Dr. Ryken reviewed the current treasury status. There is one 1.5 million in long and short-term assets in the section treasury as of March 2003. Ron Engelbreit from the AANS office reviewed and affirmed these numbers.

Delinquent memberships were recognized and it appears that there is a potential \$15,000.00 in outstanding dues. Carl Lauryssen will investigate the status of outstanding dues and send notification to members that a failure to remit annual dues would result in the loss of membership.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Spine Fellowships. It appears that there is an ongoing need to clarify the position of the Spine Section on spine fellowships. The Executive Committee has directed the formation of an AD HOC committee to clarify the position with the Society of Neurological Surgeons CAST regarding spine fellowships. This Committee will be chaired by Drs. Ian Kalfas and Joe Alexander and will include Dr. Ed Benzel, Dr. Dave Cahill, and Dr. Rick Fessler. This committee will secure the documents that have already been submitted to the SNS CAST and then review the NASS fellowship requirements and make a proposal to Dr. Haid as the foundation of further discussion with the Society of Neurological Surgeons.

2. Spine Section Archive. Dr. Rodts indicated that there really is no ongoing or longitudinal archiving of Spine Section documents. Dr. Rodts will electronically archive the Executive Committee minutes and meeting books from the past.

There being no further business, Dr. Larry Khoo made a motion for adjournment.

Minutes submitted by:

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

CLB/rm