

Reflections on a Year of Making a Difference in Aerospace Medicine

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This year I wanted to remind us all of the importance of our field and of being a member of our great organization. Our theme was "Making a Difference in Aerospace Medicine with AsMA." On this page I have had the privilege of sharing some stories from fellow members on the value of our organization in making those differences. I wish to thank these authors for sharing their stories.

I set out this year with several initiatives. With the dedicated work of many members, a lot was, indeed, accomplished.

The first initiative was to improve declining membership. We have contacted multiple aeromedical minded groups and training programs to consider AsMA membership. We will also be offering free one-day attendance at our annual meeting in Orlando to any medical student or resident not already a member. I am happy to report that for the first year since 2010, our membership has increased (from 2140 to 2287).

A second initiative was to improve the value of AsMA membership. We increased the utility of our website, expanded web-based training, and trialed web-based consolidated AsMA and Constituent dues payments. We began efforts to provide educational material on our website for pilots, for the commercial spaceflight flying public, and for aerospace medicine researchers. We added poster sessions during our annual meeting for constituents, affiliates, and committees to display and discuss their activities. We codified the use of the Space Medicine Association in all AsMA Space Medicine issues. We made our senior leadership nominations processes more transparent by announcing its onset and results well before the annual meeting. We set up our first Wikipedia, Facebook, and Twitter sites to broaden our communication and involvement, especially with the next generation of aerospace medicine specialists. We also created an AsMA ceremonial flag and even minted a new AsMA coin, often given out to prospective new members.

A third initiative was to improve services to our non-U.S. members. We are now publishing all affiliate reports on our website in order to share them with other affiliates. We increased AsMA presence and co-sponsorship at many regional and non-U.S. meetings (such as ECAM co-sponsorship in 2016), and are waiving the annual meeting registration fee this year for all students traveling to Orlando from outside the Continental U.S. Aerospace Medicine has been accepted in Canada as an area of focused competence (AFC) eligible for diploma recognition, and the UK Space Life and Biomedical Sciences Association has applied for affiliate status.

A fourth initiative was to strengthen our finances. AsMA has set a financial self-sustainment goal at a level which will ensure

our organization's financial security. We reviewed our investment policy and have adopted a "forward leaning" investment approach to allow for greater income with minimal risk. We have significantly expanded our revenue streams beyond our annual meeting, and strengthened Corporate and donor interests by establishing a Corporate Tiered Donor structure, a Corporate Forum for formal AsMA Corporate involvement, and have a draft formal agreement for mutual benefit between AsMA and the AsMA Foundation.

Here are other notable activities accomplished this year:

- Completed AsMA Compendium Review
- Endorsed an AMA Resolution on efforts to educate and guide physicians in In-Flight Medical Emergencies
- Completed Position Paper on Sleep Apnea Screening in Pilots
- Reviewed two position papers on Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus and non-conformance of in-flight Supplemental Oxygen
- Received two Proposed Resolutions on Space Medicine in Commercial Spaceflight
- Published new AsMA Journal Title, Cover, and Format
- Sent letter to U.S. Congress opposing efforts to remove FAA Third Class medical certification
- Updated our Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures to capture efficiencies and existing practices

AsMA has rewritten its strategic and business plans to continue to guide our progress into the future.

Our annual meeting will be very successful in great measure due to the excellent social and scientific activities assembled for us.

I deeply wish to thank all those this year who have shared their talents and precious time serving in our Constituents, Headquarters Office, and on our Committees, Council, and Executive Committee. This is the lifeblood of AsMA and is where the work is done!

I cannot think of a more capable and dedicated fellow member to pass on the reins of our organization to than Dr. Kris Belland. I know he will do an excellent job as our next President.

To paraphrase a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson "to leave the world a bit better...this is to have succeeded."

Thank you and I hope you continue to succeed in 'Making a Difference in Aerospace Medicine' with AsMA!

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