

The Georgia ENTertainer

Fall 2018 Issue

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President's Message

by: Elizabeth Shaw, MD
Partner - ENT of Atlanta / ENT of Georgia

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the Georgia Society of Otolaryngology/Head & Neck Surgery, recipient of the Model Society award by AAO-HNS Board of Governors Assembly in 2017, to another great year.

Our Annual Summer Meeting was held July 19-22, 2018 at the Loews Royal Pacific Resort at Universal Studios. Our honored guest, Dr. Roy Casiano, Professor of OTO-HNS at the University of Miami, shared his experience with challenging case management discussions of rhinology and sinus disease. Our other keynote speaker was Dr. Greg Randolph, Chair and Professor of OTO-HNS at Harvard Medical School who discussed management of thyroid and parathyroid disorders and some of the new treatment and management classification guidelines. It was a great meeting led by our former President, Dr. Malaika Witter Hewitt and we were joined with multiple other excellent lectures from our GSO membership, faculty at Augusta University and Emory University. Thank you Malaika!



October 7-10, 2018, brought both a breadth of National and International speakers to our state, as the AAO/HNSF Annual Meeting and OTO experience was held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. It was an excellent time to catch up on all the cutting-edge technologies and information our specialty is pursuing for the advancement of patient care and reconnect with colleagues and friends within the Academy and Board of Governors. In addition, our academy foundation has partnered with Medshare to donate medical supplies and instruments to advance global patient care. Be aware that this collaboration continues through December 31st, 2018. Medshare is a 501c(3) humanitarian aid organization headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, dedicated to improving the "quality of life of people, communities and our planet" by sourcing and directly delivering surplus medical supplies and equipment to communities in and around the world. The contact address for questions is

humanitarian@entnet.org. Donations can also be brought to the Fall GSO meeting if you missed the opportunity to donate in October.

The Fall Meeting of the GSO is being held at the Ritz-Carlton Lake Oconee on December 1-2, 2018. We are honored to have two Nationally recognized experts in their fields joining us. Dr. Patrick Antonelli, George T. Singleton Professor and Chair of the University of Florida Department of Oto-HNS, will be reviewing topics of Neuro-otology such as new directions for tinnitus management and concerns on ototopical medication choices. Dr. Russell Kridel, former President of the American Academy of Facial and Reconstructive Surgery, will travel from Houston to share his 25 years of experience on a variety of topics from Rhinoplasty to Aesthetic Contouring with the use of facial implants. Several other guest speakers from our GSO community will add to a great well-rounded meeting and we will have time for golf and socializing on Saturday as well. Thank you to our Society Executive Director, Tara Morrison, her staff and the GSO Board of Directors for their efforts in helping to organize a great upcoming meeting.

Save the Date! The Summer GSO Meeting will be held at the Sonesta Beach Resort in Hilton Head, South Carolina, July 18-21, 2019. Bring the whole family and earn CME at a great beach venue.

As 2018 comes to a close, consider a New Year's Resolution to get more involved in your local or state society. There are many opportunities to get involved. Don't hesitate to contact me directly and see the legislative update provided by Dr. Malaika Witter-Hewitt regarding our efforts that are ongoing. Our hearts reach out to our southern Georgia communities that are working to rebuild in the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Michael. To all our members, we wish you a peaceful holiday season and good health in 2019!

Elizabeth Shaw, MD



Donations being accepted through December 31st, 2018

Advocacy News from the AAO-HNS

by: Peter J. Abramson, MD
Board of Directors

Information from the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services Proposed changes

As most of you are aware, over this past summer, CMS proposed multiple changes to medical charting, coding and reimbursement. However, during the public comment period, the American Academy of Otolaryngology along with other stakeholders lobbied hard against the proposed changes as they would drastically affect the way we practice and reimbursement for the work that is done.

Jim Denny, MD, AAO-HNS Executive Vice President and CEO submitted a 26 page letter to CMS' Administrator Verma in response to the proposed changes. Some of the highlights include CMS proposal to collapse the E/M codes from 5 to 3 with the guise of some relief on the charting side. Overall payments would be reduced particularly for work currently considered for level 4 and 5 E/M codes. This concept was put on hold to undergo further study. The proposed 50% reduction in reimbursement for the 50 modifier on the same day as an E/M code was not implemented in the final rule. The Academy's research among members indicated that, if implemented, this change would have substantially reduced practice income. Although the Academy lobbied for an increase in reimbursement and a shift away from the current methodology allowing 0.5 sinus kits per sinus to a HCPCS code for the kits to bill based on the number of balloons used on each patient. The reimbursement for the kits for balloon sinus dilation were left unchanged which is certainly better than a decrease. Comments by the AAO-HNS also included responses to mis-valued codes, quality measures, prohibition on seeing physicians in the same group on the same day and opposition to equalization add-on codes among others.

Most of the changes will not be implemented as proposed so there can be more study and input. That means that we will see these unfavorable changes circle back around at some point most likely within the next two years. Please stay aware and educated. Also, the work by the AAOHNS just on this issue has more than paid for your yearly dues. Please keep your Academy membership active. We are small in numbers as a sub-specialty but our Academy is exceedingly well respected on policy and legislative matters which has been essential keeping our interests well represented.



Membership Information

**PAY YOUR
2019 GSO/HNS
DUES**

If you have not done so already, Its time to pay your 2019 dues.

[CLICK HERE TO PAY NOW!](#)

**Not A Member?
JOIN TODAY!**

Become a GSO/HNS Member today!

[CLICK HERE TO ENROLL](#)

We hope to see you at the
2018 GSO/HNS ANNUAL FALL MEETING
Saturday, December 1 - Sunday, December 2, 2018
The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds | Lake Oconee

It is not too late to join us for the GSO/HNS Annual Fall Meeting!
Meeting information & Registration on www.gsohns.org

2018 ANNUAL FALL MEETING
GEORGIA SOCIETY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY/
HEAD & NECK SURGERY & METRO ATLANTA
EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY FOR OTOLARYNGOLOGY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2018
The Ritz Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee • Greensboro, GA

REGISTER NOW!
www.gsohns.org

Augusta University Update

by: Stil Kountakis, MD, PhD
Edward S. Porubsky, MD Distinguished Chair in Otolaryngology
Professor and Chairman
Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery
Augusta University



Dear Fellow Otolaryngologists,

According to Dr. Robert Pearl of Forbes.com, the top 5 health care issues in this year's midterm elections were 1. Prescription drug pricing (58%), 2. Universal/single-payer coverage (57%), 3. Medicare funding (50%), 4. Medicaid funding (40%) and 5. Opioid crisis (28%). As you can see from the list, American voters are mainly concerned about the affordability of health care but what is missing is personal responsibility and accountability in keeping ourselves healthy and thus reducing the cost of health care. Obesity

rates are rampant in Georgia and many of our citizens are not well informed in topics such as the impact of physical activity and proper diet on the control of diabetes and hypertension and all the other maladies that result from these two. As we are getting ready for the holidays I call upon all of you to make a new year's resolution: to spend at least some time talking and educating your patients of the importance of personal responsibility in managing their own health issues. Unless our patients do this, our national health care dilemma will persist, no matter who is in the White House or who controls the House and the Senate.

I wish you Happy and Safe Holidays.

Stil Kountakis, MD, PhD

Welcome Camilo Reyes Gelves



We are excited to welcome to the department Camilo Reyes Gelves, MD. Dr. Reyes earned his medical degree at the Universidad Del Bosque in Bogota, Colombia. He completed his residency in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Universidad Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Bogota, Colombia. He then completed three fellowships at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University in Rhinology and Sinus-Skull Base Surgery, Head and Neck and Microvascular Surgery, and Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Reyes is trained in all aspects of Otolaryngology and specializes in facial

plastic and reconstructive surgery, rhinology-sinus and skull base surgery, general otolaryngology, and sleep apnea disorders. His research interests include rhinology, inflammatory disease of the sinuses, nasal cavity tumors-cancer, skull base pathology, sinus and skull base anatomical studies, and head and neck cancer.

Annual Rhinology-Skull Base Surgery Fellowship Dinner

It has become a great tradition for the MCG rhinology-skull base surgery alumni to get together for an evening of fun and food around the time of the American Rhinologic Society and the AAO-HNS Foundation fall meetings. The event this year in Atlanta was very successful and well attended by not only future MCG fellow #17 (July 2019) Chadi Makary from West Virginia University, but also by prospective fellows. The dinner took place at Cuts Steakhouse, which allowed for an evening of relaxation and sharing of interesting past stories, present and future plans.



Pictured from left to right: Chris Ito #14, University of Massachusetts, Joshua Yelverton #12, Charlotte, NC, Camilo Reyes #13 Medical College of Georgia-AU, Stil Kountakis, Jose Gurrola #11, University of California San Francisco, Shu Das #4, Columbus Ohio, Ike Unsal #16, current fellow, Jastin Antisdell #7, St. Luis University, Eyad Khabbaz #8, University of Pittsburg, Chadi Makary #17 July 2019 fellow, Troy Woodard #6, Cleveland Clinic and Brett Comer #9, University of Kentucky.

Seventeenth Annual Porubsky Symposium and Alumni Event



We are currently developing our 2019 Porubsky Symposium and Alumni Event program. We are excited to continue our alumni participation and have again invited a fellow and a resident alumnus to participate in this year's event. Our Fellowship Alumni Speaker will be Ashli K. O'Rourke, MD (Laryngology, '12) from MUSC and our Residency Alumni Speaker will be Bernard J. Durante, MD (Otolaryngology-HNS Resident, '87) from Plymouth ENT in Plymouth, MA.

This year's distinguished guest speaker will be C. Gaelyn Garrett, MD, MMHC, Professor and Vice-Chair in the Department of Otolaryngology at Vanderbilt University and Senior Executive Medical Director of the Vanderbilt Voice Center.

MCG Otolaryngology alumni are invited to participate in this course and in the social activities planned for the weekend. These include golf on Saturday afternoon at the River Golf Club in North Augusta, and graduation activities at West Lake Country Club on Saturday evening, which will include a reception from 6:00 to 8:00 pm (with fun activities planned such as corn hole and a putting contest) with dinner and presentations following. Registration for the Porubsky Symposium and Alumni Event is FREE of charge.

We hope you will save the date on your calendar and plan to attend this impressive educational event.

Available Faculty Positions

Otologist/Neurotologist: We are seeking an Assistant or Associate Professor who wishes to join a thriving academic Otolaryngology/Neurotology practice. Fellowship training required.

Pediatric Otolaryngologist: We are seeking an Assistant or Associate Professor to join a thriving academic practice of two pediatric otolaryngologists. Fellowship training required.

Interested individuals are asked to send a cover letter and curriculum vitae to Dr. Stil Kountakis at skountakis@augusta.edu.

2019 Visiting Professor Series

Otolaryngologists in the Georgia/South Carolina area are invited to attend our monthly visiting professor series. Our currently scheduled speakers are:

January 8, 2019

Shaheen Islam, MD

Professor and Division Chief, Department of Medicine-Pulmonary Medicine
Augusta University, Augusta, GA

February 5, 2019

Steffen Meiler, MD

Professor and Chairman, Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine
Augusta University, Augusta, GA

April 16, 2019

Eric Wang, MD

Associate Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-HNS
University of Pittsburgh Eye & Ear Institute, Pittsburgh, PA

May 7, 2019

Kenneth Vega, MD, FACP

Professor and Division Chief, Department of Medicine-Gastroenterology & Hepatology

Educational Events

April 11-13, 2019

Southern States Rhinology Symposium

Kiawah Island, South Carolina

southernstatesrhinology.org

June 14-15, 2019

Seventeenth Annual Porubsky Symposium and Alumni Event

Augusta, Georgia

aoefdtm.org/Porubsky

Emory University Update

by: Douglas E. Mattox, MD

Professor and William Chester Warren Jr., M.D. Chair

Department of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery



Emory University Update

All of us in the Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery at Emory University hope you are having a wonderful close your 2018.

Our department continues to deliver cutting-edge care at seven facilities throughout the Atlanta area.

Emory University Hospital Midtown Campus continues to serve as our academic and clinical centerpiece. Faculty also practice at Emory University Hospital, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Egleston Hospital, Grady Memorial Hospital, the Atlanta VA Medical Center, the Emory Sleep Center, and the Emory Aesthetic Center.

Please find the below updates from our department:

Annual AAO-HNS Meeting

We were delighted the AAO-HNS selected Atlanta to be the host city for our most recent Academy meeting. We had a wonderful meet-and-greet with alumni as well as prominent national and international otolaryngologists at The Center for Civil and Human Rights by Centennial Olympic Park. Over 150 guests were in attendance and it was terrific to reconnect with so many guests.

Our department continues to be involved on a national stage with attending physicians and trainees involved as instructors, moderators, podium presenters, and poster presenters. Faculty within all divisions were involved as instructors during the meeting. I'm also especially proud of the efforts of Drs. Adam Klein, Arturo Solares, Esther Vivas, Carrie Flanagan, Oswaldo Henriquez, and Kara Prickett who organized "Emory en Espanol" a course for visiting physicians just before the AAO meeting and was conducted entirely in Spanish.

Emory Proton Therapy Center

Years of preparation and construction are soon to come to fruition with the opening of Emory's new Proton Therapy Center in Midtown Atlanta, just two blocks from our academic headquarters at Emory University Hospital Midtown. This center - the only of its kind in Georgia - will open its doors for treatment in late 2018 with five treatment gantries. This center

will add an additional cutting-edge modality to benefit patients from both local and regional referral basins. Please feel free to reach out if you feel a patient may benefit from such treatment.

ERGO - Emory Research Group in Otolaryngology

As part of our tri-partite mission, ERGO was formed in 2016 as a means to coordinate research efforts within the department and to advance research practices within our field. Currently lead by Drs. Raj Dedhia (MD, MSCR), Nikhila Raol (MD, MPH), and Joshua Levy (MD, MPH), quarterly ERGO meetings provide a discussion forum for future and completed resident research projects and for faculty to provide didactics on clinical research skills to trainees.

Since its formation, it's identified over \$8M of research grants obtained by faculty with over \$3M of that coming for faculty serving as a primary investigator for the grant. As our department continues to grow, I'm delighted to report our research efforts are also growing in step.

Residency and Fellowship Training

Under the guidance of Residency Director Sarah Wise, we are in the midst of our residency interview season. Applications are unbelievably strong this year and we hope to announce another successful residency match of four impressive trainees in Spring 2019.

We will also continue to offer fellowship training in Head & Neck Oncologic Surgery, Laryngology, Sleep Medicine and Sleep Surgery, Pediatric Otolaryngology as well as two fellowships in Rhinology.

Our graduates continue to thrive; one of our most recent residency graduates entered private practice and three matriculated into fellowship training programs in head & neck surgery, plastic surgery, and pediatrics. Our fellows have been equally successful by going on to join academic practices across the US and Canada.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming education opportunities:

- 1) Laryngeal Dissection, Videostroboscopy and FEES Workshop - January 25-26, 2019 *please note date has changed*
- 2) Temporal Bone Surgical Dissection Course - March 25-29, 2019

Best wishes to all and please feel free to reach out if we can be of any assistance.

Douglas E. Mattox, MD
Professor and William Chester Warren Jr., M.D. Chair
Department of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery

Legislative Report



by: Malaika Witter Hewitt, MD
Immediate Past President, GSO/GNS
Partner, ENT Of Georgia-North
Otolaryngology/Head & Neck Surgery

At the national level, the AAO-HSNF announced its new executive board in a press release on 10/10/18:

President

Albert L. Merati, MD

President-Elect

Duane J. Taylor, MD

Secretary/Treasurer

Kenneth W. Altman, MD, PHD

Immediate Past President

Gavin Setzen, MD

Executive Vice President and CEO

James C. Denny III, MD

CMS Heeds AAO-HNS Concerns on 2019 Physician Fee Schedule

On November 1, 2018, CMS released a final rule implementing changes to the 2019 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. In response to AAO-HNS advocacy and coordinated efforts across the house of medicine, CMS opted to rescind its proposal to apply an MPPR/Modifier 25 reduction for procedures reported on the same day as an E/M service. In addition, the agency delayed and modified its broad-reaching proposed changes relating to coding and payment for E/M services for new and established patient office visits. Beginning in 2021, which allows more time for stakeholder input, CMS will maintain the billing code for the most complex patients and collapse the current E/M coding system into three tiers. While the AAO-HNS continues its review of the 2,400-page final rule, James C. Denny III, MD, AAO-HNS EVP/CEO, provided a preliminary analysis.

AAO-HNS LEADS EFFORTS TO OPPOSE AUDIOLOGY DIRECT ACCESS/PHYSICIAN STATUS LEGISLATION**AAO-HNS Leads Efforts To Oppose Audiology Direct Access/Physician Status Legislation**

The AAO-HNS strongly believes a physician-led hearing healthcare team, with coordination of services, is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients. However, some in the audiology community continue to pursue legislation that would threaten patient safety by removing existing physician referral requirements within the Medicare program and redefining audiologists as "limited license physicians."

The Audiology Patient Choice Act (S. 2575) was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Rand Paul (R-KY) in March 2018. If enacted, S. 2575 would:

- 1 provide audiologists with unlimited direct access to Medicare patients without the need for a physician referral; and
- 2 inappropriately add "audiologist" to Medicare's definition of a physician

S. 2575 is essentially identical to the audiology direct access/physician status legislation (H.R. 2276) introduced last year and in previous sessions of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Hearing and balance disorders are medical conditions that require a full patient history and physical examination by a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO).

Although audiologists are valued health professionals who work for and with physicians, they do not possess the medical training necessary to perform the same duties as physicians, nor are they able to provide patients with the medical diagnosis and treatment options they require.

More than 130 national, state, and local medical societies, including the AAO-HNS, have opposed this effort in the House and the Academy is again leading the effort opposing S. 2575. In addition to spearheading a physician community opposition letter, the AAO-HNS has activated a grassroots response through PROJECT 535, updated our "Call to Action" for sending pre-written messages to lawmakers, and launched a "virtual lobby week" in June. Contact the AAO-HNS Advocacy Team at legfederal@entnet.org for more information or to get involved.

From the AMA House of Delegates report: Issues impacting otolaryngology

The American Medical Association (AMA) held its 2018 Annual House of Delegates (HOD) Meeting in Chicago, IL, June 9-13.

Our Academy was represented by **Robert Puchalski, MD**, Delegation Chair; **Douglas Myers, MD**, Delegate and Otolaryngology Section Council Chair; **Craig S. Derkay, MD**, Delegate; and **James C. Denny III, MD**, AAO-HNS EVP/CEO, as Alternate Delegate.

Retrospective ER coverage denials

Retrospective denials are becoming an increasing trend among national payers. The AMA voted to work to strengthen the enforcement of federal and state laws which require payers to cover ER care when a patient reasonably believes they are in need of immediate medical attention, including the imposition of meaningful financial penalties on insurers who do not comply with the law.

Grill brush warning

The AMA voted to secure placement of a warning label on all wire-bristle grill brushes informing consumers about the possibility of wire bristles breaking off and being accidentally ingested.

Portable listening devices and noise-induced hearing loss

The AMA voted to advocate for labeling on earbuds that do not have amplitude limiters to warn of the risk of hearing loss with extended use at high volume levels for extended periods.

Compensation for pre-authorization requests

In an effort to reduce unnecessary administrative and related financial burdens, the AMA voted to petition CMS that CPT code 99080 be reimbursed by Medicare.

Physicians at the meeting also:

- * Sought to boost affordability and competition in ACA marketplaces
- * Adopted policy that puts organizational muster behind achieving health equity in the U.S. health system
- * Agreed upon common-sense gun safety measures
- * Committed to integrating precision medicine into alternative payment models
- * Declared that drug shortages are a matter of national security.

The next meeting of the AMA HOD is scheduled for November 10-13, 2018, at National Harbor, MD. With questions regarding this report and other AMA HOD activities, please contact govtaffairs@entnet.org.

At the state level for Georgia, two House bills were introduced since the summer:

Bill Number: HB 769

Bill Title: Health; recommendations from the House Rural Development Council; implement

Sponsor: Rick Jasperse

Excerpt: premium assistance for physicians practicing in medically underserved 9 rural areas of the state

Last Action: Effective Date - (07/01/2018)

Bill Number: HB 844

Bill Title: Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons; revise provisions

Sponsor: Penny Houston

Excerpt: and production of written text in English. 50 (9) 'Nonmanual markers' means various facial

Last Action: Effective Date - (05/08/2018)