Message from the Chairman

Welcome to your Section on Neurological Surgery (SONS) Spring newsletter! Your SONS members have been busy working with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and its 64,000 plus members to improve the care of children through education, advocacy, policy, and outreach. In this edition of your newsletter, you will see how we are achieving this through our newly formed Education and Advocacy and Policy Committees and through our individual member’s efforts. This is an exciting time for the AAP SONS as it goes through its development as the leading advocate for neurosurgical health in organized pediatrics.

Since SONS is regularly consulted by the AAP when formulating policies or guidelines related to neurosurgical issues in kids, we formed the Advocacy and Policy Committee to be able to readily and thoroughly review and comment on any AAP material or issues that need pediatric neurosurgery’s input. The important issues that the SONS weighed in on are summarized in the Advocacy and Policy Committee’s report. One that I wanted to highlight is how the SONS worked with other AAP sections to obtain AAP endorsement for the Guidelines Committee of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons recently published *Systematic and Evidence Based Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Positional Plagiocephaly*.

An integral function of SONS is education, not only of pediatricians and families on neurosurgical diseases, but also of neurosurgeons regarding organized pediatrics. In the Education Committee’s report, we highlight the many activities throughout the year that we have engaged in to educate during the national annual meetings of the AAP and the AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Neurosurgery.

During recent months, catalyzed by SONS activities at the 2016 Pediatric Section Annual Meeting in Orlando, there has been renewed interest by pediatric neurosurgeons in the SONS and its activities. Read about our newest members and the benefits of membership at our membership report.

Lastly, at the conclusion of our SONS annual meeting concurrent with the Pediatric Section Annual Meeting last December, John Ragheb, MD concluded his term as the SONS Chairman and handed the reins over to yours truly. I will have a difficult time filling John’s shoes. Through his leadership, the SONS grew in its scope and function, better enabling it to serve its mission of improving the neurosurgical health of children.

I really hope that you take the time to read how the SONS has been working hard to advocate for the health of children and hope that you will be moved to become more involved with your SONS.
At the conclusion of the 2016 AANS/CNS Section of Pediatric Neurological Surgery in Orlando, Florida, Brandon Sherrod, a medical student at the University of Alabama School of Medicine, and the pediatric neurosurgery team at the University of Alabama - Birmingham received the 3rd annual AAP SONS award for the best oral presentation to exemplify a broad and significant impact on health care for children with pediatric neurosurgical diseases. Mr. Sherrod’s presentation was entitled "Risk Factors for Surgical Site Infection Following Non-Shunt Pediatric Neurosurgery: A Review of 9,296 Procedures from a National Database and Comparison to a Single Center Experience." In addition to a modest stipend, Mr. Sherrod will receive a free membership to the AAP.

The SONS lecturer for the Pediatric Section Meeting was Dr. James Doty. Dr. Doty is Professor of Neurosurgery at Stanford University. He is the founder and director of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. He is also a New York Times best-selling author. Dr. Doty gave a TED-like lecture entitled, “Hacking Your Brain for Happiness.” His message to the audience is that practicing compassion towards others improves health and happiness, for both sender and receiver.

The SONS lecturer is supported by KLS Martin.

SONS would like to welcome our newest members:
Lance Governale, MD, FAAP
Sanjiv Bhatia, MD, FAAP
Jonathan Martin, MD, FAAP
Eylem Ocal, MD

SONS is also offering free membership to pediatric neurosurgical fellows-in-training with Fellowship Program Directors that are also members of the AAP. Discounted memberships are available to pediatric neurosurgical advanced practice providers (NPs and PAs). For more information about this campaign, please contact Dr. Ann-Christine Duhaime, MD, FAAP, Chair of the Membership Subcommittee of the SONS (aduhaime@partners.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 professional colleagues.
The annual meeting also marked a transition for SONS, the passing of the gavel from Dr. John Ragheb to Dr. Philipp Aldana as Chairman of SONS. We also welcome new Executive Committee Members:

- Gregory Albert, MD, FAAP – Secretary of the Executive Committee, Chair of the Education, Newsletter and Publication Subcommittee
- Sandi Lam, MD, FAAP – Chair of the Advocacy and Policy Subcommittee

Congratulations to Greg Olavarria, MD, FAAP and Jogi Pattisapu, MD, FAAP for hosting a very successful 2016 AANS/CNS Section of Pediatric Neurosurgical Surgery in Orlando, Florida as Meeting Chairs. Dr. Olavarria currently serves as Chief of the Division of Neurosurgery at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, at Orlando Health. Dr. Pattisapu is an Associate Professor at the University of Central Florida’s Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences.

Through SONS, there is an opportunity to interface with the AAP Department of Federal Affairs. The AAP is actively engaged in federal advocacy for the needs of academic and subspecialist pediatricians and the children for whom they provide care. Through its Department of Federal Affairs and dedicated staff for academic and subspecialty issues, the Academy works to promote medical research for children, funding for medical education, child access to needed providers through appropriate payment, and a pediatric workforce able to meet the needs of children across the country and beyond.

Philipp Aldana, MD, FAAP and Andrew Jea, MD FAAP attended the 2017 Annual Leadership Forum (ALF), March 9-12 in Schaumburg, Illinois. The meeting brings together leadership from AAP sections, committees and councils, and chapters. The primary purpose of the ALF is to develop health policy, advocate for children, provide networking opportunities for practitioners, and to present, discuss, and vote on ALF resolutions and AAP priorities.

Have you as a SONS member received a promotion, changed institutions, spoken at a conference or been recognized with an award? Send your vitals (who, what, when, where, why) — plus a hi-res headshot or other image, if possible — to Dr. Gregory Albert, MD, FAAP (galbert2@uams.edu) and we will post your good news to the SONS Newsletter!
Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee

The AAP SONS Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee works to represent organized Pediatric Neurosurgery in timely input on AAP activities and in development of content. For example, the subcommittee reviews AAP policy statements, which delineate principles for pediatric health care delivery and overall advancement of child health. This past year, subcommittee members Drs. Andrew Jea, Nick Wetjen, and Sandi Lam navigated engagement in the following:

- Worked along with AAP Section on Plastic Surgery to obtain AAP endorsement of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons “Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Positional Plagiocephaly”.
- Commissioned the section’s companion article summarizing the CNS plagiocephaly guidelines for pediatricians, published in AAP News concurrently with the above Neurosurgery journal publication (Drs. Sandi Lam and Thomas Luerssen).
- Consulted with SONS author Mark Dias, MD, FAAP and Section on Plastic Surgery author Thomas Samson, MD, FAAP on development of a new SONS-authored AAP health policy/clinical report (in progress), “Identifying the Misshapen Head: Craniosynostosis and Related Disorders”
- Represented Pediatric Neurosurgery on the Society for Pediatric Radiology (SPR) Consensus Manuscript on Imaging of Abusive Head Trauma (Dr. Mark Dias).
- Represented Neurosurgery at the Section on Hospital Medicine's Surgical Care Subcommittee (SCSC) identifying the role of hospitalists in pediatric neurosurgical care (Drs. Doug Brockmeyer and Eric Jackson)
- Provided technical reviews for AAP Sections and Committees:
  - Committee on Hospital Care and Section on Hospital Medicine’s clinical report revision, “The Physician’s Role in Coordinating Care of Hospitalized Children.”
  - Section on Surgery, Committee on Bioethics, and American Pediatric Surgical Association New Technology Committee’s policy statement, “Responsible Innovation in Children’s Surgical Care.”
  - Committee on Child Health Financing’s policy statement revision, “Principles of Child Health Financing”.
  - Task Force on Pediatric Practice Change’s policy statement, “Guiding Principles for Team-based Pediatric Care”.

We welcome SONS members David Bauer, MD, FAAP and Scott Elton, MD, FAAP who have recently joined the Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee. There are many opportunities to work on a national platform improving the care of children with neurosurgical disease alongside organized pediatrics and pediatric subspecialties. To get involved, please email Dr. Sandi Lam, MD FAAP, subcommittee chair, at sklam@texaschildrens.org.
The Education Subcommittee has been rebranded as the Education, Newsletter and Publication Subcommittee. This change reflects the role that SONS plays in educating pediatricians and families through multiple avenues in print, online and live at the AAP National Conference & Exhibition (NCE). Subcommittee members are Gregory Albert (Chair), Lance Governale, Francesco Mangano and Eylem Ocal.

Among other outlets, SONS members have been asked to submit stories for AAP News. In a recent past issue, a review of the weekend and afterhours effects on pediatric neurosurgery morbidity and mortality rates was provided by SONS.

One very important function of SONS is to educate pediatricians on neurosurgical topics. To this end, SONS is organizing presentations on spinal dysraphism, plagiocephaly and back pain at the upcoming National Conference & Exhibition of the AAP. In the spring, we will be submitting proposals on behalf on SONS for the 2018 NCE. In the upcoming year, we will also work hard on improving the quality of information on pediatric neurosurgical topics available to both pediatricians and families on the AAP website and parent website www.HealthyChildren.org . Topics currently under consideration include craniosynostosis/plagiocephaly, Chiari malformation, hydrocephalus, and spinal dysraphism.

If you have any story or topic ideas or would like to become involved in the Education, Newsletter and Publication Subcommittee, please contact Dr. Gregory Albert FAAP, subcommittee chair (galbert2@uams.edu).
Section on Neurological Surgery
Executive Committee

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Philipp Aldana, MD, FAAP
Jacksonville, FL

Chair Elect:
Andrew Jea, MD, FAAP
Indianapolis, IN

Ex-Officio
John Ragheb, MD, FAAP
Miami, FL

Members
Gregory Albert, MD, FAAP
Little Rock, AR
Ann-Christine Duhaime, MD, FAAP
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