Let’s Get the Job Done!

I am pleased to report that this year’s Annual Meeting in Palm Springs, CA, enjoyed record attendance of more than 1,000 in attendance, with over 179 scientific posters and 100 exhibitors present. We had the privilege of hearing from experts in the forefront of Pain Medicine throughout the week and the opportunity to hear from internationally renowned experts in pain, including this year’s keynote speaker Linda R. Watkins, PhD, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Psychology & Center for Neuroscience at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Dr. Watkins presented breaking scientific news on the immune and glial factors within the peripheral and central nervous systems that relate to chronic pain states and how therapeutics targeting key glial activation receptors is being approached in clinical trials.

On behalf of the Academy’s Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) staff, and our members, I would like to formally thank our Immediate Past President, Perry G. Fine, MD, for his service to the Academy this past year and in particular his shepherding of the strategic plan. He has done an excellent job in bringing consensus to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors on business matters and has kept us moving forward in our mission.

Dr. Fine challenged us to take the lead on the recent Institute of Medicine’s report on pain, which advocates many of the axioms AAPM has embraced for years and led us with the charge, “This is Our Time!” I will take up this charge as President and “Get the Job Done!” I have mentioned in the past that we will continue to pursue recognition of Pain Medicine as a primary medical specialty. In addition, I look forward to moving our other strategic goals forward. One area of focus is in our educational offerings among medical students and primary care providers (PCPs). Each year, leading physicians in pain medicine serve on the faculty of the Academy’s Essential Tools for Treating the Patient in Pain™ course, equipping clinicians with the knowledge they need to better treat the patient in pain. We are also looking forward to publishing a position paper that will help equip the PCP with the information they need to determine when a patient should be referred to a pain medicine specialist.

This will be an invaluable resource to PCPs as a study shows that they treat approximately 52% of chronic pain patients [1].

I also hope to see the initiation of a patient-oriented pain research program, to advocate for and develop patient-oriented pain research and scholarship to advance scientific knowledge and translate that knowledge into safe and effective therapies for patients with pain. This grant research project will provide financial support for residents, fellows, and junior investigators receiving training in scientific methods and research techniques, as well as provide research project funding support. We will still pursue participation in pain management data repositories when they become available.

Another accomplishment of Dr. Fine’s tenure as President was to reinvent the AAPM Foundation. The Foundation’s purpose is to advocate for patient safety by providing funding support to expand and enhance research and education, and to further the development of a recognized specialty dedicated to the practice of Pain Medicine. I look forward to seeing this viable fund-raising entity get off the ground and begin to generate funds to further pain research. Watch for more information on how you can get involved in these efforts.

This is your organization and I encourage you to get involved in a committee or task force, plan to submit a poster abstract or education proposal for next year’s Annual Meeting, or support the AAPM Foundation and help me take up the charge and “Get the Job Done.”

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Reference