

The Vascular Surgeon Online, Volume 8, Number 1

Welcome to the first edition of our new “The Vascular Surgeon Online” e-newsletter. We will produce two electronic issues of the newsletter each year to complement our more traditional print version of “The Vascular Surgeon.” The next issue will be in print and is scheduled for distribution in mid-April.

FROM THE PRESIDENT-Richard M. Green, MD

At last year's Strategic Planning Retreat the SVS Board of Directors voted unanimously to engage the American Board of Surgery in a dialogue that would enable vascular surgeons to redesign our training model. This issue was considered to be the most important currently facing us. Since then a number of meetings have been held with representatives of the ABS, VSB, APDVS, ABVS and SVS.

The outcome of these discussions was a proposal taken to the ABS Board of Directors in January that was unanimously endorsed. That proposal is as follows:

- 1) that certification in general surgery would no longer be required for those individuals seeking vascular certification;
- 2) that the vascular certificate would be a primary rather than a sub-specialty one;
- 3) that a proposal to create three pathways to primary certification would be written by members of the VSB and SVS, endorsed by the ABS and submitted to COCERT in March 2004;
- 4) that the three pathways would include a 3 plus 3 model or an integrated 5 or 6 year model that provide certification in vascular surgery only as well as a general surgical and vascular tract that provides dual certification.
- 5) that the VSB would be expanded to include representatives from the SCVS and PVSS as well as an additional member supported by the SVS and elected from the membership at large.

These discussions have been fruitful largely due to the good will demonstrated by all those involved. My special thanks go to Jim Stanley and Frank LoGerfo for making important and difficult decisions on behalf of vascular surgery and to Frank Lewis, Ron Meier and Barbara Bass for having the courage, leadership and wisdom to do the right thing for surgery. If all goes according to schedule the, ABMS approval should occur in March 2005. There is still a lot to be done and as this process unfolds many of you will be asked to participate.

ADVOCACY

AAA Screening Demonstration Sets Stage for Medicare Screening Benefit

The SVS – led AAA Coalition sponsored a AAA screening demonstration on Capitol Hill on December 2. The screening initiative was the backdrop for a Congressional briefing by Doctors William Flinn and Robert Zwolak. A bill will be introduced in February that would offer Medicare beneficiaries a one-time screening benefit for those with established atherosclerotic risk factors. Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Congressman Gene Green (D-TX), and Congressman Rick Larsen (D-WA) are three of the bill’s primary sponsors. More than a dozen other members of Congress have agreed to be original co-sponsors of the bill, while many more have expressed significant interest. Joining SVS in the AAA Coalition are the American Vascular Association, American College of Radiology, American College of Surgeons, Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Society of Interventional Radiology, Society for Vascular Ultrasound, Aneurysm Outreach, Inc., Cook, Johnson & Johnson, Medtronic and SonoSite, Inc.

Report from the SVS American Medical Association Liaison

Carlo A. Dall’Olmo, M.D.

SVS recently co-sponsored a resolution along with ten other medical societies dealing with expert witness qualifications and guidelines for behavior. The resolution was introduced by the American College of Surgeons at the AMA House of Delegates meeting in December 2003.

Dr. Dall’Olmo reports that the resolution “was extremely well received. As a matter of fact, during the reference committee testimony, the only negative comments were that the resolution was not strong enough, with a number of physicians wanting sanctions as part of the resolution language for those who did not abide by the conditions. Because of a certain amount of overlap with existing AMA policy, the reference committee recommended that the resolution be forwarded to the Board of Trustees so that the future report: ‘reviews existing legal standards and the courts’ prerogatives to select experts; consolidates existing AMA policies; expands them to address expert testimony beyond professional liability; and includes appropriate review and sanction mechanisms by appropriate organizations.’ This report should be available at the June 2004 AMA meeting.”

PRACTICE

Expert Witness Issues Addressed by ACS

The American College of Surgeons is working with IDEX –a national network of more than 3800 defense law offices, corporations, and governmental entities sharing expert witness information – to address the issue of plaintiff expert witnesses who provide inappropriate and inaccurate testimony. The IDEX maintains a comprehensive database

that contains more than 800,000 records of experts who have been involved in cases across the U.S. On average, 4,500 to 6,500 new records are added each month.

The network can provide the following: expert witness case history; transcript/document archival searches; abstracts of articles/books written by the expert or naming expert; "Challenges to Exclude an Expert" search; information on professional disciplinary action taken against an expert's license to practice; scientific literature research information on cases similar to that of the client; assistance in locating an expert to help build a defense.

If you are named as a defendant in a lawsuit, ACS recommends that either you or your counsel contact IDEX concerning the plaintiff expert witness in your case. The number is 800-521-5596. When calling, advise the representative that you are a Fellow of the College. They will send you the appropriate form to request the testimonial history of a particular itinerant plaintiff expert witness. A modest fee is charged only if the search yields a case history.

The above information was published in the Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons, Volume 88, Number 9.

SVS FOUNDATIONS

New Lifeline Foundation/NIH K23 Award Announced

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the NIH recently announced their willingness to jointly sponsor a new award. The "Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award" (K23) is designed to support the career development of investigators who have made a commitment to focus their research endeavors on patient-oriented research. The application deadline for the K23 award is **June 1, 2004**.

To obtain more information about the K23 award click here:
<http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm>

The Lifeline Foundation Seeks Contributions

The Lifeline Foundation and SVS have pledged \$75,000 to support our half of the first year of this career development award. Lifeline is seeking personal donations to help support subsequent years for this important award. For more information on how to contribute, please contact us at lifeline@vascularsociety.org or call 1-800-258-7188.

2004 Joan L. & Julius H. Jacobson Research Initiatives Conference, April 1-2

The Lifeline Foundation's Joan L. & Julius H. Jacobson Research Initiatives Conference will be held in Bethesda Maryland at the Hyatt Regency, April 1- 2. The theme for this year's conference is "Translational Vascular Research: From Bench to Bedside to Boardroom."

For more information on the program, to register, or make a hotel reservation click here:

http://www.vascularweb.org/VascularWeb_Contribution_Pages/Res_Initiatives/Meeting/MAIN_MENU.html

VASCULAR ANNUAL MEETING

Abstract submission for the Vascular Annual Meeting 2004 has now closed with close to 400 submissions. Thanks to all who participated in the process – the SVS Program Committee is now scoring the abstracts and will meet on February 23 in Chicago to finalize the 2004 program including the abstract submissions.

Watch your mail for more information on this historic meeting in Anaheim, June 3-6, 2004. Four prominent vascular associations will come together for the first time to create the world's premier event for specialists in vascular disease. The Society for Vascular Ultrasound (SVU), the Peripheral Vascular Surgery Society (PVSS) and the Society for Vascular Medicine and Biology (SVMB) will meet in conjunction with the SVS. Updates on the meeting can also be found on the website link below.

http://www.vascularweb.org/VascularWeb_Contribution_Pages/VascularAnnualMeeting_2004.html

SOCIETY UPDATE

The SVS headquarters in Chicago recently implemented a new Access-based membership system the first week in January to better serve the needs of our members. This spring we will be sending out a membership update form to make sure we have accurate contact information as well as documented permission for us to fax information to you when needed.

We have added a new staff member, Tracey Rheingans, as Project Coordinator, who is responsible for membership services and communications. If you have any questions about membership, dues, or an applicant that you are sponsoring, please contact Tracey directly at 312-202-5604 or email trheingans@vascularsociety.org. Tracey comes to us with an association background. She received her B.A. in art history at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

Certificates for our Distinguished Fellows are on the way. A special thanks to our Fellows Council, and Vice-Chair Anton Sidawy, M.D., for assisting us in the design and development of the certificate. Membership certificates are also on the way to all members of SVS. These certificates reflect the date of the official merger of the AAVS and SVS and the new identity as well. Thanks to Patrick Clagett, M.D, Secretary, for his direction on this initiative.

EDUCATION

The Society is currently planning a Vascular Coding Course to be held in Chicago at the Wyndham Hotel on May 7, 2004. Watch your e-mail for more details on this program. To be included on our priority mailing list please contact Melissa Kabadian at 312-202-5602 or e-mail at mkabadian@vascularsociety.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 1 – deadline for SVS membership applications

April 1 – deadline for the SVS Distinguished Service Award

April 1-2 – Lifeline Research Initiatives Conference, Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD

April 2-3 – APDVS/Residents meeting, Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD

May 7 – SVS Vascular Coding Course, Wyndham Chicago, Chicago, IL

June 1 – Deadline for Application for the Lifeline Foundation/NIH K23 Award

June 3-6 – Vascular Annual Meeting 2004, Anaheim, CA

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