Welcome to your Section on Neurological Surgery (SONS) Fall newsletter. As the Chair of our Section, I would like to keep you informed on the interesting activities, initiatives and goals of the Section.

The SONS continues to look for opportunities to use the power of the AAP and its 64,000 plus membership to improve the care of children through education, advocacy and outreach. For those of you actively involved in the SONS, you see the benefits to our patients. For those on the sidelines, hopefully I can convince you to step up and get involved. Let me tell you why.

The SONS is asked for input whenever the AAP creates health policy, produces book chapters, reviews medical policy for insurance carriers/private payers and new CPT coding proposals for neurosurgical conditions, reviews relative federal and state legislation or takes a stand on an issue important to children. Additionally, each year we are asked for CME topics that we feel are important to the health of children. SONS can suggest topics we feel are of important educational value for pediatricians or that we feel should be taken up as issues by the AAP. Each year we in SONS, along with the Section on Neurology, provide topics and speakers to the AAP National Conference and Exhibition. Topics in the recent past have included occult dysraphism, positional molding, neurosurgical emergencies, and concussion. For 2016 national meeting we have proposed programs directed at practicing pediatricians including brain and spine imaging and treatment of lumbar tufts and sacral dimples.

We all have many demands on our time, both in our professional and personal lives. I’ve always felt that the time spent away from our practices and our families could be better spent talking to the pediatricians who take care of our patients. I hope those of you on the sidelines of the SONS, or who are not members, will consider getting involved.

Have a wonderful holiday season!
Meetings

The 44th Annual AANS/CNS Section of Pediatric Neurological Surgery will be held in Seattle, Washington from December 8 to 11, 2015. The theme of the meeting is “Innovation, Invention and the Future of Pediatric Neurosurgery.” The focus of this year’s program is to inspire attendees to bring ideas to fruition through novel design and innovation.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the AAP SONS award for the best oral presentation to exemplify a significant impact on population health care for children with pediatric neurosurgical diseases will be chosen. Dr. David Limbrick was the recipient of last year’s inaugural AAP SONS award. Dr. Limbrick’s presentation was entitled “Population-Based Analysis of Complications Associated with Chiari Malformation Type I Surgery in Children.” In addition to a modest stipend, Dr. Limbrick received a free membership to the AAP.

The SONS lecturer for the upcoming Pediatric Section Meeting is Wendy Sue Swanson, MD, MBE, FAAP who will be speaking on How 140 Characters are Changing Healthcare, on Thursday, December 10 at 2 pm. Dr. Swanson is a pediatrician at Seattle Children’s Hospital. As of October 2013, she has led the Digital Health initiative at Seattle Children’s. Dr. Swanson is also author of the book Mama Doc Medicine and a blog Seattle Mama Doc.

Dr. Swanson and her team are working on several pilot programs, collaborating with tech innovators to discover ways to more effectively deliver meaningful information to patients and families. She also continues to write for Seattle Mama Doc, translating new science and parenting information to thousands of readers each month. Initial projects include building tablet and web applications designed to educate current patient families. Right now the team is piloting a new tool called Virtual Handshake™, a community-centered application designed to introduce patients and families to providers, care delivery and medications before and after the visit.

The SONS lecturer is supported by KLS Martin.

First Year Discounted Membership

If you have not had any previous affiliation with the AAP, you are eligible for reduced AAP membership national dues, at a 50 percent reduction from regular dues. This is an excellent way to get to know the SONS and the AAP, at a reduced cost. For further information, please contact Lynn Colegrove, (847) 434-7820.
SONS would like to welcome our newest members:

- Gregory William Albert, MD, FAAP - University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR
- William Corbly Gump, MD, FAAP - Norton Neuroscience Institute, Louisville, KY
- David D. Limbrick, MD, FAAP - St. Louis Children’s Hospital, St. Louis, MO
- Francesco T. Mangano, DO, FAAP - Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, Cincinnati, OH
- Steven Schneider, MD, FAAP - Long Island Jewish Medical Center, New Hyde Park, NY
- Charles Bryce Stevenson, MD, FAAP - Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, Cincinnati, OH

We look forward to your involvement in Section activities and initiatives.

SONS is also offering free memberships to pediatric neurosurgical fellows-in-training with Fellowship Program Directors that are also members of the AAP. Discounted memberships ($150) are available to pediatric neurosurgical advanced practice providers (NPs and PAs). For more information about this campaign, please contact Dr. Andrew Jea, Section on Neurological Surgery Executive Committee Secretary (ahjea@texaschildrens.org).

A strong word-of-mouth marketing campaign is an important way to promote the continued growth of SONS and the AAP. As an active member, you not only know the value that your membership provides in advancing your career and strengthening your profession, but you are also in daily contact with a wealth of prospective members at your institution and through your network of professionals.

The AAP SONS has been busy writing and publishing health policy:

- **Incidental Findings on Brain and Spine Imaging in Children** (lead authors: Cormac O. Maher MD, FAAP and Joseph H. Piatt MD FAAP)
- **Congenital Brain and Spinal Malformations and Their Cutaneous Markers** (lead authors: Mark Dias MD, FAAP and Michael Partington MD, FAAP)
- **Prevention and Management of Skull Base Deformities** (lead authors: Thomas G. Luerssen MD, FAAP and Sandi K. Lam MD FAAP)

If you would like to review these draft policies and offer your valued opinion on these important matters, please review the following link [https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/Committees-Councils-Sections/Section-on-Neurological-Surgery/Pages/Advocacy.aspx](https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/Committees-Councils-Sections/Section-on-Neurological-Surgery/Pages/Advocacy.aspx), and write to Dr. Andrew Jea, Section on Neurological Surgery Executive Committee Secretary, (ahjea@texaschildrens.org).
SONS is also active in reviewing and critiquing clinical policies endorsed by the AAP. In the past, we have helped craft a statement on the use of molding helmets to treat positional plagiocephaly. The Section has also been asked to review private payer medical policy for coverage of neurosurgical procedures and CPT code change proposals. If you would like to offer your expert opinion on clinical guidelines put forth on pediatric neurosurgical disorders, private payer medical policy or coding proposals, please contact Dr. Andrew Jea, Section on Neurological Surgery Executive Committee Secretary (ahjea@texaschildrens.org).

SONS representatives sit on the AAP’s Surgical Advisory Panel, a leadership group which has been instrumental in advocating for and obtaining AAP support of important issues which affect pediatric surgeons. Some of the SAP’s accomplishments include publishing the Referral Guidelines for Pediatric Surgical Subspecialists (February 2014). They also helped obtain AAP endorsement of the recently released SmartTots updated consensus statement on Neurotoxicity of Anesthetic and Sedative Agents that emphasizes a need for more research into the safety of anesthetics and sedatives administered to infants and young children under the age of 4. Based on the most recent SmartTots Consensus statement, the SAP elected to develop an “Optimal Timing of Surgery” task force. This Task Force would be assembled to develop guidance around the optimal timing of surgery related to behavioral and short and long term health concerns. A Section representative also sits on the hospitalists’ Section on Hospital Medicine’ Subcommittee on Surgical Care. This Subcommittee recently launched a Surgeon Survey on Inpatient Pediatric Care and Comanagement. The SAP will offer a plenary session at the 2016 National Conference and Exhibition in San Francisco, “Comanagement of Postoperative Surgical Patients: What, When, Where and How?” The SAP-authored Resolution was approved at the AAP’s Annual Leadership Forum (#115) regarding a pediatric modifier for procedures done on children less than 12 years of age. The SAP will be following up with the AAP Committee on Coding and Nomenclature on this Resolution. The SONS worked with the SAP to develop Building a Bridge Between Surgical Services and The Children’s Hospital, a proposal which discusses a how to address the problem surgical services encounter in Children’s Hospitals.

The SONS sponsored the following education programs for the general pediatrician and subspecialists at the AAP’s National Conference and Exhibition in Washington, D.C. (October 24-27):

- Abnormal Cranial Shape: When to Worry, How to Diagnose, What to Do and When to Do It?
- I’ve Got Your Back: Sacral Dimples, Vascular Lesions, Tufts, and Other Spine Problems (2x)
- Neurosurgical Emergencies for the Practicing Pediatrician

The SONS will be hosting educational programs at the upcoming NCE in San Francisco (October 22-25, 2016).

SONS members have also been asked to submit stories for AAP News. In the July 2015 issue, a review of incidental findings on brain and spinal imaging was composed by Philipp R. Aldana MD FAAP and Cormac O. Maher MD FAAP. If you have any story ideas, please write to Dr. Andrew Jea, Section on Neurological Surgery Executive Committee Secretary (ahjea@texaschildrens.org).

On behalf of the Section, the AAP launched a Periodic Survey of Fellows which surveyed pediatrician members who provide direct patient care regarding screening, referral and treatment for neurosurgical conditions. Chair-Elect Dr. Philipp Aldana will be presenting the survey results in an AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery meeting program, “Prioritizing Pediatricians’ Neurosurgical Education: Results of an American Academy of Pediatrics Survey of 505 Pediatricians” on December 9, 2015 at 11 am, in Seattle.
Congratulations to Sandi Lam MD FAAP on her selection as AANS/ACS Health Policy Scholar for 2015. This competitive award includes funding for Dr. Lam to attend the Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management. In addition, she will provide one year of assistance to the AANS and the ACS on matters related to health policy, as requested by either organization.

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) awarded a $1.8 million grant to William Whitehead MD FAAP to study ventriculoperitoneal shunt placement in pediatric patients with hydrocephalus. Dr. Whitehead and his research team will work with the Hydrocephalus Clinical Research Network (HCRN) and the Hydrocephalus Association to conduct the multi-site study. The 3-year randomized controlled trial will determine which shunt entry site results in the lowest rate of shunt failure. The study is one of 46 proposals PCORI approved for funding to advance the field of comparative clinical effectiveness research providing patients, health care providers, and other clinical decision-makers with information that will help them make better informed choices.
Section on Neurological Surgery
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