

SCSA Newsletter



"Common perioperative risks include risk of sore throat or postoperative nausea and vomiting. Rare but serious complications include heart attack, stroke, or death. Any questions?"

This, in a nutshell, is why we fought so hard for patient safety at the State House this session, and any session when anyone thinks it's no big deal to remove physician supervision.

SCSAPAC CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Forest Evans, Jr., M.D., FASA

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South Carolina General
Assembly Adjourns on
May 12, 2022

SCSAPAC CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Forest Evans, Jr., M.D. FASA

Fellow Anesthesiologists,

Some 20 years ago I first represented the SCSA at a political gathering in Columbia. I was a bit intimidated at the prospect of walking into a social situation where I wondered if I would know anyone, anyone at all. In this case it turned out that there were indeed some familiar faces from my Senate page job during college. I reminded myself that I was the expert in the room for the SCSA, and waded in.

I relay this now dated experience as an aside to the sincere appreciation I have for the numerous SCSA members who have waded in and upped efforts of late to put themselves in a position to advocate for our patients and the practice of anesthesiology in South Carolina. Establishing relationships over time is essential in ensuring that our voices are heard in the legislature, and this is accomplished by making phone calls, taking meetings with legislators, and attending political fundraisers (donating) and rubbing elbows.

The main resource that enables us as SCSA members to do these things effectively is the guidance of our Executive Director Dr. Margarita Pate and our lobbyists. We continue to enjoy excellent support from our long term lobbying team. Additional support from contract lobbyists has been employed in the current legislative cycle, leading to increased expenses (and results). Said support from the entire team has enabled us to make certain that legislators are indeed aware of the effectiveness, safety and importance of maintaining physician-led anesthetic care.

By effectively funding our PAC, we are investing in the future of our specialty, and ensuring that legislators will continue to hear the message that our fellow South Carolinians want a Medical Doctor in charge of their care when they require anesthesia. Of note, the PAC is bipartisan, donating to those that are friendly toward and support the SCSA regardless of political affiliation.

It has never been easier to make a PAC donation at the SCSADR.COM website (though checks are still fine too!). Contribute in a lump sum, or if you prefer, a recurring contribution. I'll put a plug in personally for the recurring - set it and forget it.

The SCSA and the SCSA PAC have been there for our specialty and our patients. Fellow anesthesiologists, we must invest in our specialty, invest in patient safety, and fund our PAC like we mean it.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Whew! What a month we had in March. Thanks in large part to the 54 anesthesiologists, including an impressive contingency of MUSC attendings, residents and fellows, we made quite the positive impression. We even changed several hearts and minds in the South Carolina House. Every Tuesday-Thursday of March (except when they were out the week after the budget debate) we were in the lobby just outside the House Chamber. With the direction of our excellent lobbying team, House Members were called out to the ropes to speak with us. We were able to refute the many falsehoods being told by the leaders of the nurse anesthetists and their lobbyist. Our consistent message was the priority of patient safety above all else. We were able to make clear that the bill's only benefit would be one of professional ego for the nurses, and would not fix anything or address any public need, but would rather harm patient safety. When the bill went to the House floor, the vote was overwhelmingly in our favor! Some drama in the 3M Committee ensued, but after all was said and done, the bill was finished! Thanks to all the Representatives from all over South Carolina who sided with us and patient safety!



*ASA ANNUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 22-26, 2022
NEW ORLEANS*

ASA REPORT - Jennifer Root, M.D., FASA, ASA Director for SC

Greetings all, and I hope you are having a great spring! The ASA Board had their meeting of the board on March 4-6 in Chicago. There was unusually light business before the board which reflects the amount of stuff that slowed down during Covid. All meetings of committees have been completely virtual until this past fall and other than required reviews and statement updates, most business was put on hold. The statement on Controlled Organ Donation after Circulatory Death, Statement on Sedation and Anesthesia Administration in Dental Office Based Settings, and a new Statement on Peer Support after Unexpected Outcomes: Treatment of the "Second Victim" were all discussed and approved. The Statement on Developing Policy for Infection Prevention Related to Surgical Attire was sunsetted, and we have asked the committee on occupational health to work with QMDA to amend the existing policy on surgical attire to include portions of this prior statement and update their policy overall. I for one would like to see other areas studied- not just surgical head wear! Several other statements, guidelines, and policies were reviewed such as the statement on Regional Anesthesia, Recommendations for Safe Injection Practices, and the Principals of Critical Care Medicine were all reviewed and adopted as well. Each of these documents will be placed before the House of Delegates in October at the annual meeting for final review and approval by the House. For those who do not know how things work at the ASA level, all committee work products, the yearly budgets, and strategic planning for the organization come for review at the Board level twice a year.

ASA Report continued...

In between meetings, the daily/weekly operations are managed by the Executive Committee and the Administrative Council (officers/division chairs) alongside our ASA CEO, and each October, what the board has decided comes for approval at the Annual Meeting by the House of Delegates. If you do not like something the ASA is doing, contact either our Delegates, your ASA Board members (me and Laura Roberts) or email the elected officers of the ASA. Important issues that the ASA is facing are about the same as the past few years. Membership is still hanging in there, but we are losing a significant number of members after they finish residency and do not become ASA members when they go into practice. Financially, the ASA is stable, but with most of our revenue relying on membership dues the survival of our organization will become very reliant on Anesthesiologists continuing to support their professional organization. If you have friends or partners that are not members, they can only rely on the coattails of others until there is no coat.

The VA continues to attempt to push physicians out of VA healthcare, and a new bill has been filed in congress that requires anesthesia services in VA's to be overseen by Physician Anesthesiologists. You should have already gotten a grassroots alert about this bill and will be hearing more about this as we work to get all our congresspeople to support and sign on to this.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/7048/text?r=16>

At this point, no South Carolina House member has signed onto the bill... so for what are you waiting? Contact your congressperson (<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>) and ask them to support HR 7048. Our veterans deserve a Physician Anesthesiologist leading their Anesthesia team for the best care! I promise you this is an easy email to write. Better yet, pick up the phone and ask to speak to the 'health care LA' (that is the legislative assistant in the office that deals with health care bills) and tell them who you are and why you want your house member to support this bill. They are always very pleasantly surprised to hear from us which is a bit sad really. Each of us should make an effort to reach out annually so they know what our concerns are and how we can better support our patients. Always remember you are THE expert when it comes to the practice of Anesthesiology!

Next up is Legislative Conference, then summer for ASAPAC fundraising (hint hint), and finally the ASA Board will meet again in August. The next Annual meeting is October 21-26 in New Orleans so put it on your calendar and join your fellow docs from around the country for education, advocacy, and networking.

LLR CORNER

Sixteen physicians ran for an at large seat on the Board of Medical Examiners. Three of them were anesthesiologists : Michael Pesce, MD, Ezra Riber, MD and Kevin Walker, MD. First round of voting ended April 20th. After the first round of votes, 3 made it to the run-off. Kevin Walker, MD is in the run-off! Please cast your vote for Kevin today.

CME Reminder: Medical physicians are required to complete 40 Hours of continuing medical education to renew their license. Thirty of these hours must be in their specialty; 10 may be non-specialty. Two hours must be in safe prescribing and monitoring of controlled substances. All hours must be AMA/AOA Category 1 taken within the 2-year renewal period. See S.C. Code Section 40-47-40. Physicians may also claim up to 10 hours for volunteer medical service. See S.C. Code Section 38-7930[B]

The next meeting of the Board of Medical Examiners is May 2-4, 2022.

The next meeting of the Board of Nursing is May 19-20, 2022. There are several issues outstanding of interest to us. The first is nurse anesthetists performing cosmetic procedures. The BON has been asked if this is within the scope of practice of nurse anesthetists. The other scope issue is nurse anesthetists and pain medicine. Finally, the issue of title misappropriation has also been brought to the attention of the BON. Several nurse anesthetists have followed the lead from the AANA to refer to themselves as nurse anesthesiologists. This is NOT allowed by statute in South Carolina. A licensee must only use the terms as outlined in their license. Nurse anesthetists are licensed in South Carolina as 'Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist,' 'CRNA,' or 'Nurse Anesthetist.' Nurse Anesthesiologist is NOT a statutorily approved title.

NEWS OF NOTE

Two prominent legislators are not running for re-election. Speaker of the House Jay Lucas of Hartsville announced that he would not be running for re-election this year. Majority Leader Gary Simrill of Rock Hill also announced his retirement from the House. Both of these House Members have long, distinguished careers in office and are great friends to physicians in general and anesthesiologists in particular. We wish them Godspeed in all their future endeavors. To date, 11 additional House Members are not running for re-election in November.

Murrell Smith of Sumter was unanimously elected the new Speaker of the House on April 28th. This is a great choice and we are looking forward to continuing a close relationship with Speaker Smith. He is well known to the physician community and has our strong support!

The ASA Legislative Conference is May 9-11, 2022 in D.C. We have a big group (12) attending this year. It's the first in person legislative conference since the pandemic. Several current issues include VA physician supervision of nurse anesthetists, surprise billing implementation and the perennial pain in our neck, the 33% parity mismatch in Medicare funding.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Congratulations to Christopher A. Yeakel, MD, FASA who was inaugurated as President of the SCMA on April 23, 2022. He is recently retired from practice in Columbia, but not retired from advocacy!!!



Doctors Day, March 30, 2022. A great day this year for physicians and patients!

Top photo: physicians watch from the House balcony. When the nurses' bill was up and the board lit up green (against the bill), we were ecstatic!

Bottom photo: our own Dr. Kevin Walker (third from the right) and Dr. D.T. Shantha (just to the left of the Governor) listening to The Honorable Governor Henry McMaster read the proclamation celebrating Doctors Day 2022.