

Alabama EPIC

SUMMER/FALL
1999

Interim Communique for Emergency Physicians in Alabama

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Alabama Chapter of the American

College of Emergency Physicians

P.O. Box 4629 • Montgomery, AL

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From The President ...

Thomas L. Arnold, M.D., FACEP

It is with a large measure of humility that I begin this year as president of Alabama ACEP. I hope to be up to the task. With the help of the members, we can together make this another very good year.

Looking back over the last year, much has been done. Chapter finances are much improved. Drs. Campbell and Christen negotiated the sale of the textbook business to Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS) International, and Dr. Mitchell balanced the books and made budgetary plans. Mr. Holman made it all work from day-to-day, and Dr. Squyres kept the long view in sight. The Prudent Layperson standard has been applied to the Alabama Medicaid Patient First Program through the efforts of Drs. Heard and Squyres, and to HMO programs in Alabama, through the efforts of Drs. Alsip and Squyres. Working relationships with the Alabama Hospital Association and MASA have been strengthened greatly. The Annual Conference was overwhelmingly great, the largest ever, and had an intense program (as good as any I've seen). It also made a handsome profit for the chapter. Hats off to Dr. Garvey!

This year we need to see that the chapter finances are kept within the budget, and we all need to help Dr. Garvey with another conference as good as this year's. Speakers, sponsors, recruitment, and talking it up will all help. Individual participation will help the most. Plan on being there next year June 25-28, 2000. Plan also on recruiting members for Alabama ACEP—this year our membership is over 200, so for the first time we will have three votes at the ACEP Council meetings. There are thought to be 600-700 physicians practicing Emergency Medicine in Alabama. It would be nice if all those voices could be heard.

With the Medicaid Patient First-Prudent Layperson issue rapidly moving toward resolution, we need to keep our end of the bargain with Alabama Medicaid—namely to educate our members about what the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and EMTALA actually require. A helpful extension of that idea might be to offer to educate hospital staffs and county medical societies about these complex legal and regulatory issues. Emergency Physicians are the experts in these issues—we've been dealing with them for a long time. Volunteers to speak are needed. An important issue found during the Prudent Layperson discussions was the abysmally low fees which Alabama Medicaid pays emergency physicians.

(Continued on page 2)

Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the Alabama Chapter American College of Emergency Physicians.

Check out the
Alabama ACEP Worldwide Web Site
at: www.alacep.org

President's Message *(Continued from page 1)*

E&M Codes I, II, and III are not worth billing for (most groups lose money sending out a bill which costs more to prepare and send than you get back, if it's ever paid) and \$33.67 for a Level V evaluation is absurd. The entire state should be ashamed of this. This is an issue on which we must prevail. Medicaid fees must be raised.

Other issues which call out for attention are violence and injury prevention. The Alliance to the AMA and The Alliance to MASA have programs promoting domestic violence prevention. National ACEP has abundant material concerning injury prevention—they will even send you slides or computer presentations for free.

Emergency physicians are in a unique position to teach and educate about these issues on a daily basis, which is real patient protection and patient advocacy. In addition, many local groups and organizations are in need of speakers. Think what a difference you could make in your community by occasionally speaking about these issues, think what each member of your group doing the same thing would do. I will provide you with assistance and encouragement, if you make the commitment to get involved (I'll be especially encouraging if you identify yourself with Alabama ACEP when you do it).

Membership requirements are changing. As of the end of this year, to have full ACEP rights and privileges you must either be a member on 12-31-1999, or have completed an approved Emergency Medicine Residency. There are 600-700 physicians practicing emergency medicine in Alabama—and we need all of them to be in Alabama ACEP. There are 215 members of Alabama ACEP now. We gained a significant political and financial victory in the Patient First issue—three times as many members would change the political climate enough to raise Medicaid E&M fees. This is not only a matter of professional pride, but is a pocketbook issue as well. More members increase the chances of better re-imburement. What do you as an individual want?

Dr. Tom Terndrup is the new Chair of Emergency Medicine at UAB. If we can help him to establish a strong academic emergency presence in Alabama, it will increase the chances of getting a residency program re-started in Alabama. We have two strong institutions (UAB and USA) capable of training emergency residents, and several other communities quite capable of providing part-time training. Dr. David Garvey is involved in a project to develop an Emergency Trauma Management course (in addition to being the Education Committee Chair and organizer of the best annual Conference we ever had). He says authors would help speed it along. These are just two ways those interested in academics can participate. There are also emergency medicine interest groups for medical students at UAB and at USA. They would appreciate real world speakers—and you might even find some potential partners there.

Finally, there are plans to start an information service for the media (print, radio and TV), by faxing information to them on a regular basis. With this we will publish various pertinent issues simultaneously across the state. It might be heat stroke one week and politics the next. Alabama ACEP can in this way teach and increase public awareness about emergency issues and at the same time gather some credit for good works done for our communities. Any help with the website will be greatly appreciated. Send in your comments and opinions. There are two jobs offered on the bulletin board right now.

In summary, we need to stick to our budget, develop another great conference, gain more members, and have as many members as possible educate the public and other physicians about EMTALA as well as injury and violence prevention, and not let up on Medicaid for fee increases. We are also going to strengthen our already-good working relationship with MASA. Together we can accomplish more than we can individually, but it is the individual effort which makes the group effort visible. It's time to cut bait and fish.

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HONDURAS MEDICAL MISSION TRIP

Thomas L. Arnold, MD, FACEP, Chapter President

In late July, my wife Debora, son Michael, and I had the opportunity to travel to rural Honduras to work in a medical clinic in Limon. We had never done that sort of thing before, but we went because Michael, who went last year, came back and told us we needed to go there. I am humbled by the experience and especially so at being told to go by a 13 year old 'child'.

The trip was sponsored by a church in Jasper, and organized by my uncle-in-law, Dr. Tom Camp from Jasper, and his wife, Judy. It was a medical as well as religious trip. We took two physicians, one dentist (age 79), one veterinarian, five RNs, one lawyer, and others of assorted occupations. Limon is a community of about 8000 people on the eastern part of the north Honduran coast. It is 150 miles from the LaCeiba, the country's third largest city. There is electrical power and cable television via satellite, and there is non-portable running water, but no municipal sewer system. We carried our food, water, and medical supplies. The clinic itself is the largest building in the town—two examination and treatment rooms, waiting room, 4 bed dental clinic and pharmacy are downstairs. Living quarters for 16 are upstairs, as well as a kitchen and two bathrooms and hot water. Generators serve as back up power.

We flew from Birmingham to Houston to Tegucigalpa, which is a difficult airport to land on—surrounded by mountains, the single runway is at least 3/4 mile long. I have great admiration for the pilots. From there we boarded a 25 passenger turboprop and flew to LaCeiba where we were met by the mission staff. We spent one night in a hotel there and were off the next morning to Limon by pick-up and van. The road there is scenic—coastal plains, mountains, and valleys...it is also only partially paved. Hurricane Mitch did a lot of damage to the roadway, and destroyed most major bridges, as well as all the banana trees in the country. The first 100 miles were OK, considering the storm damage—the last 50 miles were on gravel roads with big holes.

When we arrived in Limon it was time to unpack the medicines and supplies. We had asked physicians in Montgomery and Jasper to donate medicines and were astounded at the generosity. We also received a very substantial amount of money, with which we bought additional medicines and supplies. Others gave T-shirts, caps and toys. We took everything we got—about 2 tons. We arrived on

Sunday evening, unpacked immediately and set up the clinic and pharmacy for an 08:00 opening.

By 06:00 there were people in line at the door. Some walked three days to get a chance to see a doctor or a dentist. They were interviewed and given a 3x5 piece of paper with name, age, weight, and chief complaint, and sent to triage where VS without temperature were taken. Then they waited to see either Dr. Camp or me. Dental patients went to the dental clinic directly. After examination, patients went to the pharmacy to get their medicines. Michael helped Judy dispense the medicines. We ran the clinic from 08:00 until noon, had lunch and siesta, then started back again at 14:00 and ran until 17:00. Most people wanted to be de-wormed and to get vitamins. Asthma, due to indoor cooking on wood adobe stoves, is common. Musculoskeletal complaints are also frequent since the most common work activity is using a machete. I saw 4 cases of acute malaria, and suspected a lot of TB, but had no way to test for it. There is no x-ray, and there are no lab tests, except for the centrifuge and capillary tubes we took to measure hematocrits. Anemia is very common, and is usually due to intestinal parasites—it is worsened by numerous pregnancies in females. Several women I saw had been pregnant 15 times. The infant mortality rate in Honduras is 41.88/1000 live births, and I suspect, higher in the rural areas. Priority for vitamins went to pregnant ladies and small children, but we ran out of vitamins for both. We did not have any pediatric asthma medicines. I put a handful of people on digoxin for atrial fibrillation and treated a little hypertension—but not much. We saw about 1000 people in 4 1/2 days. Even people who had walked several days to get there were clean, all were polite, and almost all made it a point to say thank you, not only for seeing them, but for coming to the area.

Have I let on yet that it was fun and rewarding? There was neither paperwork nor insurance. There were no bureaucrats, and our lawyer was one of us. My wife Debora was my nurse, and she gratefully put up with me, and helped me a lot. Michael taught me a valuable lesson by speaking forthrightly about the need to take action. Our group made it back without mishap and all are safe and health. It doesn't get much better. Oh yeah, get involved somewhere—soon.

ALABAMA ACEP RETIRES DEBT!

I'm extremely pleased to notify the membership that following several years of administrative downsizing, a statewide raffle drive, personal and corporate donations, a little "sweat equity" from the board and staff, and the most successful annual conference in our history this past June, the Alabama ACEP organization is now debt-free! Special

thanks to all of you who helped by securing or making financial donations, and to past and current members of the Board of Directors for being proactive, frugal, and totally dedicated to sustaining the association. Hallelujah...we are debt-free!

J. Leland Holman, Executive Director

What's the News at: the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Thomas E. Terndrup, MD, FACEP, Professor and Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine University of Alabama at Birmingham

The Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama adopted a resolution establishing the Department of Emergency Medicine on November 3, 1994. Prior to that it existed as a Division in the Department of Surgery from the early 1980's. Although we are still in the facility which was originally constructed in the 1960's, we are undergoing some important renovations, and have recently added a 4 bed chest pain unit, new flooring, and CT scanner.

In 1999, you can't be anything without a mission statement so here goes:

Mission Statement: The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Department of Emergency Medicine exists in order to provide the highest quality emergency medical care to patients, to participate in the education of health professionals, and to promote the development of the specialty of Emergency Medicine and related disciplines through excellence in patient care, teaching, and research.

Following our recent recruiting efforts, the Department now has 12 full-time faculty, with 9 ABEM board-certified physicians. Many belong to SAEM and participate in committee's or task forces. Recent additions include the individuals with subspecialty interests in Pediatric EM, cardiovascular medicine, and EMS. Recent EM resident graduates from the University of Pittsburgh, St. Luke's-Roosevelt, and East Virginia School of Medicine have joined the faculty. We are pleased at the ongoing relationships with our many clin-

ical colleagues at the Huntsville campus, and are planning a "Career Night" with the EM student club in early September led by Dr. Sam Heard. There appears to be significant interest in EM amongst the student body, and seven graduates have just begun their residency training at programs all over the U.S.

Clinically, the main ED remains busy with an overall admission rate of 26%, a trauma load of over 6,000 cases annually, and over 3,300 "chest pain" cases are expected this fiscal year. We are actively planning a new ED, scheduled to open in early 2003, which will increase overall square footage by a factor of nearly 3. From an educational perspective, we have received favorable reviews from important individuals and committees here at UAB from an EM residency training program, with expectations of beginning with new EM trainees in July 2001. Our research programs have grown rapidly, and under Kurt Denninghoff's leadership we have passed a funding milestone of over \$1 million for the current academic year. We have an active basic science lab looking at cerebrovascular perfusion in shock, as well as a number of clinical research protocols. Finally, we hope to recruit EM residency prepared fellows who are interested in training in research or EMS.

We look forward to contributing to the efforts of Alabama ACEP and Emergency Medical care across the state.

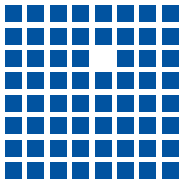
VIP Program

Tom Arnold, MD, FACEP, Chapter President

This year the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) entered into a partnership with the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) to educate community leaders on Vehicle Injury Prevention (VIP). Through this initiative, an excellent slide presentation has been developed and is available to all participants. The presentation deals with what happens in a crash, injury statistics, financial concerns, and the use of seatbelts, child seats, airbags and helmets. The presentation is already "in the can" but meant to be customized or enlivened with the presenter's own experience.

ACEP is seeking as many emergency physicians in

each state as possible to agree to be a presenter. Civic organizations such as the Jaycee's, Rotary Club, PTA, Lions, etc., will be targeted and arrangements made by ACEP and the Alabama Chapter to accommodate the VIP speaker. I have agreed to assist in the coordination of this effort throughout Alabama, but other Alabama ACEP members are needed to make the program effective. If you'd like to be added to the list of potential VIP speakers, please contact me via the chapter web site, by e-mail (taspok@mindspring.com), or through the chapter office in Montgomery. I look forward to hearing from many of you.



Committees - 1999

All members are encouraged to join and become active in chapter committees. Contact the chair listed below or the Alabama Chapter ACEP office.

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS)	Neil Christen John Campbell	256-235-5266 334-749-3411
By-Laws	Michael Sternberg	334-470-1649
Education	David Garvey	256-517-8200
EMS	John McMahon, Jr.	334-460-5333
Legislative	Phillip Bobo	205-345-2326
Membership	Neil Christen	256-235-5266
Practice Management/ Reimbursement	Jorge Alsip	334-460-5333
Communications	Thomas Arnold	334-272-1050
Emergency Trauma Management	David Garvey	256-517-8200
Public Relations	Robert Cox	334-470-1649
Academic Affairs	Marni Bonnin	205-591-6515
Pediatrics	Peter Glaseser	205-934-2116

ACEP MEMBERSHIP What It Does For You!!

- Federal Representation
- State Legislative Representation
- Regulatory Representation and Reimbursement
- Annals of Emergency Medicine
- Policy Development and Patient Care Advocacy
- Education Meetings and Publications
- Public Relations Activities
- Representation of the Specialty in the House of Medicine
- National Emergency Medicine Political Action Committee (NEMPAC)
- Emergency Medicine Foundation (EMF)
- Member Publications - "ACEP News", "EM Today", "Foresight", "24/7", "News for Emergency Medicine Residents".
- Website
- Professional Staff Assistance and Access to Information

Congratulations

**to the Following Members Elected as Officers
and to the Board of Directors!!**

Mark C. Mitchell, MD, FACEP, Daphne
President-Elect

John E. Campbell, MD, FACEP, Auburn
Board of Directors (re-elected)

Neil Christen, MD, FACEP, Anniston
Secretary/Treasurer

David J. Garvey, PhD, MD, FACEP,
Huntsville
Board of Directors (re-elected)

Thomas Terndrup, MD, FACEP,
Birmingham
Board of Directors

Sam B. Heard, MD, FACEP, Huntsville
Board of Directors (re-elected)

Gary Wright, MD, FACEP, Gulf Shores
Board of Directors

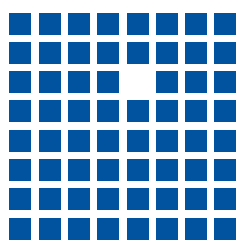
CAIO* - Alabama/ACEP's Educational Conference

David Garvey, PhD, MD, FACEP - Chapter Education Committee Chair

CAIO (good bye!) to the 16th Annual Educational Conference held in Destin, Florida June 13-16, 1999. I want to thank everyone who participated in this event to help make it the most successful conference ever for Alabama-ACEP! We had over 120 registrants and 32 corporate sponsors. Every speaker was rated in the very good to excellent range as was the conference on the whole. The weather was great, the golf tournament was fun, the food, beach-time and camaraderie was excellent.

CAIO (hello!) To the 17th Annual Educational Conference to be held again in Destin-Florida June 25-28, 2000. Mark your calendars now. Plans are already underway to make the millenium conference bigger and better than this years event. We are planning again to offer ACLS and ATLS refresher courses, and may add APLS as an ancillary course or as part of the actual educational session. We are also considering inviting neighboring ACEP chapters and the Alabama Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) to join our conference. The more the merrier. Hope to see you in Destin next June.

*CAIO is the friendly Italian greeting for hello and good-bye.



THE ALABAMA CHAPTER
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS
WISHES TO THANK THESE

ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR
SUPPORT OF AND PARTICIPATION IN
THE 16TH ANNUAL
EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE
“CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN
EMERGENCY MEDICINE”
JUNE 1999.

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**PUBLICATIONS /
REPORTS
AVAILABLE**

Members who were unable to attend the annual conference in June have requested copies of the hand-out from the trauma lecture by Thomas Scaletta, MD, FACEP, Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, West Suburban Hospital Medical Center, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Rush-Cook County Emergency Medicine Program, Chicago, Illinois.

“Trauma - Beyond ATLS”

- Changes in Emergency Medicine
- ATLS Evolution
- ATLS Myths
- Appropriate Decision-Making
- Advancements
- Trauma Care Standards

In addition, another publication is also available, “The Future of Emergency Medicine”, by Nancy Auer, MD, FACEP, the 1997-98 Task Force on the Future of Emergency Medicine, and the American College of Emergency Physicians.

**“The Future of Emergency
Medicine”**

- Future Direction of Emergency Medicine: Implications for Academics and Resident Training
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of the Future
- Emergency Medicine’s Role in Public Health
- The Industrialization and Corporatization of Emergency Medicine
- Reimbursement Realities for the Future of Emergency Medicine

Contact J. Leland Holman at the chapter office, 334-265-0068, if you’d like to be sent a copy of Dr. Scaletta’s lecture report or the ACEP publication.

ALABAMA – Excellent staff opportunity with 400-bed regional referral center with new ED which sees 40,000 visits. Work with progressive Emergency Medicine Trained/Boarded physicians and superb back-up staff with all major specialties available. Position offers highly competitive compensation as independent contractor to Hospital. Enjoy living in one of the lowest cost of living cities in the U.S. and within close proximity to Panama City Beach and the Gulf coast. Apply in confidence to Daniel Stern & Associates: 800-438-2476; CV fax: 800-892-2781; e-mail: em@danielstern.com

P P E Physician's Practice Enhancement, Inc.

PPE is offering great Emergency Medicine opportunities in the Birmingham area. We have **IMMEDIATE** openings for full and part-time physicians with the progressive three-hospital Eastern Health System, Inc.

Medical Center East - Birmingham, Alabama

35,000 visits/yr.; double/triple and Fast Track ED physician coverage.
Great RN/PMD backup! Family Medicine Residents rotate through ED.
Great teaching opportunities and administrative opportunities!

Successful applicants should possess Emergency Medicine Board Certification/Board Eligibility or Primary Care Board Certification with EM experience; ACLS, ATLS and PALS/APLS. We offer a highly competitive employee compensation with Medical/Dental/Prescription Coverage, 401K, flexible scheduling and CME reimbursement for full-time physicians and INCENTIVE BONUS FOR ALL PHYSICIANS.

Medical Center Blount - Oneonta, Alabama

13,000 visits/yr.; 12 hour shifts. New facility! State of the Art ED! Great RN/PMD backup!

Successful applicants should possess BE/BC in Emergency Medicine or Primary Care, ACLS, ATLS and PALS/APLS. We offer a highly competitive employee compensation with Medical/Dental/Prescription Coverage, 401K, flexible scheduling and CME reimbursement for full-time physicians and INCENTIVE BONUS FOR ALL PHYSICIANS.

St. Clair Regional Hospital - Pell City, Alabama

16,000 visits/yr.; 12 hour shifts. Great RN/PMD backup!

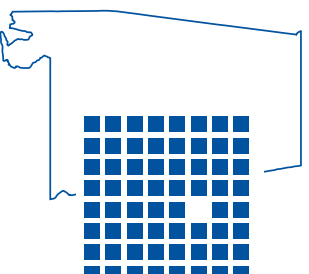
Successful applicant should possess BE/BC in Emergency Medicine or Primary Care, ACLS, ATLS and PALS/APLS. We offer a highly competitive employee compensation with Medical/Dental/Prescription Coverage, 401K, flexible scheduling and CME reimbursement for full-time physicians and INCENTIVE BONUS FOR ALL PHYSICIANS.

Fax your C.V. to (732) 706-0987 or call Maureen Durham toll free 1-877-377-6684.

UPCOMING EVENTS - 1999

- Sept. 28**
Association of Birmingham Emergency Physicians
Monthly meeting, 6:30 p.m., Birmingham
For more information contact Dr. Marri Bonnin,
205-591-6515
- Oct. 13**
MASA Practice Management Seminar
"Improved Collection Practices in the Health Care Office" - Huntsville.
For registration information contact the MASA Education Department,
334-263-6441 or 800-239-6272
- Oct. 14**
MASA Practice Management Seminar
"Improved Collection Practices in the Health Care Office" - Birmingham.
For registration information contact the MASA Education Department,
334-263-6441 or 800-239-6272
- Oct. 26**
Association of Birmingham Emergency Physicians
Monthly meeting, 6:30 p.m., Birmingham
For more information contact Dr. Marri Bonnin, 205-591-6515
- Oct. 26**
State Emergency Medical Control Committee
Quarterly meeting, 10:00 a.m., The RSA Tower, Montgomery
For more information contact the State EMS Office,
334-206-5383
- Nov. 9**
Association of Birmingham Emergency Physicians
Monthly meeting, 6:30 p.m., Birmingham
For more information contact Dr. Marri Bonnin, 205-591-6515
- Dec. 7**
MASA Practice Management Seminar
"CPT: A Comprehensive Study", Birmingham. For registration informa-
tion contact the MASA Education Department,
334-263-6441 or 800-239-6272
- Dec. 8**
MASA Practice Management Seminar
"Exploring ICD-9-CM: A Voyage of Discovery", Birmingham. For registra-
tion information contact the MASA Education Department,
334-263-6441 or 800-239-6272
- Dec. 9**
MASA Practice Management Seminar
"CPT: A Comprehensive Study", Montgomery. For registration informa-
tion contact the MASA Education Department,
334-263-6441 or 800-239-6272
- Dec. 14**
Association of Birmingham Emergency Physicians
Monthly meeting, 6:30 p.m., Birmingham
For more information contact Dr. Marri Bonnin, 205-591-6515

If you know of courses, meetings or other events that you'd like listed in this calendar, please notify Alabama ACEP at telephone 334-265-0068 or fax 334-265-1233.



ALABAMA CHAPTER
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