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Forum

March–April 2021 Forum

**AMPA
Hope?**

As I sit down to write this latest column for the AMJ Forum as AMPA's representative, I'm struck by conflicting emotions that will likely be all too familiar to our flight crews. While the imprint of the elastic bands on my N95 mask are still fresh on my face from my last COVID patient flight, I may permit myself just a bit of tempered hope as the first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic comes to an end.

On one hand, the awful reality of the last year is still ever present. So much has been lost, so many patients that we have done our best to take care of, so many lessons learned from the early days in March of 2020 until now. The toll has been high. We learned the awful news at the end of December that Steven Neher, the past president of ASTNA, had died after contracting the virus while working clinically. Steven, of course, was well known to many in our profession and well regarded by all, including all of us here with AMPA, and our deepest condolences go out to his family, friends, and coworkers. He will not be forgotten for the work he did for all of us in our profession and the clinical care he provided to so many.

The impact that COVID has had on all of us is what tempers my hope, but as 2021 begins, we may just be starting to allow a glimmer of hope. In mid-December of 2020 many of us were offered the opportunity to receive the first COVID vaccinations. There was initial concern that there might be resistance or hesitation to being vaccinated, and the board of AMPA met very quickly to draft a statement of support encouraging all of us who are eligible to get vaccinated. We released this statement almost immediately and posted it on our social media accounts and website, again proving the value of those mediums in reaching a far greater audience in a very short period compared to the traditional methods of communication. We very

much want to engage our membership via social media, as it has proven to be a far more effective and faster means of communication with our membership.

As this past year has proven repeatedly, the current standard of care regarding COVID has been constantly evolving as new information has been gleaned and best practices established. We encourage the AMPA membership to use our social media as a resource for asking timely questions, and we've been pleasantly surprised how robust the conversation has been in answer to questions that have come up. It's hard to gauge what impact will be made with posting our organization's position statement on social media, but if the flurry of "vaccination selfies" was any indication, there just might be justification for that glimmer of hope that we might be able to turn things around in 2021.

Finally, and acknowledging that the other work of AMPA must go on despite COVID, I would like to also turn your attention to the combined work of several of our members, working in partnership with ACEP and NAEMSP to publish our joint position statement "Physician Oversight of Air-based Emergency Medical Services: A Joint Position Statement of NAEMSP, ACEP and AMPA," which emphasizes that "the delivery of air-based EMS requires clinical and operational aptitudes that demand both specialized training and specialized oversight of a physician." Please take a look at it, as many of our colleagues spent a great deal of effort formulating it, and for that we thank them for their work. There are more position statements coming down the pike, and we want to review these on a regular basis to keep them up to date and pertinent.

So, while we permit ourselves a glimmer of hope that we can start to return to something resembling the new normal of health care with the rollout of the vaccines, we still have much work to do and can't let our guard down. So, keep your mask on, social distance,

and limit your risk to the best of your ability. We need everyone on the front lines.

As always, if you have questions, thoughts, or concerns about anything AMPA related, please contact us via our social media accounts or our email info@ampa.org.

Ryan Wubben, President

**ASTNA
2021... A Fresh Start**

ASTNA is excited to present, in conjunction with IAFCCP and AMPA, a new and improved Critical Care Transport Medicine Conference (CCTMC) at the Perdido Resort in the beautiful Orange Beach, Alabama. We invite everyone to join us for a week of outstanding education, activities, relaxation, and honoring those we have lost—all while maintaining strict social distancing/masking guidelines. It is our hope this conference will get our memberships back on track in providing evidence-based education that may help us refine our knowledge and skills, while providing a safe space for networking, comradery, and bonding. Please visit CCTMC.net for more information regarding accommodations and upcoming information on speakers and activities.

ASTNA, in conjunction with AAMS and its partner organizations, is working on an in-person Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC) for 2021. We encourage all those who have an interest in presenting information related to clinical care, case studies, research, or any topic to apply! We look forward to a fun, engaging, and educational in-person AMTC!

ASTNA is here to assist with education requirements by providing TPATC and our new PATC course, both available in-person and online! These courses offer 16+ hours of continuing education credits that go towards certification renewals and individual program education, all while satisfying Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems requirements. Stay tuned

for the release of the revised Core Curriculum and 2nd edition of the *Human Patient Simulation for Transport Environments* coming later this year.

May 2021 continue to be a great year for us all as we adapt to this “new normal” and the struggles that COVID-19 has brought us. We value our members and partner organizations and look forward to a great year of outstanding educational opportunities!

Josh Wall, President

IAFCCP

A Culture of Safety

In the last issue I talked about the “Taking Care of Our Own” tour in which IAFCCP partnered with ASTNA and the MedEvac Foundation International, but I only talked about 1 piece of that tour. ASTNA President Sharon Purdom spoke of resiliency, and we spent quite a bit of the day talking about lifesaving behaviors.

The Life-Saving Behaviors (LSB) program was given to the IAFCCP by PHI Air Medical. This program came out of the Life-Saving Thinking program where PHI was awarded

the 2016 Vision Zero award from AAMS. At that banquet David Motzkin, President of PHI Health and an emeritus board member of the IAFCCP, offered to give this program to anyone who was interested in it and reiterated that “safety is not proprietary.” The LSB program discusses behaviors that have caused injury and/or death and the best practices to mitigate them.

We were able to modify how the content was delivered by gathering input by early tour sites. As a result, we instituted an interactive session. This created a platform in which people told stories of close calls and near misses and deaths of our friends and colleagues. One of the biggest takeaways that came out of this was the involvement of participants in the process. I asked people to set their titles aside and be objective; to listen and hear each other. The engagement was unreal. From state-level directors, program and system directors, and administrators of all levels down to the line-level clinicians, people sat and spoke candidly. It was clear that cultures of safety exist and are promoted. I’m not

sure why this was so exhilarating to me personally, but it certainly was. My question to you is do you feel the same with your organization?

The patient transport industry has programs of many sizes, various management schemes and ideals. One thing shouldn’t be different in any of these platforms—safety. It should be consistent despite where you work. HEMS gets quite a bit of attention when an incident occurs and, in contrast, when a ground ambulance is in an accident it may barely makes the local news. Rest assured these accidents occur in an exponential factor. I encourage our programs and individuals to step back and take an outside look into your program. Consider complacency creep and methods to prevent it. Reach out to other programs and open a dialogue. Create local/regional/state committees that collaborate for improvement for our industry. We have room for improvement; there is always room to grow.

Take care of each other, take care of our own. Safety is not proprietary.

Phil Ward, President

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Pediatric Advanced Transport
2019, pp. 270

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