

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

**Peabody Hotel Plaza Ballroom G, Orlando, Florida
May 3, 2004, 1 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Gerald Rodts, Jr., at 1:25 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Joseph Alexander, Dr. Ronald Apfelbaum, Dr. Charles Branch, Jr., Dr. Tanvir Choudhri, Dr. Darryl DiRisio, Dr. Richard Fessler, Dr. Peter Gerszten, Dr. Ziya Gokaslan, Dr. Michael Groff, Dr. James Guest, Dr. Regis Haid, Jr., Dr. Robert Heary, Dr. John Hurlbert, Dr. Robert Johnston, Dr. Larry Khoo, Dr. Daniel Kim, Dr. Rajiv Midha, Dr. Daniel Resnick, Dr. Gerald Rodts, Jr., Dr. Timothy Ryken, Dr. Christopher Shaffrey, Dr. Gregory Trost, Dr. Christopher Wolfla.

Guests: Dr. John Jane, Ms. Katie Orrico, Mr. Tom Marshall, Mr. Ron Engelbreit.

The minutes from the Executive Committee Meeting in San Diego in March of 2004 were reviewed by the group. There was one correction suggested that Dr. Rodts was incorrectly identified as the President-Elect of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons by the Nominating Committee. With this correction, the minutes were approved by the Executive Committee.

WEB SITE: Chris Wolfla was asked to present the Web Site report and because of scheduling conflict, was placed out of order. He indicated that the response to the *New York Times* letter has been placed on the web site. It documented that there have been revisions of the Executive Committee and links to other sites have been included. He is including an application form for membership in the Section on the web site and his soliciting content. Discussion was held regarding posting Executive Committee minutes but these will not be posted on the web site at this time.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The treasurer's report was presented by Dr. Ryken and Mr. Engelbreit. There have not been any substantial changes since the report at the March meeting. It was noted that the proposed changes in the allocation to long-term investment pools have not been made in the report dated March 31, 2004. The annual meeting revenue has not been finalized as there are several outstanding bills. It is anticipated that this will be within the budget.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Spine Fellowships: Dr. Reg Haid reported on progress with the ad hoc committee on spine fellowships. Dr. Gerald Rodts has appointed Dr. Haid as the Chair of this committee. Drs. Haid, Alexander and Branch met with Dr. Phil Weinstein of the Society of Neurological Surgeons prior to the Executive Committee Meeting. At this

time, the proposal is to include a Spine Section Executive Committee member on the SNSCAST. The spine fellowship applications will be passed through the Section for approval by a committee appointed by the Section that will include members of the Society of Neurological Surgeons and Section appointees. These applications, after approval by this committee, will be delivered to the Society of Neurological Surgeons for review and approval. It is the intent to have this active later this calendar year. The intention was for the Spine Section Committee to present the finalized application and accreditation criteria to the Section Executive Committee at the meeting in October, with subsequent approval anticipated by the SNS Council at its meeting in December. Following this, aggressive recruitment of the fellowship accreditation may begin.

Discussion involved a proposal by Dr. Shaffrey that the Scoliosis Research Society has approached Dr. Ondra regarding fellowship accreditation for deformity specialty activity. Dr. Rodts has directed Dr. Ondra to participate in this process with Dr. Kuntz and Dr. Mummaneni.

2. The CMS/Spine Fusion Task Force Report Presented by Ms. Katie Orrico: Ms. Orrico indicated that the group met with the CMS representatives in Washington on March 29th. The proposition from CMS was that there is too much spine surgery and there is a need to regulate spinal fusion surgery. This group is meeting with members of the Section, the North American Spine Society, and the AAOS. Dr. McCormick presented the CMS Task Force a tutorial on spine fusion surgery that presented the range of conditions, many of which are very appropriate for spine fusion surgery, that it's inappropriate to lump things together. Dr. Resnick indicated that it appears the CMS has bought into the suppositions from the *New York Times* article and the query, "what is the evidence of spine fusion surgery's value?", appears to be being driven by outside forces. At this point, we are awaiting the CMS' digestion of these meetings and then their responses will then be analyzed and dealt with by the task force.

3. AANS Annual Meeting Personnel Changes: Mr. Tom Marshall, the Executive Director of the AANS, indicated that Jennifer Byrd, who was the section liaison, is no longer with AANS. Ms. Angie Silberhorn has been appointed as the liaison for the Section on Spine and Peripheral Nerves. She will help manage the annual meeting and other needs of the Section during the year. Dr. Alexander indicated that the experience with the personnel change has been very positive thus far. Mr. Marshall reinforced that it is not just Angie but the entire AANS office that is responding to Section needs.

4. Journal of Neurosurgery: Spine was presented by Dr. John Jane. Dr. Jane indicated that the *JNS: Spine* has enjoyed increasing submissions and will increase to six issues per year this year. It will be a free-standing journal that will be indexed and marketed separate from the *Journal of Neurosurgery*. The goal is to increase to eight issues per year over the next couple of years. He proposed some challenges including editorial board issues and the role of orthopedic surgeons on the editorial board. He has asked for advice from the Executive Committee regarding additions to, and changes in, the advisory board. Questions and answers followed. Dr. Jane indicated that he is

aggressively pursuing marketing of the *Journal of Neurosurgery: Spine* outside of neurosurgeons so that this information may be available to the more broad spine world.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Annual Meeting: Drs. Shaffrey and Resnick indicated that by all accounts the annual meeting was a great success. All of the invoices have not yet been received but it appears that the financials for the meeting will be satisfactory. Demographics and other attendance details were included in the Executive Committee booklet. This recent meeting attendance was up about 15% from the previous year in Tampa, but below the peak meetings in Orlando.

2. Exhibits: Sixty-six of the 70 available booths were sold at the San Diego meeting. While the exhibit space sales were slightly under budget, sponsorship budgeting was above budget to the same level so that it appears that all of the budget items were met. Recommendations for an accelerated prospectus distribution and marketing to outside vendors will be considered along with our continued interest in insuring adequate traffic through the exhibit area during the meeting.

3. Future Sites: Dr. Alexander indicated that the Wyndham complex in Orlando adjacent to the Disney properties was evaluated and he presented alternative dates, with the Executive Committee approving the March 15-19, 2006, block. Dr. Alexander will proceed with this contract. There was a discussion regarding filling room blocks and mandatory registration with an absolute mandate to avoid violating the room block commitment.

4. Education Committee: Drs. Heary and Hurlbert indicated that there is a proposed AANS professional development course in August of 2004 and in December of 2004, along with February of 2005. These are primarily spine courses and will be filled with faculty from the Spine Section.

5. Newsletter: Dr. Khoo had nothing new to report other than there remains some confusion about the continuity of the editorial staff.

6. Rules and Regulations: Nothing to report.

7. Nominating Committee: Nothing to report.

8. Research and Awards Committee: Drs. Gropper and Guest will continue as co-chairs for the 2004-2005 cycle. Dr. Foley has been appointed to the Committee by Dr. Rodts.

9. Guidelines Committee: Dr. Resnick indicated that the fusion guidelines document will be distributed to the Executive Committee in its final form within the next few weeks. He will secure a \$30,000 sponsorship from industry to have the document

published in the *Journal of Neurosurgery: Spine*. The manuscript must be in to the *Journal of Neurosurgery: Spine* by June 1st so that it may be published in the next cycle in the early fall.

10. Membership Committee: Dr. Trost indicated that membership data is in the meeting packet. Currently, there are 1366 members. Of note, the Spine Section has been replaced as the largest subsection by the Tumor Section and we will analyze this.

11. Outcomes: Nothing to report.

12. Coding: Dr. Johnston reported for Dr. Mitchell regarding the propagation of a total disc arthroplasty code. This communication was included in the Executive Agenda Book.

13. Washington Committee Report: Dr. Fessler indicated that there is a need for volunteers for the neurologic and orthopedic device forums for the FDA. These are not the device panels but forums that will make proposals to the panels. He also indicated that the neurologic device panel member, Dr. Fernando Diaz, is completing his term and there is a need to replace him on that panel.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dr. Branch reported on the need for questions for the different examinations that are prepared and presented by the American Board of Neurological Surgeons. Both the primary written examination and the maintenance of certification examination will require substantial questions from the spine group. He will solicit participation from the Spine Section in the question-writing process.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

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

CLB/ajb