

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2011-2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The chief aims of the Association are the advancement of knowledge and skill in perioperative anesthesia care for the veteran undergoing surgery. The vision of the AVAA is aligned with the VA mission to promote excellence in anesthetic care of veteran population by building a culture of education and research. In roughly past 10 years, our specialty evolved from the frame of the operating room theater to complex tasks of a perioperative physician anywhere in the hospital. As perioperative physicians, we provide care for both medical and surgical patients in critical care units, oversee chronic pain and pre-operative medical evaluation clinics and are involved in daily management of the OR. In many VA hospitals, Anesthesiology managers are the sole managers of the operating rooms or jointly working with Chiefs of Surgery and/or the OR Nurse Managers.

Since the AVAA shares similar objectives with the National Anesthesiology Services (NAS), it may sound that these organizations are duplicates. In order to decrease the overlap, AVAA mainly functions as an organization to educate its members about the pearls of "Practice of Anesthesiology" in VA settings rather than being involved in administrative aspect of this specialty. We will closely collaborate with Anesthesia Services of armed forces and welcome our colleagues from uniformed forces to have joint membership. The AVAA has revised the website to allow its new members to apply and pay their dues online.

Most anesthesiologists practicing in the United States probably believe that the practice of Anesthesia is reasonably similar in private sector and VA. Through my tenure at the VA, I have learned how significant these variations are. Anesthesiologists have assumed several roles in perioperative medicine and play active role to help the organization to meet or exceed on external peer review program (EPRP) measures related to surgical infection prevention (SCIP). Clinical pathways, evidence-based practices and guidelines adopted from various professional societies are routinely used by VA anesthesiologists. AVAA is equipped to educate its members with concepts and "how to's" in Anesthesia practice and related VHA directives.

The AVAA website has been reformed and includes forums and share points for scientific discussions. Please note that patient identifiable information should not be shared in these forums. Any educational material that is suitable for CME credits will be reviewed by the scientific editorial board and be placed on the website to be accessed by the members. State University of New York at Buffalo has accepted to sponsor the CME materials following a thorough review by the editorial board. Now, AVAA members will be able to earn CME credits by completing a post-test prepared for these educational courses.

The future goal is to expand the educational website to host a VA Anesthesia Journal, and I hope that with the help of the AVAA members this will be a success. Future indexing by Medline and Pubmed search engines will be sought. During Annual meetings, various workshops in the field of airway management and use of Ultrasound for nerve blocks will be offered. I would like to thank Dr. Ann Walia, the current Secretary of the Association for her outstanding efforts to make these educational sessions a reality.

Best wishes,

Nader D. Nader