



AOS Quarterly
Newsletter
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STATE AFFAIRS
Star Award 2005



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Executive Committee

Katherine H. Baltz, MD
President
Councilor to the AAO
(through 12/31/08)
Little Rock

Richard A. Harper, MD
Secretary-Treasurer
Little Rock

William T. Mabrey, MD
Immediate Past President
Little Rock

Paul M. Henry, MD
Past President
Fayetteville

Kellye C. McElroy, MD
AOS Councilor to the AAO
(effective 1/01/2009)
Fayetteville

Stephen K. Magie, MD
Legislative Chair
Little Rock

Laura Hawkins
Executive Director

Special Points of Interest:

- AOS / OMIC Cooperative Agreement
- Medicare E-prescribing
- AOS Fall Meeting
- Meetings/News & Events
- 2008 Regional Meeting

AOS Members Vote on Cooperative Agreement with Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Company

At the 2008 Fall Meeting, Arkansas Ophthalmological Society members voted to enter a cooperative agreement with Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Company (OMIC).

AOS members will benefit from this agreement by receiving a preferred 8% premium discount, which is exclusively for society members who attend OMIC

risk management courses at the regional meetings. OMIC estimates the average physician will save \$450.

OMIC will also exhibit at the regional meeting and members will be able to link to OMIC's website through AOS' website.

OMIC looks forward to state-specific feedback from state society members on ideas

for future presentations and risk management resources.

OMIC is the only ophthalmic-specific risk management program in the United States. In 2007, OMIC received an A (Excellent) financial stability rating from A.M. Best.

Nineteen other state societies and five subspecialty societies have signed similar agreements with OMIC.

Medicare Incentive Payments Available for Physicians Who E-Prescribe in 2009

Over the next four years, Medicare will provide incentive payments to physicians and other practitioners who electronically prescribe, starting with a 2 percent bonus in 2009 and 2010, 1 percent in 2011 and 2012, and 0.5 percent in 2013.

For those who report on quality measures under the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI), this would be an additional 2 percent beyond the 2 percent 2009 PQRI bonus.

For practices that qualify for PQRI through an e-prescribing measure or as their only quality reporting measure, there will not be

an additional payment incentive for e-prescribing under the new regulation.

The e-prescribing measure is removed from PQRI for 2009 and is a standalone measure as its own bonus program. However, for practices that qualified for PQRI by e-prescribing in 2008, they can qualify for both a PQRI payment incentive and e-prescribing payment incentive by successfully reporting on three or more measures, not including e-prescribing in 2009.

In order to qualify for the e-prescribing bonus a minimum of 10% of your Medicare allowable charges must come from the office

visit codes (eye codes, E/M, or consult codes).

Also, a practice must have a qualified system and it is advised that you report on every patient encounter that generates an office visit code in order to ensure that you meet the 50% reporting minimum.

The new initiative is part of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008. Beginning in 2012, eligible professionals who are not successful electronic prescribers (and who do not get one of the exemptions) will experience a reduction in payment (1 percent penalty). For more information, go to CMS' website, www.cms.gov.

Society Members

Elect New Executive

Committee Members

for 2008 - 2010

AOS Conducts Fall Meeting at Big Cedar Lodge

On Friday, September 19, the Arkansas Ophthalmological Society conducted its Fall Meeting in conjunction with the 2008 Table Rock Regional RoundUp at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri.

AOS President William T. Mabrey, MD, announced the proposed slate of officers for 2008-2010. No additional nominations were made from the floor.

Members voted unanimously to accept the following slate:

Katherine H. Baltz, MD, President; Richard A. Harper, MD, Secretary/Treasurer; and Kellye C. McElroy, MD, Councilor to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Tracy C. Baltz, MD, reported on the activities of the Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision of School Age Children. He said the Commission is looking at ways to increase the number of children who actually receive an eye exam after failing their vision screening.

Laura Hawkins, AOS Executive Director, informed members that the 2009 coding seminar had been scheduled for January 16 in Little Rock at the Crowne Plaza. She reported the 2009 seminar will follow a new half-day format.

Ms. Hawkins stated AOS sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid opposing the proposed ruling on durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies (DMEPOS).

She said CMS recently announced that ophthalmologists would be exempt from the accreditation requirements for DMEPOS, but CMS would not guarantee the exemption as permanent.

Ms. Hawkins discussed the Department of Health and Human Services proposed regulation on ICD-10 code sets, a more than 10-fold increase from the current code sets. The code sets are scheduled to be effective October 1, 2011. She said many groups are

opposing this timeline due to the considerable burden to physicians and they have requested a pilot study.

Ms. Hawkins informed members of a new resource for ophthalmologists with Latino patients, "Simple Steps to Communicate with Spanish-speaking Patients." The resource was written by a Spanish teacher from Wisconsin. More information, can be found at www.ahorahablo.com.

Richard A. Harper, MD, announced Residents & Alumni Day and the AOS Spring Meeting would be held on June 5, 2009, and would follow the same format as previous years.

Dr. Katherine Baltz informed members of a cooperative agreement proposed by Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Company (OMIC). After discussion, AOS members voted in favor of signing the agreement (see article on page 1 for additional information).

MEETINGS / NEWS & EVENTS

MEETING DATES

AAO Joint Meeting with the European Society of Ophthalmology (SOE)

November 8-11, 2009
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, GA

AOS Coding Seminar

January 16, 2009
Crowne Plaza
Little Rock, AR

AOS Spring Meeting

June 5, 2009 *(NEW DATE)*
Jones Eye Institute
(in conjunction with Residents & Alumni Day)
Little Rock, AR

IN THE NEWS

Sight-Preservation Bill Introduced in US Senate

Recently, Senators Chris Dodd, D-Conn, and George

Voinovich, R-Ohio, introduced the Vision Preservation Act of 2008. The legislation, supported by the American Academy, would improve and strengthen federal public health programs at the CDC, the NIH and the Health Resources and Services Administration to prevent and manage blindness.

AOS Members Attend Table Rock Regional RoundUp

Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma state societies met on September 18-20 at Big Cedar Lodge for the 2008 Table Rock Regional RoundUp.

The meeting included educational presentations on ethics, retina and neuro-ophthalmology. The program also included presentations on Toxic Anterior Segment Syndrome (TASS), front line medicine in Iraq and Afghanistan and medical liability issues.

Resident members from Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri

and Oklahoma participated in the "Resident Paper Contest."

Julie B. Shelton, MD, the resident presenter from Arkansas, was awarded second place for her presentation on "Choroidal Adiponectin Expression Related to Smoking in Apolipoprotein E Deficient Mice."

The program included a welcome reception and breaks in the exhibit center. A chuck wagon cookout was held for attendees and their family members on Friday evening.



Attendees focus on the educational sessions, which were scheduled all day on Friday and one-half day on Saturday at Big Cedar Lodge.



Dr. Claire Price and Dr. Richard Harper visit during one of the breaks in the Exhibit Hall.



Dr. Bill Mabrey visits with representatives from Genentech during the morning break in the Exhibit Hall.

The Arkansas Ophthalmological Society wishes to thank the following companies for their support of the 2008 Regional Meeting. Please remember to thank these company representatives for their support when they call on your office.

Educational Grant

American Retina Foundation

Premium Exhibit Booth

Genentech

Regular Exhibit Booths

- A+ Computer Solutions
- Alcon Laboratories, Inc.
- Allergan
- BD Medical - Ophthalmic Systems
- Bausch & Lomb

Regular Exhibit Booths (continued)

- Carl Zeiss Meditec, Inc.
- Ellex
- Envision Low Vision Rehabilitation Center
- Heidelberg Engineering
- IRIDEX Corp.
- Inspire Pharmaceuticals
- Nidek, Inc.
- Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Company
- Optovue, Inc.
- Pfizer Inc.
- Vista Ophthalmics, Inc



Letter from the President

Dear AOS Members:

First, I would like to thank Dr. Bill Mabrey for his outstanding service as president of the Society, and I am honored to serve as AOS president for the next two years.

Second, I would like to thank all the members who attended the regional meeting at Big Cedar in September. Arkansas had a wonderful turnout.

Congratulations goes to Dr. Julie Shelton, who continued the winning tradition by Arkansas residents by placing second in the Resident Paper Contest.

Planning for the 2009 regional meeting will begin soon. If you have any comments about this year's meeting or have topic ideas for 2009, please contact me or Laura Hawkins and we will pass those along to the planning committee.

In November, I will attend the AAO Annual Meeting as Arkansas' Councilor. In 2009, Dr. Kellye McElroy will assume the duties of Councilor and we will both attend the AAO Mid-Year Forum in Washington DC. Please feel free to contact us if you have a concern you think needs to be addressed on a national level.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend the coding seminar on January 16, 2009. The seminar will follow a new 1/2 day format to encourage more physician participation. Registration materials will be mailed in mid-November.

January will also bring another legislative session. I'm sure we will be following many legislative issues affecting ophthalmology and medicine in general. Be on the lookout for legislative bulletins and please respond quickly.

Sincerely,
Katherine H. Baltz, MD



ATLANTA IS FULL OF SURPRISES!

Join us for the third Joint Meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the European Society of Ophthalmology.

- > **2008 Joint Meeting** November 8 – 11
- > **Subspecialty Day** November 7 – 8
- > **AAOE Program** November 8 – 11

www.aao.org/2008



**AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY**
The Eye M.D. Association

Promotion Code: AAO08