

# Pediatric SHORT CUTS



Spring 2017

AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery

Editor: Mark D. Krieger, MD, FAANS



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ABPNS/ABNS Update

## President's Message

I hope to see you at the upcoming 2017 American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Annual Scientific Meeting in Los Angeles, April 22-26. The Pediatric Section has two separate programs: The first is on Monday, April 24, from 2-5:30 p.m., during which the Matson Lecture, titled *The Perception of Quality*, will be delivered by Arthur E. Marlin, MD, FAANS. Dr. Marlin has been practicing pediatric neurosurgery for nearly 40 years and, during that time, he spent five years as the CEO of Methodist Children's Hospital in San Antonio. These two very different perspectives will make for a very compelling presentation. Following the Monday session, the Matson reception will be held in Dr. Marlin's honor. The location of that reception will be announced at the meeting. Please come join us for cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and the opportunity to meet with our Matson Lecturer and your fellow pediatric neurosurgeons. The second Pediatric Section meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 25, from 2-5:30 p.m.

The 2016 Annual Meeting of the AANS/CNS Pediatric Section on Neurological Surgery in Orlando, had the theme: *The Faces of Pediatric Neurosurgery: Excellence, Quality, Compassion.* The meeting was a great success thanks to the hard work put in by Greg Olavarria, MD, FAANS and Jogi V. Pattisapu, MD, FAANS(L).

There were nearly 400 attendees in an outstanding venue. As you know, the Section has had to be more budget-minded with meetings and Thursday night events have not been scheduled for the past two years. It seems this has turned out to be a great opportunity to socialize with colleagues, so I think this trend will continue. As always, our visits to the exhibitors are critical for our continued success, and I am pleased to announce that all of the attendees did a great job of interacting with the exhibitors. They reported a very high level of satisfaction. Please continue to spend time with the

industry representatives during meetings, as they provide crucial funding for us.

The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Meet of the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery will be held from Nov. 28-Dec. 1, 2017, in Houston, and is being chaired by David I. Sandberg, MD, FAANS, and Howard L. Weiner, MD, FAANS.

As a bit of housekeeping, please be sure to update your contact information at our website. We use the databank to keep you informed about Section activities. After the 2017 AANS Annual Scientific Meeting, the new officers will take over the business of the Section. Mark R. Proctor, MD, FAANS, as chair; Mark D. Krieger, MD, FAANS, as chair-elect; Bermans J. Iskandar, MD, FAANS, as secretary; and Matthew D. Smyth, MD, FAANS, as treasurer. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve the Section as chair over the past two years. We started out with numerous budget issues, including meeting expenses, and we have worked as a team to scale things back and still deliver quality meetings. We hope to build a fund through the Neurosurgical Research & Education Foundation (NREF) to help raise money for the Section to use for further program development and other activities. There will be more on this to come. We welcome anyone in the Section who is interested in participating on committees to please contact any of the officers and let us know how you would like to participate.

Sarah J. Gaskill, MD, FAANS  
Chair, Pediatric Section

# Matson Lecturer: Arthur E. Marlin, MD, FAANS

Dr. Marlin is an internationally known pediatric neurosurgeon. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Board certified in neurological surgery and pediatric neurological surgery, he is a past chair of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) Joint Section of Pediatric Neurosurgery .

Currently a professor of neurosurgery at the University of South Florida (USF), he has edited nine books on pediatric neurosurgery and wrote the *Handbook of Pediatric Neurosurgery and Neurology* with Sarah J. Gaskill, MD, FAANS. He has in addition authored close to 100 articles.

Dr. Marlin trained at McGill University, the University of Minnesota and New York University. His most influential mentors have been Theodore Brown Rasmussen, MD; Joseph Ransohoff, MD; and Frederick J. Epstein, MD. He was the founding chief executive officer at the Methodist Children's Hospital of South Texas and held that position for five years while in active practice of pediatric neurosurgery. He is a senior member of the American Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery (ASPN).

With almost 40 years of experience in pediatric neurosurgery, his main clinical interests are hydrocephalus, epilepsy, spasticity and tumors. On a personal note, Dr. Marlin is an avid chess player, artist and a tennis player. He retired from horse breeding and

competitive dressage when he moved to Florida in 2006. He has been married to his wife Bebbly since 1972 and has three children, all who of whom are in the field of medicine. Sarah Swartz is a pediatric nephrologist; Tamara Norton is a pediatric physical therapist and Evan Marlin is completing his neurosurgery residency at Ohio State this July.

He enjoys spending time with his seven grandchildren who come to Florida frequently to visit. On a personal note, he has been an exceptional mentor, colleague and friend to me over the past 30 years. I regret that he did not have the opportunity to influence more pediatric neurosurgeons directly. I feel fortunate to have gained so much skill, wisdom and expertise from him over the years and have been blessed to be a part of the extended Marlin family to this day.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Matson Lecture presented by Dr. Marlin titled "*The Perception of Quality*" on Monday, April 24, during the Pediatric Session held from 2:00-5:30 p.m. at the 2017 AANS Annual Scientific Meeting. A reception in honor of Dr. Marlin will be held following the Monday afternoon session; the location will be announced at the meeting.

Sarah J. Gaskill, MD, FAANS  
Chair, Pediatric Section

## National Meeting

It is with great enthusiasm that we bring to you the following speakers and topics for the 2017 American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Annual Scientific Meeting. Arthur E. Marlin, MD, FAANS, is the Maston Lecturer and Neil Martin, MD, FAANS, UCLA chair, will speak on quality measures and their experiences in implementing quality improvement projects. W. Jerry Oakes, MD, FAANS(L), from Birmingham, Ala., will then offer insights from his illustrious career in his talk: "*What I Have Seen.*"

In the first face-off, the treatment of cystic craniopharyngioma (resection vs. intracystics therapy) will be discussed by Lissa Catherine Baird, MD (Oregon Health & Science Laboratory) and Daniel H. Fulkerson, MD, FAANS (Indiana University

Health). In the second, Robert C. Dauser, MD, FAANS (Texas Children) and Gary K. Steinberg, MD, PhD, FAANS (Stanford) will discuss the pros and cons of indirect vs. direct bypass for Moyamoya disease. Lastly, Marvin D. Nelson Jr., MD, MBA, and Benita Tamrazi, MD, from the radiology department of Children's Hospital Los Angeles, will review imaging advancements in the fields of oncology and epilepsy. We are deeply grateful to all the participating speakers and look forward to seeing everyone there.

Andrew H. Jea, MD, FAANS  
Joshua J. Chern, MD, PhD, FAANS



## SAVE THE DATE

**Save the Date for the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual AANS/CNS  
Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Meeting:  
Nov. 28–Dec. 1, 2017, in Houston.**

An exciting program is being planned based upon the meeting theme:

Pediatric Neurosurgery Reaching New Heights (see the attached *Save the Date* flyer). A fabulous group of keynote speakers is lined up, including:

- Mark W. Kline, MD – internationally-respected leader in pediatric HIV/AIDS, global child health and Physician-in-Chief of Texas Children's Hospital, Baylor College of Medicine

We again planed an advance practice provider (APP) seminar and networking event on the first day of the meeting, Nov. 28. In addition to scientific abstracts, this year's program will include three debates covering controversial topics in pediatric neurosurgery undertaken by experts on the topics.

Please plan to submit your best work for oral and poster presentations this summer, and join us in Houston!

Respectfully,

David I. Sandberg, MD, FAANS

Howard L. Weiner, MD, FAANS



## Research Committee Report 2017

The current roster of the Research Committee includes Edward Robert Smith, MD, FAANS, chair; Cormac O. Maher, MD, FAANS; and Eric M. Thompson, MD. The committee is currently directing two major initiatives: (1) the second year of a successfully revamped Pediatric Section Grant and (2) ongoing participation in the Neurosurgical Research & Education Foundation (NREF) grant program.

Last year, the Section approved a significant change in the format of the annual research award in response to several years of limited applications. The Fellow/Junior Faculty Research Grant was initiated, changing the target population of the grant to fellows/new faculty in order to recruit and retain pediatric neurosurgeons engaging in research focused on problems unique to pediatric neurosurgery. The funding level is \$10,000/year, with discretion to award as a single grant or divide it into two grants of \$5,000. The response to this new format was 10-fold greater than the previous year, with 10 applications, all of them of high quality. Two grants of \$5,000 each were awarded for 2016-17; one to an incoming fellow and one to new faculty:

- One focused on general neurosurgery topics
- Investigation into the genetic determinants of developmental neurovascular anomalies, Kris Kahle, MD, PhD, Yale University (new faculty 2015)
- TRPV4 Antagonists for the Treatment of Hydrocephalus, Andrea Gail Scherer, MD, Indiana University (starting fellowship at Riley Hospital 2016)

We are eager to continue this process, and application information can be [found here](#).

The Section is also actively involved in the NREF grant program, with an interest in promoting applications with a pediatric focus and is now directly involved in grant review. There were four dedicated pediatric grants this year, with two funded (out of nine possible NREF grants), suggesting an increased capacity for pediatric-focused research. We would strongly encourage applications, with information present on the [website](#).

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Robert Smith, MD, FAANS

## Membership Report

Membership in the AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery continues to grow. The current roster includes 339 active, eight associate, 77 lifetime, 33 international and 32 resident/fellow members, for a total of 489 members.

Since the last edition of Pediatric ShortCuts, the newly-approved Pediatric Section members are:

### Active

Eric M. Thompson, MD, FAANS (Durham, N.C.)  
David A. Chesler, MD, PhD (Stony Brook, N.Y.)  
Kaveh Asadi-Moghaddam, MD, PhD  
(Grand Rapids, Mich.)  
Kaine Chamberlain Onwuzulike, MD, PhD (Cleveland)  
Heather Stevens Spader, MD (Hollywood, Fla.)

### Resident/Fellow

Augustus Jose Perez, MD (Jackson, Miss.)  
Jarod Roland, MD (St. Louis)  
Molly Hubbard, MD (Minneapolis)  
James Andrew Stadler III, MD (Palo Alto, Calif.)  
Tanya Minasian, DO (Los Angeles)  
Vincent Diong Weng Nga, MBBS, MRCS  
(Toronto, Ontario, Canada)  
Derek Yecies, MD (Palo Alto, Calif.)  
Thomas W. Larrew, MD (Charleston, S.C.)  
Muhammed Burhan Janjua, MD (New York)

### International

A. Graham Fieggen, MD, IFAANS  
(Cape Town, South Africa)  
Ammar Hadi Kadhim, MBChB, IFAANS, FIBMS  
(Al-Samawah, Iraq)  
Shibu Pillai, MD (Bangalore, India)

### Medical Student

Leonard Verhey (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

### Lifetime

Michael D. Heafner, MD, FAANS(L) (Charlotte, N.C.)  
Andrew D. Parent, MD, FAANS(L) (Jackson, Miss.)

For additional membership information, please visit the [Pediatric Section website](#).

David Delmar Limbrick Jr., MD, PhD, FAANS

# AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurosurgery Traveling Fellowships

The AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurosurgical Surgery offers the following traveling fellowships:

- 1) The **International Traveling Fellowship** is for neurosurgeons who, at the time of their application, are either training in a residency program outside the U.S. and Canada or who have completed residency training outside the U.S. and Canada within the past five years. The fellowship will cover the traveling and living expenses for a three-month period to be spent observing the activities of an established pediatric neurosurgical service of the applicant's choosing in the U.S. or Canada. Up to two fellowships will be awarded annually on the basis of a competitive evaluation by a committee of the Pediatric Section. The fellowship stipend is \$7,500.
- 2) The **Domestic Traveling Fellowship** is for residents in accredited North American neurosurgical training programs. The fellowship is intended to cover traveling and living expenses for one month for a resident who wishes additional experience in pediatric neurosurgery during residency. The one-month fellowship can be spent at any pediatric neurosurgery program within North America to pursue an activity which broadens the resident's exposure to pediatric neurosurgery, including observation at a clinical or research center, participation in a research project or any other relevant activity. Up to two fellowships per year are awarded on the basis of a competitive evaluation by a committee of the Joint Pediatric Section. The fellowship stipend is \$2,500.

## Congratulations to the 2017 Fellowship Recipients:

### International Traveling Fellowship:

1. Femi Owagbemi, MD, (from Nigeria, to the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas)
2. Nishanth Sadashiva, MBBS, MCh, (from Bangalore, India, to British Columbia Children's Hospital, Vancouver, Canada)

### Domestic Traveling Fellowship:

1. Akshitumar Maheshbhai Mistry, MD, (Resident at Vanderbilt, fellowship at The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada)
2. Vijay Mysore Ravindra, MD, (Resident at University of Utah, fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital in Boston)

### Call for 2018 Applications:

Requirements for both fellowships include:

- 1) A statement defining the purpose of the proposed fellowship
- 2) A letter of recommendation from the applicant's current neurosurgical program director
- 3) A letter of acceptance from the institution where the applicant intends to take the fellowship confirming the description of the fellow's potential activities during the period of the award
- 4) The applicant's current Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The deadline for application submission is Nov. 1, 2017.

The completed application should be **emailed** to:

**[David.I.Sandberg@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:David.I.Sandberg@uth.tmc.edu)**

David I. Sandberg, MD, FAANS  
Professor and Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery  
Dr. Marnie Rose Professorship in Pediatric Neurosurgery  
McGovern Medical School, University of Texas Health  
Science Center at Houston  
6431 Fannin Street | MSB 5.144 | Houston, TX 77030  
Phone: 713.500.7370 | Fax: 713.500.7352

Respectfully submitted,

David I. Sandberg, MD, FAANS

# Message from the President of the AANS

Pediatric neurosurgery has recently passed the 25-year mark since the inception of the American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery (ABPNS). Since that time, over 200 individuals have completed fellowships approved by the Accreditation Council for Pediatric Neurosurgery Fellowships (ACPNF) and have passed their pediatric subspecialty qualifications, allowing them to hold a 10-year, time-limited ABPNS certificate. For the first decade following the establishment of the ABPNS, less than 10 pediatric neurosurgery fellows per year completed ABPNS certification (Table 1). In the last decade, interest in pediatric neurosurgery has been on an upswing (Table 2). In 2016, 13 individuals passed their ABPNS credentialing process and another 24 passed the recertification process. Likewise, the American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ASPN) now has over 250 members.

As such, the subspecialty of pediatric neurosurgery appears to be having a renaissance. Looking back over the quarter century since the development of the ABPNS, we have seen the survival rate of children with the most common brain tumors more than double. Advances in the treatment of hydrocephalus have led to dramatic reductions in the number of shunts and shunt revisions being performed at most major pediatric facilities. Our shunt infection rates are trending steadily downward. Advances in neuro-imaging and electro-diagnostics have led to earlier and better treatment of children with epilepsy. Newer age-specific implants have led to better management of pediatric spinal disorders of all types. Spinal deformity surgery in children is rapidly becoming part of the armamentarium of pediatric neurosurgery rather than being

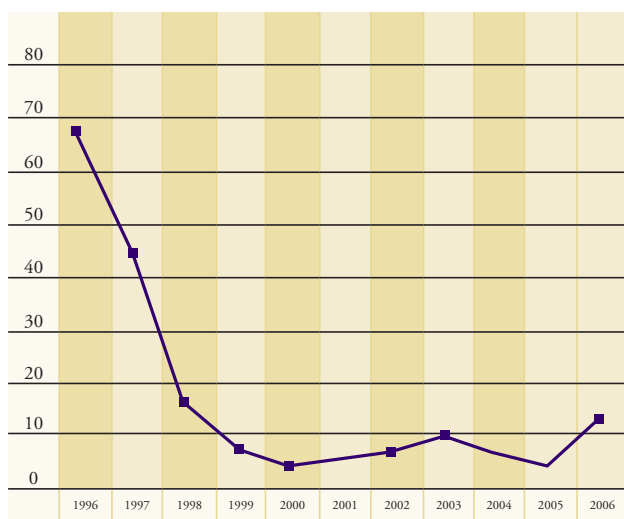
relegated to orthopaedics. In most tertiary pediatric hospitals with more than one pediatric neurosurgeon, we are now seeing further subspecialization within the field. Pediatric neurosurgeons have also gained stature in leadership positions within organized neurosurgery. At present, pediatric neurosurgeons hold leadership positions within the AANS, the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), the Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) and the ABNS, just to name a few.

It seems to me the perfect occasion for us to acknowledge the prescient work of our predecessors who had the foresight to both organize and execute the development of our subspecialty in such a manner that pediatric neurosurgery now serves as a model for fellowship training and sub specialization within neurosurgery. In his article on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ABPNS and ABNS, John Ragheb, MD, FAANS, details the alignment of the two organizations in a way that should continue to benefit pediatric neurosurgery. With the implementation of these agreements, pediatric neurosurgeons will no longer hold a diploma from a “rump board,” but will be recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) for the special qualifications that we hold.

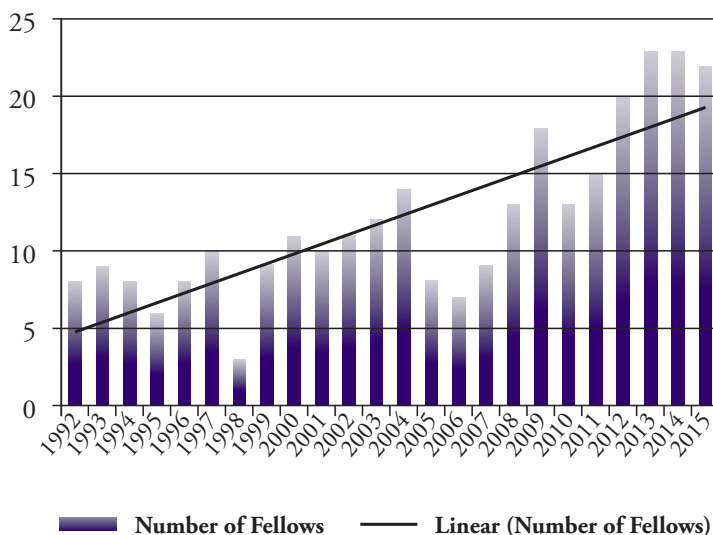
Respectfully,

Frederick A. Boop, MD, FAANS  
AANS President

Figure 2: Diplomates Certified by the American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery (ABPNS) 1996-2006



## Number of ABPNS Fellows



# ABPNS | ABNS Update

The American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery (ABPNS) was established in 1996 by a dedicated group of pediatric neurosurgeons to identify and recognize subspecialty practice and expertise in pediatric neurosurgery at a time when organized neurosurgery refused to identify subspecialization. In order to establish and codify the optimal training and practice requirements for pediatric neurosurgeons, 40 senior pediatric neurosurgeons from the U.S. and Canada met in Chicago in the summer of 1991. By unanimous vote, they founded the ABPNS, and the original 152 Diplomats were certified in 1996. Since that time, a total of 283 neurosurgeons have been certified, and many of the original group have recertified for the third time. The Board is recognized by hospital and insurance credentialing bodies and our Diplomates are active across neurosurgery.

Times have changed. The American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS) is now committed to identifying subspecialties in neurosurgery and recognizes that the model for subspecialty credentialing created by the ABPNS should be embraced. The Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) has also acknowledged that the Accreditation Council for Pediatric Neurosurgical Fellowships (ACPNF) requirements for and mechanisms of monitoring of fellowships training will remain and is the model for subspecialty fellowship training. In addition, both the ABNS and CAST will defer to the ABPNS and ACPNF regarding the credentialing of pediatric neurosurgeons credentialed by the Canadian Royal College.

Therefore, in an effort to improve and streamline the certification and continued certification processes, the ABPNS Board of Directors has signed a memorandum of understanding with the ABNS that will allow the two organizations to work together. The strength of the two organizations will come together toward the shared goals of an efficient, effective and educational credentialing and re-credentialing process. This transition will take place over the next several years, as the processes for certification of pediatric neurosurgeons evolves. Although many of the details are still in development, the Board of Directors wanted to provide a broad outline of the planned changes to our Diplomates and over the next several months will continue to fill in the details of the process as it evolves. Periodic updates will be added to the ABPNS.org Board website. It will remain the place to look for details of the certification and re-certification processes.

The initial pediatric neurosurgery subspecialty exam will be taken within one year of completing an ACPNF accredited pediatric neurosurgery fellowship and will be available to those that have completed accredited training in neurosurgery recognized by the ABNS or Canadian Royal College. The applicant will then submit case logs from their post-fellowship practice demonstrating a pediatric neurosurgery-focused practice in compliance with ABNS/ABPNS criteria and, once approved, will take a combined ABNS/ABPNS oral examination. There will be a transition period over the next several years, allowing those that have already graduated, but not yet taken the ABNS exam, to sit for the ABPNS written exam. The exam will be given electronically at ABNS testing sites, but the content will still be developed by the ABPNS.

The current ABNS Maintenance of Certification (MOC) process and the ABPNS re-certification process will evolve into a unified system of continuing education that focuses on core concepts and advancements that alter the fundamentals of practice. The goal is to have a single process that is valuable to Diplomates and focuses on continued learning in our ever-evolving field and is specific to the practice of pediatric neurosurgery. Those re-certifying will still meet case log requirements verifying pediatric-focused practice. The educational material that will be the core of this new process is still under development and therefore those recertifying in 2017 will still be subject to the original ABPNS exam process.

In addition, in order to better align the ABNS and ABPNS categories of certification, the ABPNS now recognizes those who have retired from our field as well as those who are clinically inactive. Information regarding these categories of certification are available at the [ABPNS website](#).

John Ragheb, MD, FAANS

# Update from the Accreditation Council for Pediatric Neurosurgery Fellowships

The past year has seen some major changes in the pediatric neurosurgery fellowship accreditation process. The Accreditation Council for Pediatric Neurosurgery Fellowships (ACPNF) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) Committee on Accreditation of Subspecialty Accreditation (CAST). According to the terms agreed upon in the MOU, the ACPNF will continue to establish standards for fellowship accreditation and determine if programs meet these standards. The ACPNF will continue to administer the pediatric neurosurgery fellowship match. The ACPNF will share information with CAST on accredited programs. CAST will no longer make decisions on pediatric fellowship accreditation independently of the ACPNF and will no longer offer accreditation for pediatric programs except in coordination with the ACPNF. The ACPNF will facilitate CAST efforts to share pediatric neurosurgery fellowship data with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The organizations have enacted bylaws changes to reflect the new relationship. More detail is available on the website for those who are interested in learning more about these changes.

For the last two cycles, we have required programs to submit case data for the hospital as well as for individual fellows. On the basis of the data that has been submitted, we anticipate moving forward

with several new case-volume requirements in future accreditation cycles. The rationale for these requirements was discussed in detail at the recent program director meeting that was held during the American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ASPN) Annual Meeting in January. These additional metrics will ensure the best learning environment for our trainees and will be useful as we begin data sharing with the ACGME.

There are now 28 accredited fellowship programs. A complete and up-to-date list of all currently accredited programs may be found here. In the last cycle, 29 individuals entered the match. Of these, 18 were graduates of U.S. or Canadian residency programs. After some discussion at the program director meeting, the decision was made to hold the fellowship match in the week following the Pediatric Section meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [cmaher@med.umich.edu](mailto:cmaher@med.umich.edu) or ACPNF chair, R. Michael Scott, MD, FAANS, at [michael.scott@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:michael.scott@childrens.harvard.edu) if you have any questions about pediatric neurosurgery fellowships or the accreditation process.

Cormac O. Maher, MD, FAANS

## Pediatric Section Treasurer's Report Shortcuts

### Summary

The Pediatric Section remains in good financial health. Total net assets as per the mid-year (12/31/2016) financial statement totaled \$709,475. This represents the total cumulative revenue of the Section since its inception.

### Annual Meeting

The 2016 Annual Meeting for the AANS/CNS Joint Section in Pediatric Neurological Surgery in Orlando, Fla., is expected to produce budgeted revenue of \$346,895 with a net excess of \$36,726. This is compared to a net excess of \$67,172 at the 2015 Annual Meeting in Seattle. The net revenue has now been positive for two years in a row as a result of continued efforts by Section officers to reduce cost in collaboration with local meeting hosts and AANS staff.

The Section's long-term investment account remains favorable at \$691,745, as per the 12/31/2016 financial report. The Section's long-term investments are handled via a pooled investment portfolio with the other sections, which allows the sections to get into funds not otherwise available to smaller investors.

### Specific Expenses and Financial Resolutions

The Section continues its commitment toward its educational and research missions. Again in the 2017 budget, there is renewed financial commitment toward the Pediatric Neurosurgical Research & Education Foundation (NREF) Fellowship grant, Section research awards and domestic and international traveling fellowships.

Overall, there appear to be no concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Bermans J. Iskandar, MD, FAANS  
Madison, Wisc.



# Message from the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Neurological Surgery Chair

Your colleagues at the Section on Neurological Surgery (SONS) have been busy working with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and its 64,000-plus members to improve the care of children through education, advocacy policy and outreach. In this section of Shortcuts, we will show you how we are achieving this through our newly formed Education, Advocacy and Policy Committees, and through our individual members' efforts. This is an exciting time for the AAP SONS as it continues its development as the leading advocate for neurosurgical health in organized pediatrics.

Since SONS is regularly consulted by the AAP when formulating policies or guidelines related to neurosurgical issues in kids, we formed the Advocacy and Policy Committee to be able to readily and thoroughly review and comment on any AAP material or issues that need pediatric neurosurgery's input. One that I want to highlight is how the SONS worked with the AAP Section on Plastic Surgery to obtain AAP endorsement for the Guidelines Committee of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons' (CNS) recently published *Systematic and Evidence Based Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Positional Plagiocephaly*. If you are interested in reviewing clinical reports, policy statements or technical reports and would like to offer your opinion on important matters as they relate to pediatric neurosurgery, please write to Sandi K. Lam, MD, FAANS, chair of the Advocacy and Policy Subcommittee of SONS at [sklam@texaschildrens.org](mailto:sklam@texaschildrens.org).

An integral function of SONS is education, not only of pediatricians and families affected by neurosurgical diseases, but also of neurosurgeons regarding organized pediatrics. The AAP SONS Education Committee gathers throughout year, including at the national annual meetings of the AAP and the American Association

of Neurological Surgeons (AANS)/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Neurosurgery. Highlights of the SONS meeting at the recently concluded AANS/CNS Pediatric Section Annual meeting included the 2016 AAP SONS Lecture, "*Hacking Your Brain For Happiness*," by neurosurgeon James R. Doty, MD, FAANS. The AAP SONS award for best oral presentation went to "*Risk Factors for Surgical Site Infection Following Non-Shunt Pediatric Neurosurgery: A Review of 9,296 Procedures from a National Database and Comparison to a Single Center Experience*," by Brandon Sherrod, medical student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). If you are interested in being involved in the SONS Education Committee, please email Greg W. Albert, MD, FAANS, Section on Neurological Surgery Education Committee chair, at [galbert2@uams.edu](mailto:galbert2@uams.edu).

Lastly, at the conclusion of our SONS annual meeting, concurrent with the AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Surgery Annual Meeting last December, John Ragheb, MD, FAANS, concluded his term as SONS chair and handed the reigns over to me. I will have a difficult time filling John's shoes. Through his leadership, SONS grew in scope and function and is now better able to serve its mission of improving the neurosurgical health of children.

I really hope you take the time to read how SONS has been working hard to advocate for the health of children and hope that you will be moved to become more involved with SONS whether you are a member or not. Please search for us at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

Sincerely,

Philipp R. Aldana, MD, FAANS

# ABNS Update

The oral examination is the last event in the initial certification process, which begins with a neurosurgical residency in an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited neurosurgical program and passage of the written or primary examination. Whereas the written examination explores an applicant's knowledge in relevant disciplines, the oral examination explores knowledge and judgment in clinical neurosurgical practice after an applicant has been an independent practitioner. The oral examination takes place through a series of face-to-face examinations involving the applicant, current and former directors of the Board and guest examiners. Examination of a candidate's knowledge and judgment typically includes queries regarding preoperative evaluation, intraoperative technical and judgmental issues and post-operative management, including appropriate treatment of complications.

The Oral Examination of the American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS) has undergone periodic review and revision over the years. The current format includes three, 45-minute examination sessions that focus on cranial, spinal and other neurosurgical topics. Different medical boards conduct their oral examination in different ways and some do not have an oral examination at all. The ABNS seeks to maintain an oral examination process that is relevant, rigorous and of value to both our specialty and for public safety. Commencing with the Spring 2017 examination, a new format will be used.

The new format includes three, 45-minute sessions:

- One focused on general neurosurgery topics
- One focused on a subspecialty topic that the applicant may choose (spine, tumor, vascular, trauma/critical care, functional, pediatric or a second general session)
- One focused on an evaluation of the applicant's own cases. At present, each applicant submits 150 consecutive cases as part of their credentialing process. From this pool, the ABNS will select 10 cases for possible discussion, five or six of which may be discussed. The purpose of this session is for the applicant to take the examiners through his or her case management process with a focus on knowledge, management and safety.

Candidates who pass the oral examination become Certified Diplomates of the ABNS.

Richard G. Ellenbogen, MD, FAANS

Professor and Chair

Department of Neurological Surgery

Director, UW Medicine

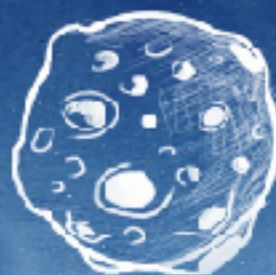
Neuroscience Institute

Director, ABNS

President, American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ASPN)



# Reaching New Heights



46th Annual Meeting of  
the AANS|CNS Section on

**Pediatric**  
Neurological Surgery

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Nov. 28–Dec. 1, 2017  
Hilton Americas, Houston