



## American Osteopathic College of Anesthesiologists From the President

April 1, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a truly unprecedented situation around the world. Our thoughts are with those who have been directly affected by the virus, and all of those who are struggling with the ramifications of this global health crisis.

The AOCA's leadership cares for you and wants you to know that we are here for you if you need something from the College. We understand the tremendous stress that our members and all health care providers are under as they work on the front lines and at the home offices trying to keep all patients tended to and cared for.

As you know, AOCA's leadership made an important decision about the Mid Year Seminar. The health, safety and well-being of our attendees, speakers, and exhibitors was our priority. At the time, the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus in the US was low and we monitored the situation daily, literally moment to moment, before and while we were in Chicago. We followed the advice of the US Centers for Disease Control as well as state and local governmental authorities and held the conference.

There were just under 100 attendees who were not able to attend the conference due to personal choice or institutional restrictions. These people were offered the opportunity to carry-over their registration to the Annual Meeting scheduled for September or, to receive a full refund. The InterContinental hotel worked with us to reduce the cancellation restrictions as well.

All in all, this was a great meeting and once again, AOCA's education was top notch. We have posted the power point presentations as well as audio files on our [website](#). These are not available for CME, however, they are rich in exciting content and I encourage you to take a look at these resources.

The AOCA [website](#) also has some resources for you about COVID-19, including a new opportunity from Marriott's Caregiver Community. We continue to hope that this situation finds relief soon in various ways.

I wanted to alert you to an important issue that is gaining momentum and needs your direct help. On Monday, March 30, President Donald Trump and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a variety of [temporary regulatory waivers and new regulations](#) to address health care's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of note, the changes include the elimination of physician supervision of anesthesia services under Medicare (during the duration of the state of emergency). The rule defers to state law and hospital medical staff rules that may require supervision. According to the waiver and rule changes, "CMS is waiving the requirements that a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CNRA) is under the supervision of a physician."

I participated in a town hall meeting hosted by Mary Dale Peterson, MD, President of the American Society of Anesthesiologists. The ASA is against this temporary waiver, citing their belief that it is not necessary nor is it safe for patients to waive the regulation that requires physicians to supervise nurse anesthetists. When communicating with your own legislators and governors you may want to consult the [language achieved in the state of Michigan](#).

Julie Kahlfeldt, your association executive director, and I are working closely with the ASA, state and federal offices to learn all we can so that we can protect our members and to help educate those making these decisions about health care provisions. We will keep you updated about ways in which you can help to end this temporary waiver and reaffirm Medicare's physician-led, team-based anesthesia model one that has assured millions of Medicare patients access to safe, high quality anesthesia care.

Visit [CMS.gov](#) for the [full list of waivers and guidance](#).

Please stay well and safe.

Jeffrey Kyff, DO, FAOCA  
President