

AAPM Board of Directors Update

Respectfully submitted to the SEAAPM Chapter by Ivan A. Brezovich, SEAAPM Chapter Representative [ibrezovich@uabmc.edu 205-934-1758], January 28, 2010

The Fall 2009 Board of Directors meeting was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), on Saturday, Nov. 28, 2009 from 12:30 PM – 6:00 PM at the Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Financial issues dominated the deliberations, directly or indirectly. The CARE bill was introduced in the House during Sept. 2009 as a stand-alone bill. In the Senate, it will be attached to the much larger Health Care reform bill as an amendment, by a senator from Wyoming. The AAPM leaders were disappointed that the Coalition virtually ignored AAPM in its current activities. I personally can see why: AAPM does not financially contribute to the effort. While the ASRT and others spend over \$ 100,000 per year on lobbying, AAPM support so far has not gone beyond a few hundred dollars plus the cost of sending a delegate to Coalition meetings.

Licensure was on the minds of many. There was a motion calling for AAPM to abandon all of its efforts to obtain licensure. Opponents of licensure argued that it would introduce additional bureaucracy with its potential that some physicists might get caught in the network of new regulations, that it would not solve any identifiable problems, that there is no proof of quality improvement in states that have licensure, that it would cost lots of money, and that it may violate the tax exempt status of AAPM and the Articles of Incorporation of AAPM which state that no substantial fraction of its funds be used for efforts to influence the government. After legal counsel assured us that the proposed cost would not violate tax laws or the articles of incorporation, the discussion went on nevertheless. Proponents pointed out that virtually all medical professions have licensure, that some regulations will emerge with or without medical physicists' participation, and that licensure would give us an opportunity to affect upcoming regulations and not leave us totally at the mercy of others. It was also pointed out that licensure had been discussed for many years and was supported by many previous boards, that individuals had spent large amounts of their time to get us to the current level, and that money had already been spent by AAPM which would be totally lost if the effort were abandoned. Eventually the debate had to be ended with a cloture vote, and the motion to abandon the licensure effort was voted down.

Long discussions about the budget followed. Because of lost revenue caused by the current economic slowdown, the originally proposed budget had a projected deficit of \$1.8M. By cost reducing measures, which included cancellation of the money previously allotted for the CRCPD registry of qualified medical physicists and the cancellation of the traditional face-to-face Board Spring meeting, the projected budgeted deficit was reduced to 600k. Based on the historical statistical model, which takes into account that many of the Task Group meetings and other Board approved activities do not materialize, the actual balance should be within +/- 5%. A potential 5% budget deficit was considered acceptable at a previous Board meeting. Opponents of licensure argued that no money should be spent on licensure, especially in view of the projected deficit. The long discussion had to be stopped by a cloture vote, and the proposed budget passed.

Avenues for increasing revenue were another topic discussed at length. Another attempt at raising membership dues was considered unlikely to succeed in view of the very modest \$15 dues increase that was voted down by a wide margin last year. Additional educational meetings were also discussed, but recent experience with such meetings does not suggest that these would be major money makers.

A lawsuit filed against AAPM was discussed in the presence of a lawyer. Unfortunately, I am not at liberty to report about that, since anything said or written becomes discoverable information and can be held against us. The presence of lawyer at the Board meeting protected the deliberations according to the confidential lawyer-client relation.

More detail will be available in the full Minutes which will be posted on the AAPM website when they get approved during the next Board meeting. Please send me an e-mail or call me if you have any questions, comments or suggestions on how to make AAPM better serve you. Keep in mind that many of the actions by AAPM do have substantial impact on your profession.

Ivan A. Brezovich,
SEAAPM Board Representative