

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

**San Diego Marriott, San Diego, CA
March 17, 2004 at 8:00 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Regis Haid, Jr.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Mark McLaughlin, Dr. Robert Heary, Dr. Ronald Apfelbaum, Dr. Daniel Resnick, Dr. Richard Fessler, Dr. Gerald Rodts, Jr., Dr. Tanvir Choudhri, Dr. Mitchell Gropper, Dr. James Guest, Dr. Rajiv Midha, Dr. Charles Kuntz, Dr. Gregory Trost, Dr. Christopher Wolfla, Dr. Michael Groff, Dr. Khoo, Dr. Christopher Shaffrey, Dr. John Knightly, Dr. Joseph Alexander, Dr. Nevan Baldwin, Dr. Darryl DiRisio, Dr. D. Kim, Dr. Allan Levin, Dr. Ziva Gokaslan, Dr. Paul McCormick, Dr. Curtis Dickman, Dr. Edward Benzel, Dr. Charles Branch, Jr., Dr. Regis Haid, Jr.

Guests: Dr. Phillip Weinstein, Dr. Stewart Dunsker.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. Dr. Branch asked the membership to review the minutes as provided on the compact disc electronic version. Approval of the minutes was motioned by Dr. Gropper and seconded by Dr. Wolfla.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Dr. Ryken presented the treasurer's report. He recommended that \$250,000.00 be moved into the long-term investment pool at this time. His recommendation was also to move \$200,000.00 additional to the long-term investment pool after the annual meeting once the final accounting of expenses was received. This transfer would be approved at the meeting of the Executive Committee in May. He then reviewed the budget for the 2004 year. The recommendation to transfer funds to the long-term pool was approved by the Executive Committee.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Annual Meeting Request for Proposal: Dr. Haid reported on the Executive Committee's review of RFP's for annual meeting services. After receiving and reviewing these, a vote was made by the Executive Committee to retain the AANS Meeting Services as the annual meeting manager and organizer for the section. It appeared that the AANS bid was about \$35,000.00 below the other proposals. Discussion ensued and the decision of the Executive Committee was affirmed.

2. Speaker Registration: Further clarification of the obligations of guest speakers and speakers at meetings was discussed. The following guidelines were reaffirmed:

A waiver of the registration fee will be granted to the meritorious service award winner and the honored guest. Invited speakers who are section members or eligible for section membership will include members of NASS, CSRS, and SRS in addition to the AANS

and CNS members. These invited speakers will be subject and obliged to register. Non-members will be subject to registration but may be sponsored under unrestricted corporate grants. On international fellowships, the registration will be paid under the Fellowship Grant.

It was again reaffirmed that the only people who were eligible for a waiver of the registration fee for the meeting would be the meritorious service award winner and honored guests.

3. Spine Fellowships: Dr. Haid introduced Dr. Phil Weinstein who is the President-elect of the Society of Neurological Surgeons to discuss the Committee for the Accreditation of Subspecialty Training of the Society of Neurological Surgeons. Particular reference was made to the Spine Fellowship process. Dr. Weinstein described the Society of Neurological Surgeons and the evolution of the subspecialty certification process. He reaffirmed that the six month obligation for spine fellowships is the minimum and not the norm. He also indicated that the expectation was that applicants for fellowships will have completed their board certification training. He also indicated that joint fellowships could be considered.

Discussions centered around the need to have more structure in the fellowship certification process. Dr. Haid proposed the formation of an Ad Hoc committee as a liaison with the Society of Neurological Surgeons and the section for spine fellowship approval. Dr. Branch was appointed to form the committee and select membership, at least two of whom would be from the Society of Neurological Surgeons who are section members and these will function as a Fellowship Review Committee. The proposal was also made that spine fellowship directors be considered for membership in the Society of Neurological Surgeons. Drs. Haid, Branch, Rodts, and Weinstein will meet at the AANS meeting to further this proposal in advance of the SNS meeting later in May.

4. The CMS/Spine Fusion Task Force: Dr. Haid proposed a task force to address issues being raised regarding the credibility of spine fusion as a treatment in the lay press. This will be addressed at the CMS level. He has appointed a task force that includes Dr. Paul McCormick as Chair, Drs. Vince Traynelis, Chris Shaffrey, Curtis Dickman, Rick Fessler, Dan Resnick, and Steve Ondra. They will meet on March 29, 2004, with CMS. A pre-meeting was arranged on Thursday, March 20, 2004.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Annual Meeting: Drs. Resnick and Shaffrey presented information on the annual meeting. Dr. Resnick indicated that this attendance and revenue appears to be on budget. This included both the registration fees and corporate sponsorships. He is proposing an annual meeting template to be used in the future by both the annual meeting and scientific chair and the meeting planner to track the milestones in advance of the annual meetings. He also proposed crafting a letter to the AANS administration recognizing Jennifer Phillips for her work and indicating the need for backup personnel.

We will also put into place a process for critiquing the annual meeting process on a year-to-year basis and this information will be available to each upcoming meeting chair.

2. Exhibits: Dr. McLaughlin presented on the current exhibit situation. There was some concern that all of the available exhibitors did not sell. He will continue to address the concerns regarding the participant flow or traffic through the exhibit hall. Concern was made regarding the need to send out the exhibit prospectus earlier and the continued request to the scientific program team to not let the programs encroach on exhibit time.

3. Future Sites: Dr. Alexander indicated that the site in Phoenix for 2005 is confirmed and will be on March 9th through 12th. There was discussion about the concern from the AANS regarding the proximity of the section meeting to the AANS annual meeting. The Executive Committee will consider this but will not restrict ourselves. Proposed site for 2006 is Orlando and the dates of March 15th through the 18th were approved by the group. Proposal for the San Antonio meeting in 2007 in the second week of March and proposal for a meeting in Vale, Colorado in 2008 that would be a ski or winter sports facility meeting. Dr. Alexander will present these in further meetings.

4. Education: Dr. Hurlbert was not present to present.

5. Newsletter: Dr. Khoo recommended that the audience for the newsletter be increased by making this part of the web site. A discussion ensued as to implementing this.

6. Web Site: Dr. Wolfla was recognized for his outstanding work in having the Section web site produced on time and under budget. He is charged with creating a data base of the membership and will be allocated \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 or .25 FTE's to maintain a membership roster by geographical area. Recommendations to add links to the DMLR and the NPHCA were made as well.

7. Rules and Regulations: Dr. DiRisio indicated that the indicated by-laws changes have been approved by the Executive Committees of both the AANS and CNS and will be voted on by the membership at the annual business meeting.

8. Awards and Research Committee: Drs. Gropper and Guest presented the process by which the awards were reviewed and granted this year. This process is in evolution. Dr. Gropper indicated that Dr. Sawin was not a functional member of the committees and this required him to vote in his place. The Crockard International Fellowship will be awarded this year but there will not be a Sonntag award. The Cahill award has been approved and funded by the Synthes Corporation. An effort was made to ensure that there was adequate coordination with the award winners presentation and the Scientific Program Committee going forward. Dr. Guest recommended that application forms be standardized and was encouraged by the fact that the quality of applications was improving. He also proposed a course on writing grants as part of a section meeting in the future.

9. Nominating Committee: Dr. Baldwin indicated that Dr. Bob Heary had been proposed as the Chair-elect for the section. Dr. Haid indicated that he had submitted the proposals for the Section for the AANS. Dr. Rusty Rodts is the president-elect of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons.

10. Guidelines Committee: Dr. Resnick indicated that the Spinal Fusion Guidelines were close to final. There was some further discussions on the control of the copywrite and the journal in which these will be published. Dr. Resnick has indicated a desire to publish these in *Spine* but Dr. McCormick proposed publication in *the Journal of Neurosurgery Spine*.

Further discussion centered around the present kinds of publication in these different journals. There was a motion to vote on which journal offered the guidelines for publication. The Executive Committee voted to submit the fusion guidelines for publication in the *Journal of Neurosurgery Spine*. The final version of the guidelines will be distributed to the Executive Committee members for final approval prior to submission for publication

11. Membership Committee: Dr. Trost continues efforts to secure payment of the dues and ensure that the new residents are members of the section.

12. Outcomes Committee: Dr. Gerszten made a proposal to put the Quality of Life Measurement Tools on the web site for membership to use in individual practice analysis and for publication as well.

13. CPT Committee: There was no report from the CPT Committee:

14. Peripheral Nerve Task Force: Dr. Midha indicated that the Peripheral Nerve Section will have an afternoon scientific session at the AANS annual meeting in May.

15. Washington Committee: Dr. Fessler reported that the media campaign for the doctors for Medical Liability Form Project was well underway with video infomercials being played in a variety of states to try to influence elections. He applauded the formation of a CNS Subcommittee and will report on that as well. The Rapid Action Task Force for the FDA task force was recruited. Drs. Heary, Apfelbaum, Resnick, Guest, Khoo, Trost, Groff, and Alexander will volunteer for this.

16. PAC: Dr. Ondra was not here to report.

17. Public Relations Committee: Drs. Kuntz and Choudhri proposed some additional content and opportunities for the web site. These include publicizing and promoting Spine Section guidelines identifying or enhancing mechanisms within the Spine Section to respond in a timely fashion to spine matters in the late press and to be

sure that there were adequate links to related projects such as Think First.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dr. Haid reported that the Section members will be proposed as potential members in the Scoliosis Research Society and the Cervical Spine Research Society next to the review of the Executive Committee grid will require a consolidation of the Research and Awards Committee and the addition of the CMS Spine Fusion Committee and the SNS Spinal Fellowship Committee.

The last item was a presentation by Dr. Dunsker of the activities of the DMLR (Doctors for Medical Liability Reform) and the NPHCA (Neurosurgeons to Preserve Health Care Access). He indicated that this effort was alive and quite active in North Carolina and Washington state and moving to Pennsylvania. This overall effort has garnered substantial support from the major professional societies but he requested that we ask our colleagues in otolaryngology in particular to have their national organization join. The solicitation continued for individual contributions to this effort. After his presentation, the Section Executive Committee received a motion to contribute \$100,000.00 of Section funds to the NPHCA. This was approved unanimously.

Motion was made to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

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

CLB/rmm