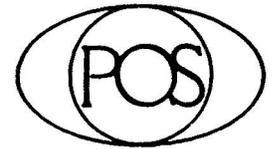


Keeping POSted

Fall 2021

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



I am writing this "President's Corner" while riding as a passenger headed for a brief getaway in Upstate New York. A tractor trailer three vehicles ahead was too high to get under a low power line on Route 66 and knocked the wires down across the road. It looked like a long wait or detour before I would be on my way. A quick glance around revealed an ATV trail running parallel to the road, which could be accessed through a gravel parking lot, and was not blocked by the power lines. We were quickly on our way.

The power line and detour made me contemplate the last 18 months since the COVID outbreak. As a group, ophthalmologists like to have an organized plan, whether how to get through a busy office day or a complicated surgery. Like encountering the power line in the road, we have all had to make quick decisions and adaptations to still safely get to where we need to go ... taking care of our patients.

The Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society as a group owes a huge thanks to David Buerger, MD, FACS, and Nadine Popovich for ar-



Marshall W. Stafford, MD
President
Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society
2021-2023

ranging and running the virtual format for the past year's monthly and spring meetings. We all appreciate the education and CME that these meetings provided.

In addition, with the unexpected closing of the medical society building, Dave and Nadine had to find a new meeting place for the upcoming year. The Rivers Casino has beautiful views of the rivers and city. It also has free, safe parking which is necessary for our evening gatherings. I hope everyone is looking forward to the in-person format as much as I am, and the Delta variant will not drop another power line in the

road! As listed later in this newsletter, we have a strong group of speakers lined up for the monthly and spring meetings.

Organized medicine has a more important role than ever to protect our patients' eyesight, and our staff and selves' wellbeing. When COVID's first wave of hospitalizations escalated, physicians, nurses and other health care workers were lauded as heroes. Signs were hung and free cookies were given out. After the "kudos to workers" died down, very little was done to improve the long-term stresses encountered by many providers. We and our staffs are working harder than ever, still needing to wear masks and treat unvaccinated patients, and dealing with the fogging of slit lamps and phoropters.

While the great majority of our patients appreciate this, very little has been done by Medicare or insurance companies to assist us. Medicare payment cuts are still going forward despite the higher cost of obtaining staff and supplies. Aetna reinstated preauthorization for cataract surgery

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despite no evidence that it has a benefit to patient care or avoids unnecessary surgery. It seems Aetna’s executives, while probably working remotely from their vacation homes, decided to take advantage of COVID disrupting organized medicines meetings and ability to fight back.

While we are all going to miss Ken Cheng’s excellent care of our difficult strabismus referrals (he may not!), he is going to continue to advocate for quality patient care through his involvement as board chair of Safe

Eyes America (safeeyesamerica.org). Please check out the website to see how they are trying to protect quality eye surgery in America. In addition, Sharon Taylor, MD, FACS, is President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology (another organization we need to support more than ever).

Finally, I ask members to encourage younger associates to become actively involved in the POS. Please introduce yourself to the new residents and welcome them to the Pittsburgh Ophthalmology community. Jake Waxman, MD, has done an excellent

job over the past 20 years helping the residents prepare thoughtful cases to present to our speakers. I vividly remember sitting at the “residents” table 30 years ago with my co-residents, Mike Azar, Deepi Dhaliwal, Laura Pallan and John Missry. We would remark on the “old guys” rushing up to the dessert buffet at the end of the last lecture. I realize I am the “old guy” now rushing up to get dessert.

The POS is really a huge asset to all of us, and I know of no other city with such an active society. Looking forward to seeing everyone on September 9th!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Thank you to all who renewed their dues for 2021. Our membership remained constant with 173 members in 2020 to 171 members in 2021. A breakdown of membership includes: 110 active members; 27 residents and fellows; and 34 retired honorary members.

The POS is an integral part of our ophthalmology community, providing valuable education to its members as residents, fellows and faculty. Recruitment of members is important and strengthens the organization. If you know of an ophthalmologist who is not a member of the POS, or if you are welcoming a new physician to your practice, please contact Nadine Popovich, who would be happy to send an application for membership.

Non-members also are welcome to attend one of the monthly meetings. I encourage you to invite a non-member to a meeting to reconnect with the Society. Physicians who meet the criteria are welcome, as a guest of a member, to attend one monthly meeting of their choice. Ms. Popovich can assist with registration and outline criteria for attendance (npopovich@acms.org).

Eric A. Pennock, MD

Welcome to the following new members:

Lance Bodily, MD
H. Robert Papas, MD
Seth Fox, DO, MS, FAOCO
Perry Younger, MD
Leanne Labriola, DO

POS membership dues increase for 2022

I'd like to express gratitude for your continued support of the Society and to advise of an increase in membership dues for 2022.

As you know, the Allegheny County Medical Society (ACMS) was home to POS meetings. The monthly meeting expense was **extremely nominal** and offered a significant cost savings. This allowed us to keep membership dues the same since 2016.

Due to the recent change in venue and rising meeting costs, the time has come that we can no longer defer an increase. Membership dues will increase from \$375 to \$400 for 2022. This was not an easy decision, but it was necessary.

The benefits of membership are strong. Our meetings provide an excellent opportunity for you to foster relationships with your peers and to participate in quality lectures, presented by nationally recognized ophthalmologists, while receiving continuing education credits. Meetings also offer the opportunity to engage in a smaller group and relaxed setting with the invited speakers and fellow POS members. Social time is always built into our meetings to ensure camaraderie.

We are fortunate as an organization to serve a vibrant and active greater ophthalmology community in Pittsburgh and are pleased to continue the long-standing tradition of monthly dinner meetings, culminating in our full-day Annual Spring meeting and banquet in March. *I look forward to your continued support and seeing you at an upcoming meeting.*



Marshall W. Stafford, MD
President

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues statements will be sent electronically October 15. Yearly dues are \$400 and are instrumental and key in defraying the cost of providing quality educational programming each month.

For your convenience, credit card payments can be submitted online. Members can visit www.pghoph.org and log in to their account. A membership renewal notification will appear with instruction on how to remit payment online. You also may contact Nadine Popovich to process your credit card. The Society accepts Visa, Mastercard, AMEX and Discover. Checks also are accepted and can be made payable to Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society.

Thanks to your continued support and submitting dues in a timely manner, we remain an active and strong specialty organization, providing quality programming and collegial social opportunities while advocating to protect and enhance our profession.

POS board, committee appointments announced

Marshall W. Stafford, MD, was installed as president of the Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society (POS)

March 12. Dr. Stafford, who served as president-elect since 2019, will serve a two-year term from 2021 through 2023. He has been an active member since 1996 and has served as treasurer of the Society since 2003.



Dr. Stafford

Dr. Stafford earned his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pa., in 1990. He completed a transitional internship at the Medical Center of Delaware in Wilmington before attending the Eye and Ear Institute, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, for his Ophthalmology residency. He completed a fellowship in Glaucoma at Washington University Eye Center, St. Louis, Mo., in 1994.

Board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, Dr. Stafford serves as chairman, Department of Surgery, St. Margaret Hospital, UPMC, and is clinical assistant professor, University of Pittsburgh Medical

Center. He has been the team ophthalmologist for the Pittsburgh Steelers Football Club since 2012.

Pamela P. Rath, MD, was elected to serve as president-elect of the POS and will serve a two-year term. She has been an active member of the POS since 2006, serving as a Board member and a Course Director of the Ophthalmic Personnel program since 2016.



Dr. Rath

Dr. Rath is a Pittsburgh native who received her medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha honor medical society. She completed her residency at the University of Minnesota, where she received multiple awards including for research, teaching and patient care and compassion. Dr. Rath completed a fellowship in medical retina, inherited retinal diseases, electrophysiology as well as ocular oncology at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, England.

Board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, Dr. Rath is a retina specialist at

Everett and Hurite Ophthalmic Association. She has 19 years of experience specializing in the treatment of medical retinal diseases. She also is trained in the diagnosis and treatment of intraocular tumors and hereditary diseases of the retina.

Jared E. Knickelbein, MD, PhD, was selected to serve as chair of the Public Relations Committee. In this role, he will work to expand the Society's digital presence, including a focus on social media.

Dr. Knickelbein has been a member of the POS since 2018 and is a retina specialist with Retina Vitreous Consultants.



Dr. Knickelbein

Zachary A. Koretz, MD, third-year resident at the UPMC Eye Center, has been selected to serve as resident appointee to the Board of Directors. Dr. Koretz will join course directors



Dr. Koretz

Pamela Rath, MD, and Avni Vyas, MD, to plan the 2022 Ophthalmic Personnel meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to rely more on digital connections for our meetings and to create a new sponsorship model for vendor support (whose funds are needed to offset meeting costs). I am pleased to report POS account balances remain stable and minimal expenses were realized during the timeframe of September 2020 through March 2021.

Revenue increased and overall expenses were lower than in the previous year, due to the removal of food and beverage expenses for all meetings. Our monthly Zoom meetings (free platform), partnered with our Virtual Platform, were cost effective and aided in our return on investment. The annual meeting profit was significant and bolstered our bottom line for the year.

As we look ahead to 2021-22, the Society will focus on

securing vendor support for this year's meeting series.

Membership dues also are instrumental for a positive operational account. POS membership is an excellent value, not just for the CME credit, but for the updates on local and national issues, and the opportunity to hear distinguished national faculty at monthly meetings. I encourage all members to extend an invitation to their colleagues to join.

Through a continued effort to expand membership and strong focus on identifying sponsorship for support of the annual and monthly meetings, we look to continue to remain solvent for 2021-22 and the future.

Laurie A. Roba, MD

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO) is currently preparing for when the legislators return to Harrisburg in late September.

The PAO has many legislative priorities, but one of our top priorities is protecting the pediatric vision of Pennsylvania. In 2020, the PAO worked with members of the General Assembly to pass Act 122 of 2020, which created a vision screening schedule for students in grades K-12, as well as creating a requirement that all students receive a vision screening prior to admission to school for the first time. This session, House Bill 1343 has been introduced and would mandate eye examinations for students in grades K-12; this legislation would undo all of the good work accomplished through Act 122 of 2020. The PAO also is engaged with prior authorization leg-

islation in both the House and Senate. As the PAO engages generally with prior authorization, we also are working with the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) to help advocate against AETNA's recent policy change requiring prior authorization for cataract surgeries.

Finally, the PAO is working to introduce legislation that would stop any health benefit plan from denying coverage for early eyedrop refills. This legislation has been adopted in 26 other states and similar language has been adopted into guidelines for Medicare Part D programs.

Prepared by Tyler Burke

Associate, Milliron Goodman/Government Relations
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

PAO NEWS

The Society is pleased to recognize the following members who play an active role in the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO) by serving in a leadership position. Our local representation is exceptional, and we are fortunate to have a dedicated group of colleagues who give of their time to better the professional interests of ophthalmology and our profession.

Pennsylvania Academy
of Ophthalmology



President-Elect

Sharon L. Taylor, MD, FACS

Chair, Bylaws and Rules Committee

Chair, Nominating Committee

Michael J. Azar, MD

Secretary, Legislation & Representation

Kenneth P. Cheng, MD

Co-Secretary, Medical Practice and Payment System

Joel D. Brown, MD

Secretary, Public Health

Kenneth P. Cheng, MD

AAO Councilor

Robert L. Bergren, MD

Sharon L. Taylor, MD, FACS

Member at Large

Roger Zelt, MD, FACS

Donald Morris, DO

Sharon L. Taylor, MD, FACS, to serve as PAO President

Sharon L. Taylor, MD, FACS, will begin her term as President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO), a 600-member statewide association, on September 18, 2021.



Dr. Taylor

Dr. Taylor, past president of the POS, has practiced comprehensive ophthalmology at North Park Ophthalmology since 1993.

She has served on the PAO Board since 2015. Dr. Taylor also serves as Councilor of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). Additionally, she has been a member of the POS Board of Directors since 2009.

Dr. Taylor is Co-Chair of the UPMC System Health Information Management (HIM) Committee and serves as a volunteer seeing Ophthalmology patients at the Catholic Charities Free Clinic in Pittsburgh.

With member physicians throughout the Commonwealth, the PAO strives to be the voice of ophthalmology; making efforts to ensure quality eye care on the legislative and regulatory fronts, while building and maintaining relationships with major insurance carriers within the state.

For more information, visit www.paeyemds.org.

PITTSBURGH OPHTHALMOLOGY SOCIETY

WWW.PGHOPH.ORG

THORPE CIRCLE

The Thorpe Circle was extremely active with positive gains in both members and revenue in 2020 and foremost, achieving a milestone since inception in March 2014. Currently, membership stands at 77 members, as compared to 67 members in 2020.



For those who are currently members, thank you for your support. A sustaining category was recently established for Thorpe Circle members (the dollar amount is left up to discretion of the individual). Please consider a contribution in the sustaining category.

The generous donation was the impetus for the Thorpe Circle Early Career Physician campaign. Members under 40 years of age had the opportunity to become a lifetime member of the Thorpe Circle at a discounted fee of \$150. Dr. Berkowitz's contribution defrayed the cost difference for this select group to become a member.

Welcome to the following early career physicians who took advantage of this exclusive opportunity:

- Lance M. Bodily, MD
- Joseph N. Martel, MD
- Heo-Jeng (Eugene) Ooi, MD
- Deepam Rusia, MD, MBA
- Shripaad Y. Shukla, MD

Vanguard Life Strategy Moderate Growth Fund

As of June 30, 2021, the fund's balance stands at \$51,370.24 as compared to \$39,402.00 during the same period last year. All mon-

ies are invested in the Vanguard Life Strategy Moderate Growth Fund and no disbursements have been made.

The Thorpe Circle, established in 2014, was created to offset the costs of the Thorpe Lecturer. Your donation strengthens the fund and permits the POS to continue the tradition of excellence by inviting distinguished guest faculty to serve as the Thorpe Lecturer. Donations may be in the form of an annual contribution, estate planning, by patients or family members in honor of an ophthalmologist (practicing or retired), or in memoriam.

To join the Thorpe Circle or to donate as a Sustaining Member (category for current Thorpe Circle members) please visit www.pghoph.org and click on [Thorpe Circle](#) to download the [donation form](#).

Your gift ensures your legacy as one devoted to the recognition of academic and clinical excellence in ophthalmology. Consider joining or donating as a sustaining member today!

Mike Azar, MD

Below is a summary of the Thorpe Circle activity.

Welcome New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following Thorpe Circle members:

- Seth A. Holst, MD
- Pinchas Rosenberg, MD
- José-Alain Sahel, MD
- John S. Swogger, DO
- Irving G. Weinberger, MD

Early Career Physician Campaign

Understanding the value of continuing education as a lifelong endeavor and wanting to encourage the next generation to support our Annual Thorpe Lectureship, Peter Berkowitz, MD, presented a \$1,000 donation to the Thorpe Circle. Dr. Berkowitz presented the gift upon his retirement.



Thorpe Circle

of the Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society

Founding Members

Est. March 2014

Michael J. Azar, MD

David J. Baker, MD

Chris A. Balouris, MD

Dr. & Mrs. Constantine A. Balouris

Ivan Baumwell, MD

Robert L. Bergren, MD

Peter J. Berkowitz, MD*

Albert W. Biglan, MD

Richard A. Bowers, MD*

Joel D. Brown, MD

Daniel E. Buerger, MD, FACS*

David G. Buerger, MD, FACS

George F. Buerger, Jr. MD, FACS

Brian J. Caputo, MD

Edward J. Chang, MD

John A. Charley, MD

Kenneth P. Cheng, MD

Phillip H. Choo, MD

Lisa M. Cibik, MD, FACS

Garry P. Condon, MD

Ian P. Conner, MD, PhD

P. William Conrad, MD, PhD

Bernard H. Doft, MD

Norman L. Edelstein, MD, FACS

William M. Fronczek, Jr., MD*

Denise S. Gallagher, MD

Jean C. Harwick, MD

Karen B. Lauer, MD

Cari Lyle, MD

John C. Maher, MD

John M. Mikulla, MD

Miroya J. Monsour, MD

Donald Morris, DO

Barry D. Moskowitz, MD

Karl R. Olsen, MD

Paul M. Phillips, MD

Scott L. Portnoy, MD

Allan J. Press, MD

Pamela P. Rath, MD

E. Ronald Salvitti, MD*

Joseph J. Scherer, MD

Michael P. Schneider, MD

Joel Schuman, MD, FACS

Marshall W. Stafford, MD

Theresa B. Strong, MD

John C. Stuart, MD

Sharon L. Taylor, MD, FACS*

Thomas W. Uihlein, MD

Thierry Verstraeten, MD

Edmond C. Watters, MD

Evan Waxman, MD, PhD

Gary S. Weinstein, MD, FACS

Jeffrey T. Wincko, MD

Roger P. Zelt, MD

Continuing the Legacy

Roxana Barad, MD

Lance M. Bodily, MD

Jennifer Salvitti Davis, MD

Andrew W. Eller, MD

Seth A. Holst, MD

Jared E. Knickelbein, MD, PhD

Joseph N. Martel, MD

Lisa M. Nath, MD

Heo-Jeng (Eugene) Ooi, MD

Eric A. Pennock, MD

Pinchas Rosenberg, MD

Laurie Roba, MD

Deepam Rusia, MD, MBA

José Alain Sahel, MD

Shripaad Y. Shukla, MD

John S. Swogger, DO

Avni Vyas, MD

Irving G. Weinberger, MD

* denotes Sustaining Member

Continuing the Legacy

In Memory, Recognition or Appreciation

In Memory of Irwin S. Terner, MD - Sewickley Eye Group

In Appreciation of John A. Charley, MD
~ Mrs. Velma F. Ferrari

In Recognition of Frank Cignetti, MD
~ Staff of East Suburban Ophthalmic Assoc.

In Memory of Robert Arffa, MD
~ Sharon L. Taylor, MD*

In Recognition of
John G. Krah, ACMS Executive Director
(1989-2018)
~ Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society

2020-21 Virtual Monthly, Annual and Allied Meetings - Recap

The 2020-21 virtual meeting series was a success. Thank you to members for their patience and participation. Attendance for all five meetings remained high, with an average of 65 attendees per meeting. In this transitional time, we were pleased to note vendor support was better than anticipated. Overall course comments were positive, with members appreciating the convenience of attending the program from their home or office.

The following exhibitors are to be commended for their support of our monthly virtual meeting series:



Virtual 56th Annual Meeting and 41st Ophthalmic Personnel Meeting

As COVID-19 state and local regulations remained in place, which prohibited in-person gatherings, the 56th Annual Meeting and the 41st Meeting for Ophthalmic Personnel were held virtually March 12. This was the most responsible path to maintain safe conditions for attendees, presenters and exhibitors. Overall evaluations and comments from the virtual experience were extremely positive, with many attendees recognizing and appreciating the convenience of attending a session from their home or office, while participating in excellent educational sessions.

56th Annual Meeting

Robert H. Osher, MD, distinguished



faculty, served as the 40th annual Harvey E. Thorpe Lecturer. Dr. Osher, professor of Ophthalmology at the College of Medicine of the University of Cincinnati and medical director emeritus of the Cincinnati Eye Institute, presented several

brilliant lectures. "Management of Complications during Cataract Surgery – Posterior Capsule Tears," offered exemplary videos and narration by Dr. Osher, followed by the Thorpe lecture: "Award winning Videos: Teaching Through Entertainment," which offered attendees superb video vignettes throughout his presentation.

Dr. Osher has designed many of the contemporary intraocular lenses and instruments used in cataract surgery, in addition to developing new techniques in this subspecialty. His surgical videos have won more than 25 first-prize honors at the American, European, Asian and South American Cataract Societies including three Grand Prizes at ASCRA and ESCRS.

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Prominent guest faculty who enhanced the program with their insightful lectures included:

Daniel J. Briceland, MD, medical director, Spectra Eye Institute, Sun City West, Ariz.

Hans Bruhn, MHS, risk manager, Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Company (OMIC), San Francisco, Calif.

Keith D. Carter, MD, FACS, Lillian C. O'Brien and Dr. C.S. O'Brien Chair in Ophthalmology; chairman and head, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Iowa Health Care; professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences and professor of Otolaryngology, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa.

John Pollack, MD, practitioner, Illinois Retina Associates, PC, Chicago, Ill., internationally recognized retinal clinician, surgeon, and educator, and associate professor of Ophthalmology, Rush University Medical Center.

The full-day program featured a hybrid of recorded and live sessions. Attendees engaged with speakers during the recorded sessions by using the chat feature to ask questions. A highlight of the offering was the Live Panel Question-and-Answer sessions, which included participation by all guest faculty. David G. Buerger, MD, FACS, president of the POS, served as moderator for these unique and lively sessions.

Thank you to our Premier Sponsors, Alcon and Vertical Solutions, and to all of the exhibitors who sponsored the program. The Virtual Exhibit Hall featured 14 exhibitors and offered attendees the opportunity to engage with representatives to learn more about their products and resources. Winners of the raffle (sponsored by the POS) were Joel Brown, MD; Laurie Roba, MD; and Eric Pennock, MD.

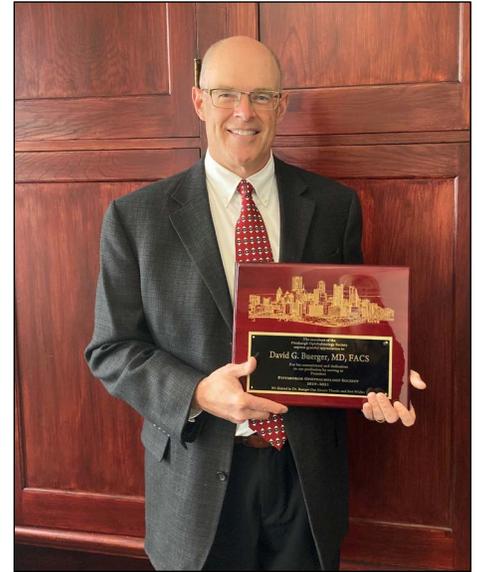
Dr. Buerger recognized for service as POS president

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Buerger thanked the POS Board, Membership and Allied Course Directors for their assistance during his term. The past few years were extremely unique, and he was grateful for the efforts of POS leadership to ensure successful programming.

Dr. Buerger recognized for service as POS president

Incoming President Marshall Stafford, MD, took a few moments to acknowledge Dr. Buerger's accomplishments throughout his service as president. Looking through a record of past presidents, it is notable that Dr. Buerger has the honor as the first "second generation" president of the Society. His father, George F. Buerger Jr., MD, served as president of POS from 1987-89.

Several factors in 2020 impacted the structure of the POS meetings. The sale of the former Allegheny County Medical Society building (the former meeting site of the POS) along with the COVID-19



David G. Buerger, MD, FACS, is pictured with a plaque in recognition of his service as POS president.



A screenshot of current POS President Marshall Stafford, MD, during his remarks at the virtual conference.

In his remarks, Dr. Stafford outlined the extremely unusual situations Dr. Buerger encountered throughout his term and thanked him for the tremendous amount of work to keep the POS meetings running smoothly.

Several factors in 2020 impacted the structure of the POS meetings. The sale of the former Allegheny County Medical Society building (the former meeting site of the POS) along with the COVID-19

pandemic pressed Dr. Buerger into immediate action to find a new location and to pivot to virtual meetings for the 2020-21 meeting season. It is due to his exemplary work that the POS meetings continued, virtually, during COVID and a new location for meetings was finalized.

Dr. Stafford's first official duty was presenting the president's plaque and thank you gift – virtually – to Dr. Buerger in recognition of his service.

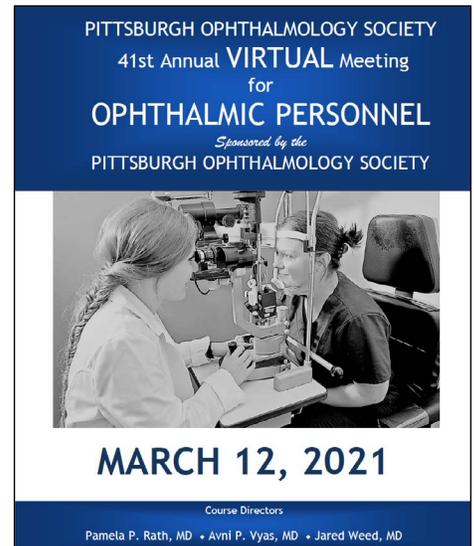
41st Annual Meeting for Ophthalmic Personnel

Running concurrently with the POS Annual Meeting was the 41st Annual Meeting for Ophthalmic Personnel. The virtual program attracted a strong number of ophthalmic

technicians, assistants, coders and front staff. The well-respected program is designed specifically for ophthalmic personnel to enhance the quality, expertise and safety of ophthalmic patient care.

Course directors Pamela Rath, MD, Avni Vyas, MD, and Jared Weed, MD, worked tirelessly to plan this high-level virtual educational offering. Comments from attendee evaluations were highly favorable, with many appreciating the virtual component and ease of use with the virtual platform.

The program featured a hybrid of plenary and breakout sessions, many of which were accredited by JCAHPO. Participants had the opportunity to create their own track of programming during the afternoon sessions from several



front- and back-office sessions. The Society depends and relies on local expertise and talent to present each session. This year was no exception, with local physicians providing quality presentations. The course directors would like to thank all the POS members who participated as speakers for the program.

Thank you to the following Exhibitors who supported the Annual and Allied Program:



2021 to 2022 Monthly In-Person Meetings begin in September!

We look forward to bringing our ophthalmology community together at in-person events and invite you to attend the 2021-22 monthly meeting series.

After an extensive search of numerous venues in and around the Pittsburgh area, the Rivers Casino was selected to host POS meetings. It was difficult to find a venue that replicates the Allegheny County Medical Society in terms of price, value and location, but the banquet rooms at the Rivers Casino fit many of our meeting needs. The venue is centrally located and offers free parking (valet parking is available for a nominal fee) and ample meeting space for attendees and exhibitors.

The POS meetings will be held in the [Allegheny Room](#), located on the 2nd level. This is a non-smoking facility and provides ample social distancing space. The Rivers Casino also adheres to strict food and beverage serving guidelines and follows all CDC protocol.

Monthly meetings will be held September through February. No meeting will be held in November due to the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (AAO) Annual meeting, scheduled for November 12-15, 2021.



A view of the Allegheny Room at the Rivers Casino, the new in-person meeting space for the Society.

Meeting Agenda Refresher

- 4:00 p.m. – Registration and Visit with Exhibitors
- 4:30 p.m. – 1st Lecture by Guest Faculty
- 5:35 p.m. – Resident Case Presentation
- 6:00 p.m. – POS Business Meeting / POS Social - Visit with Exhibitors
- 7:00 p.m. – 2nd Lecture by Guest Faculty (Dinner to be served during lecture)
- 8:15 p.m. – Conclusion of program

Registration is required for each meeting. Confirmation of registration: A confirmation of your registration will be sent to the email you provide. If you

do not receive a confirmation, you did not successfully register. Questions? Contact Nadine Popovich at npopovich@acms.org or (412) 321-5030 for assistance.

2021-22 Monthly Educational Series

Join us as we welcome the following guest speakers to Pittsburgh:

*Thursday, September 9 –
Norah S. Lincoff, MD*

**Professor, Department of Neurology
Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY**

Dr. Lincoff is a neuro-ophthalmologist with a primary clinical interest in optic neuropathy and vasculitis. She sees a full range of neuro-ophthalmologic conditions, but specializes in adult autoimmune optic neuropathy syndromes, diplopia, headache and multiple sclerosis (MS).



Dr. Lincoff

Her main research interests include preventative treatment trials for autoimmune optic neuropathies and neuroprotection. Dr. Lincoff presents annually at national and international conferences regarding MS and the use of ocular coherence tomography and imaging specific to her field. She also is involved in the “Hopeful Ways Nicaragua Eye Care Mis-

sion Project,” an annual medical mission to Nicaragua to prevent blindness. Working together with a group of medical professionals, local interpreters and Peace Corps volunteers, the project provides free vision care to more than 2,600 patients a year.

Thank you to President-Elect Pamela Rath, MD, for inviting Dr. Lincoff.

**Tuesday, October 5 –
Anup Khatana, MD*

**Medical Director, Cincinnati Eye Institute
Cincinnati, OH**

Dr. Khatana joined Cincinnati Eye Institute (CEI) as a cataract and glaucoma specialist in 2000 and was director of the Glaucoma Service and fellowship from 2012 – 2020. He became medical director of the Cincinnati Eye Institute in 2019. He is a volunteer clinical assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology, and was voted teacher of the year by his residents here in 2011. He has been selected by his peers to Best Doctors in America since 2001.



Dr. Khatana

Dr. Khatana uses the latest cataract surgical technology, including the use of toric and multifocal intraocular lenses, and specializes in the management of various complicated and advanced forms of glaucoma, as well as all the newer minimally invasive glaucoma surgeries. As an investigator in various clinical trials, Dr. Khatana is able to provide his patients access to new drugs and technologies at an earlier stage.

**Please note this meeting is on a Tuesday!*

Thank you to Ian Conner, MD, PhD, for inviting Dr. Khatana.

November – No POS Meeting



– AAO 2021

Join colleagues at AAO 2021 – where all of ophthalmology meets®. This year’s meeting is scheduled for November 12-15 at the [Ernest N. Morial Convention Center](#) in [New Orleans, LA](#).

For additional details and registration information, visit the AAO 2021 [registration page](#).

Questions? E-mail registration@aa.org.

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Thursday, December 2, 2021 – Edwin H. Ryan, MD

**Vitreoretinal Surgery, PLLC
Associate Clinical Professor
Ophthalmology
University of Minnesota
Department of Ophthalmology**

Dr. Ryan was awarded his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Minnesota. He completed a residency in Ophthalmology



Dr. Ryan

at Northwestern University and a fellowship in Diseases and Surgery of the Retina and Vitreous at Washington University in St. Louis.

Dr. Ryan directed the Retina Service at the University of Minnesota Department of Ophthalmology from 1989 to 1992 and is currently an associate clinical professor of Ophthalmology.

Dr. Ryan joined VitreoRetinal Surgery in 1996.

Thank you to Thierry Verstraeten, MD, for inviting Dr. Ryan.

Thursday, January 6, 2022 – Gregory S.H. Ogawa, MD

**Eye Associates of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM**

Dr. Ogawa is an ophthalmologist

at Eye Associates of New Mexico, specializing in problems involving intraocular lenses, irises, cataracts and corneas. Dr.



Dr. Ogawa

Ogawa manages complex patient cases, often for the underserved, routinely treating monocular patients and infants and children with cataracts as well as performing ocular reconstructive procedures for eyes that have experienced a range of injuries. At Eye Associates of New Mexico, he serves as the medical administrative officer in addition to his patient care activities.

Dr. Ogawa has designed multiple surgical instruments with the goal of making eye surgery safer and more effective. He also has developed, presented and published new surgical techniques in the area of iris reconstruction and suture fixation of intraocular lens implants. He helped advance and disseminate new surgeries such as endothelial keratoplasty – implantation of miniature telescopes for patients with macular degeneration – and soon, the implantation of custom artificial irises.

A beloved educator, Dr. Ogawa travels nationally to major eye surgery meetings such as the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Society for Cataract

and Refractive Surgery and The Cornea Society, where he teaches eye surgery in labs and didactic sessions to residents, fellows and experienced practitioners.

Thank you to Zachary Koretz, MD, for inviting Dr. Ogawa.

Thursday, February 3, 2022 – TBD

Information will be emailed to members once a speaker is identified.



Mark Your Calendar

57th ANNUAL MEETING

42nd Annual meeting for Ophthalmic Personnel

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2022

Pittsburgh Marriott City Center, Pittsburgh, PA

Planning is underway!

Details will be emailed to members and posted on the POS website.

Online Registration Required for Monthly Meetings

The Society will continue the online registration process for all monthly meetings. **Registration for each meeting is required.** Here are a few guidelines to register for each meeting:

- Visit www.pghoph.org and click on the “Registration is Open” link.
- Follow the prompts; Select your registration type; and complete all information
- A confirmation will be sent to the email you provide. If you do not receive a confirmation in your designated email, your registration was not completed.

CME PROTOCOL TO SUBMIT PROGRAM EVALUATION AND OBTAIN CME TRANSCRIPT!

The Society continues to use AHN as our CME credit guarantor. Below is a refresher from the AHN Department of Credentialing to obtain your CME transcript after each meeting.

To Receive CME Credit:

- All POS meeting attendees must create an account in the AHN Continuing Medical Education website <https://cme.ahn.org> (see complete instructions below).
- NOTE: If you are a physician affiliated with AHN/Highmark and have already established an account, you do not have to create another. POS transcripts will appear in your account.
- You must complete the evaluation within 2 weeks from the date of the program to be awarded CME.

To Establish / Create your Account

- Visit <https://cme.ahn.org>
- Click on “Register” in the top right-hand corner
- Complete the required information

- Email – Please use an email that you frequent as the email you designate will be used to send the evaluation link after each meeting.

Evaluations will be available for completion for 2 weeks from the date of the program. Evaluations will not be accepted after the 2-week period.

To Complete your Evaluation after Each Meeting:

- Attendees will receive a notification from AHN that your evaluation activity is ready to be completed.
- Visit <https://cme.ahn.org>
- Log in with your username and password
- Once you log in, there will be a “Pending Activity” notification and link to complete the evaluation.
- Proceed with completing and submitting the evaluation
- You will be able to access your transcript at this time

To Access your CME Transcript:

- In order to access your CME Transcript, you must complete the evaluation first (See “Completing Your Evaluation After Each Meeting” instructions above)
- Visit <https://cme.ahn.org>
- Log in in with your username and password
- At the home page, you may access your transcript by clicking on “MY ACCOUNT” TAB at the top of the page.
- A series options will appear – click on “MY TRANSCRIPT.”

Questions? Contact Nadine Popovich at npopovich@acms.org or (412) 321-5030.

CMS 2022 Physician Fee Schedule includes payment cut

July 19, 2021 (reprint from *Ophthalmology Times*)

AAO, Surgical Care Coalition teaming up to ensure the final version of the rule is fair to ophthalmologists and surgeons as one company is expressing its disappointment in the proposal.

The proposed 2022 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule and Quality Payment Program rules released by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) may usher in a wide range of changes, including a 3.75% reduction in the conversion factor used to calculate payments to physicians. However, according to the Surgical Care Coalition, the proposal by CMS fails to address pending cuts to surgical care and therefore continues to threaten patient care by reaffirming these previously imposed cuts.

The cuts are the result of a reduction that is necessary to keep Medicare payments budget neutral. At the end of 2020, Congress passed a one-year fix that prevented the cuts due to take effect in 2021. Without additional intervention, the cuts will go into effect Jan. 1, 2022.

CMS is proposing to cut the Medicare conversion factor — the basic starting point for calculating

Medicare payments — for CY2022 by 3.75%. This year's cut is reinstating the cut that Congress prevented last year, which further emphasizes the need for continued congressional intervention to protect patient care.

The Surgical Care Coalition noted that updates to the conversion factor have failed to keep up with inflation, and it will be joined by the American Academy of Ophthalmology to ensure the final version of the rule is fair to ophthalmologists and surgeons.

"CMS' proposed 2022 Medicare Fee Schedule has a huge effect on ophthalmology's ability to run a successful ophthalmology practice, which has one of the highest Medicare beneficiary bases," said George A. Williams, MD, AAO Senior Secretary for Advocacy. "The academy is proud to partner with the Surgical Care Coalition and will work over the next few months in an effort to ensure that the final version of the rule is fair to ophthalmologists and surgeons."

The proposal's release is followed by a 60-day public comment period closing on Sept. 13, which will culminate in CMS' release of the final rule, which is expected to be announced by November for implementation on Jan. 1, 2022.



As a result, the proposed rule could be subject to change before a final rule is released.

Glaukos Corp. has stepped up to discuss the proposal, noting that the proposed rule and accompanying addenda include payment rates for two new Category I Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes, including 669X2 for non-complex cataract extraction in combination with the insertion of an aqueous drainage device and 669X1 for complex cataract extraction in combination with the insertion of an aqueous drainage device.

Category I CPT Codes 669X2 and 669X1 will replace Category III codes 0191T and 0376T as the primary codes that physicians will use to seek reimbursement utilizing Glaukos' trabecular micro-bypass technologies (iStent, iStent inject, iStent inject W) when used as approved in combination with cataract surgery.

Applying the CMS 2022 Proposed Rule's assigned total facility Rel-

ative Value Units (RVUs) and associated conversion factor, Glaukos estimated a proposed 2022 physician fee for Category I CPT Code 669X2 of approximately \$565.23, representing incremental physician fee payment for the insertion of an aqueous draining device of approximately \$34.25 versus the proposed 2022 physician fee of approximately \$530.98 for Category I CPT Code 66984 (non-complex cataract surgery alone).

“We are aware of and extremely disappointed with CMS’ proposed 2022 physician fees for the new Category I codes that cover our sight-saving trabecular micro-bypass technologies used in combination with cataract surgery,” said Thomas Burns, Glaukos’ president and CEO. “While this is unwelcomed and unexpected news that we believe is unjustified, we are eager to engage with our key ophthalmic societies and are committed to exploring every option during the public comment period in hopes that medical providers across our network are paid appropriately for conducting these types of procedures.”

This announcement does not include the Medicare Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) Proposed Rule for Calendar Year 2022, which will include proposed facility fee payments for services furnished in both the hospital outpatient department (HOPD) and ambulatory surgical center (ASC) settings. Glaukos expects the 2022 Medicare OPPS Proposed Rule to be released by CMS over the coming days to weeks.

David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS, executive director of the American College of Surgeons, noted that while CMS is taking notable strides to improve health equity and access to care, the proposed rule maintains the cuts to surgical care that Congress stopped last year.

“These cuts harm the care patients need and deserve, which is the opposite of what CMS is

trying to achieve,” he said. “Without congressional action, surgical care faces a significant payment cut and threatens patient access to critical treatments and procedures. All patients deserve a health care system that invests in surgical care and does not create uncertainty year after year.”



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For more than a century, Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh has been a leader in programs and services for people of all ages who are blind, vision impaired, or who have other disabilities. Our mission is to improve the lives of persons with vision loss and related disabilities by teaching independence and self-advocacy.

PITTSBURGH OPHTHALMOLOGY SOCIETY

To act as the voice of ophthalmologic medicine in the Pittsburgh area, to serve as patient advocate in promoting preventive eye care, quality medical and surgical care and rehabilitative services for individuals with ophthalmologic diseases and to advance the knowledge, science and practice of ophthalmology, to assist in the improvement of the quality of ophthalmologic medicine and training therein, and to promote integrity in the practice of ophthalmic medicine.

Safe Eyes America (SEA) – Advocating for patient safety

How often have you thought, “What can we do about optometry’s continual attacks on surgical standards and patient safety with attempts to expand their scope of practice?” Or “Why haven’t we involved patients in this fight, after all it’s their eyesight that is at stake?” Paraphrasing Winston Churchill – **We must step forward and say enough is enough. With absolute sincerity, I am telling you now that we, our profession, and the safety of our patients are at a crossroads.**

Consider this, there is an American Heart Association, an American Lung Association, the National Kidney Foundation, but unless an eye patient is blind or has a specific condition such as RP, there is no eye patient organization! The absence of one is hard to believe. The public needs to have a voice NOW to stop the run of states allowing optometric lasers and surgery. Without a public voice demanding continued high standards for eye surgery the battle will be lost.

Concerned citizens have banded together to create “SafeEyesAmerica (SEA), a 501(C)4, non-profit organization. SEA is an entirely independent, patient advocacy organization whose goal is to ensure patients have continued access to the highest quality medical and surgical eye care.

SEA’s objective is clearly stated in its organization documents: (1) promote the delivery of the highest quality medical and surgical eye care to the American public; and (2) to educate the public, federal and state legislators, and regulators on quality eye care (some provided by optometrists and some by ophthalmologists) and, notably, on the vital importance of medical education and ophthalmology residency training in the delivery of safe, quality eye surgery. The SEA website is filled with useful, patient-oriented information; see it for yourself, visit SafeEyesAmerica.org.

As an independent public/patient organization that fosters education of the public and legislators, SEA is another “dog in the fight” to preserve standards for quality medical and surgical eye care. **SEA moves the debate over optometric scope of practice from inside the state Capitol walls to the public arena, where eye patients are educated and speak up on the importance of safe, high-quality eye care. For example, SEA recently produced video advertisements for Florida’s battle to preserve surgical standards. The ads reached hundreds of thousands of targeted voters in key legislative districts, generating contacts and contributing to a victory for patient safety**

with the preservation of safe standards for eye surgery.

To grow and continue as the voice for eye patients advocating for quality eye care, SEA needs your support now so that it can continue to reach out to more and more patients and grow in strength. Contribute on the website or contact SEA at info@safeyesamerica.org for more information. Think about it – when patients are educated about what constitutes safe surgery, their response is unequivocal – preserve surgery standards and quality medical eye care.

Please, join me in contributing to a cause we all passionately believe in – preservation of quality eye care and surgery. Contribute \$1,000, \$500, \$250, or whatever you feel comfortable with. Simply put, SEA is the patient voice that has been missing in the scope of practice legislative fight. Your contribution is an investment in ensuring surgical standards are maintained, not eroded, and that patients have continued access to only the high-quality eye care that they deserve. Thank you.

Your Surgery by Surgeons Colleague,

Kenneth P. Cheng, MD

Chair, Safe Eyes America
www.safeyesamerica.org

I have no financial interests to disclose.

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2021-22 RESIDENTS & FELLOWS

The members of the Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society welcome UPMC Eye Center new residents and fellows and acknowledge current faculty. We look forward to their participation at an upcoming monthly meeting. Congratulations to Caroline Vloka, MD, selected as Chief Resident. Dr. Vloka will coordinate resident presentations for each meeting.



Dr. Vloka

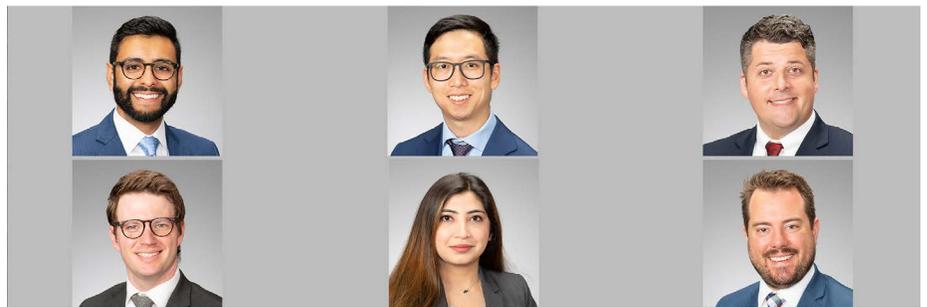


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