

# Washington State Orthopaedic Association Newsletter

February 2010

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## **WSOA Leadership**

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**Tom Degan MD**  
Director

**Michael Thorpe, MD**  
Director

**Doug Musgrave, MD**  
Director

**Ash Patel, MD**  
Director

**Robert Winqvist, MD**  
Director

## **Message from the Board**

### **The Orthopedic Brotherhood**

We as orthopedic surgeons are bound together by our devotion to our patients and profession. Our patients' welfare and our profession are compromised by external forces which displace us from being the primary decision makers clinically and professionally. Some of these forces are legislative in nature, to which the AAOS and WSOA work diligently to help shape. Other forces come from the free market, to which we as individuals must respond thoughtfully and responsibly for the sake of our patients and profession.

Anecdotal evidence suggests increasing numbers of employed orthopedic surgeons (although the 2008 AAOS census data show 68.7% of orthopedic surgeons remain in private practice).<sup>1</sup> Regardless of whether we are in solo private practice, group private practice, academic practice, or employed by a multi-specialty clinic or hospital, we as orthopedic surgeons must all recognize our inter-dependence. At the heart of our profession is the private practice orthopedic surgeon. His or her ability to successfully advance the practice of orthopedic surgery in the free market favorably affects our incomes, lifestyles, autonomy, and ability to care for patients. The perceived increased numbers of orthopedic surgeons in employed arrangements, with the associated relegation of autonomy, inherent slow decline in salary, and loss of professional authority, is a cause of concern for many amongst our ranks. Whether this increased interest in being employed represents a "mini-boom", or "bubble" waiting to be popped, remains unknown. Regardless, the employed orthopedic surgeon trend, if taken too far, is a potential threat to our profession.

Each of us must recognize that our professional satisfaction is dependent upon the success of our orthopedic colleagues. We must all advocate on behalf of each other, even when a specific issue does not affect us or our individual practice directly. We cannot be fooled into focusing on short-term, self-defeating competitive issues brought to bear by administrators or employers. We must remain steadfast in our concern for the long term success and growth of our profession, as well as the importance of the private practice physician in defending our role as decision maker for the sake of our patients and future generations. For it is without a doubt that your orthopedic colleague (and possibly "competitor") is more vested in your long term success and professional satisfaction than any employer, hospital administrator, or multi-specialty clinic CEO. Let us not lose sight of the bonds that bind us as we approach these uncertain times.

Douglas S. Musgrave, MD

1. Orthopaedic Practice and Medical Incomes in the U.S. 2008 published by the AAOS Department of Research and Scientific Affairs, June, 2009.

**WSOA Board Meeting Minutes**  
[June 2009](#)  
[May 2009](#)  
[April 2009](#)  
[March 2009](#)

### Residents

Did you know your WSOA membership is complimentary?

[Join today!](#)

You'll receive complimentary registration to all WSOA CME/Annual meetings.

Call our office for more information 206-956-3642

### Past WSOA Newsletters

[June 2009](#)  
[July 2009](#)  
[August 2009](#)  
[September 2009](#)  
[October 2009](#)  
[November 2009](#)  
[December 2009](#)  
[January 2010](#)

### WSOA Offices

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## Haiti Update

The WSOA has collected \$6000 in donations from WSOA members, on behalf of SIGN. Thank you to all of you who have contributed via the WSOA and directly to other charities.

Dr. Lyle Sorensen from Virginia Mason is in Haiti. You can follow him via Twitter by following this link <http://twitter.com/sorensenlyle>

## AAOS Haiti update: Patient movement system to continue

A decision has been made to continue for the time being the functions of the Medical Review Board in Haiti and the associated Department of Defense/National Disaster Medical Service (NDMS) patient movement program. This system has been active for the past two weeks and helped move Haitians with life-threatening injuries to the United States. Further updates will be provided as decisions are reached.

Shriners Hospitals for Children have developed a policy for assisting Haitian children who have significant orthopaedic, burn, or spinal cord injuries. The following are key points of the policy:

- All requests for care in any Shriners Hospital should be channeled through the office of the Vice President - Medical Affairs.
- The Vice President and his staff will review the requests and ensure that they are appropriate for treatment in a Shriners Hospital.
- Depending on the circumstances and the availability of transportation, the most appropriate hospital will be identified.
- Contact from Shriners will be made with the hospital to coordinate the logistics associated with the acceptance of the patient.

According to the Wall Street Journal, a study by the Inter-American Development Bank has determined that, by some measures, the earthquake in Haiti was the most destructive natural disaster that a single country has experienced and may have caused as much as \$13.2 billion in damage. The quake also killed an estimated 200,000 to 250,000 people, and left more than 1 million people homeless.

[Read more...](#)

## Renew Your 2010 Membership Dues Online

Simply login to [www.wsoa.org](http://www.wsoa.org) and pay your 2010 Membership dues conveniently and securely.

## AAOS News

### South Carolina Orthopaedic Association: Workers Compensation Update

The South Carolina Orthopaedic Association (SCOA) has been embroiled in a battle to prevent significant reductions in surgical reimbursement in the Workers Compensation program. The Medical Services Physician Manual (fee schedule) in South Carolina has not been amended since 2003. Earlier this summer the Commission began public hearings on amending the manual. In September the staff released a proposal to simply adopt the 2009 Relative Value Units as

published by CMS and apply a \$52 Conversion Factor for all medical services. The net result for all procedures was a positive 3%. In digging deeper, however, the SCOA discovered this actually resulted in a 10% reduction in surgical fees while all other medical services received significant increases. The SCOA has made a formal proposal to the Commission to adopt a separate \$60 Conversion Factor for surgical services, with the rest of the services maintaining a \$52 Conversion Factor. The Workers Compensation Commission is scheduled to have a work session and a hearing next week to make a final decision on the proposals before them. The vast majority of the states across the nation apply a higher conversion factor or fee schedule for surgical services in comparison to all other medical services. We are hopeful that South Carolina will make the same decision in the coming weeks.

## **WSOA 2010 Annual Meeting**

### **"Save the Date"**

The 2010 WSOA Annual Meeting will be held Nov. 19-20 at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue, with Grand Rounds and a cocktail reception on Friday, followed by an all day conference on Saturday. This meeting is complimentary to all WSOA members. You may register on line at [www.wsoa.org](http://www.wsoa.org) or call our office at 206-956-3642. The WSOA meetings are growing with each year! Don't forget to reserve your seat!

**Exhibitor and Sponsors needed!** Please feel free to forward contact information of those you feel might be interested in exhibiting or sponsoring our 2010 Annual meeting to our office at 206-956-3642 or send to Darla White at [ddw@wsma.org](mailto:ddw@wsma.org)

## **Supplier Sponsorships**

As an ongoing effort to offer our members value added benefits, the WSOA is in the process of creating an on-line directory of medical suppliers. We will also be offering sponsorship opportunities in our monthly newsletter. Each monthly sponsor will receive article space to draw attention to their goods or services. Please feel free to pass this information on to suppliers you think might have an interest in this opportunity. For information contact Darla White at 206-956-3642 or email at [ddw@wsma.org](mailto:ddw@wsma.org)

## **Update Your Contact Information**

The WSOA feels it is critical to be able to keep its members up to date on important issues affecting your practice and patient care. Please be sure your contact information is current with our office. You may email contact information updates to Darla White, WSOA Association Executive at [ddw@WSMA.org](mailto:ddw@WSMA.org).

## **In Memoriam**

Dr. Jay B. Williams of Mercer Island passed away on February 11. He was an Orthopaedic Spine Surgeon for Proliance.

## **Physicians Assistants Join WSOA today!**

The WSOA Board of Directors has approved the membership of physician assistants in the WSOA. Please encourage your PA staff members to join. Go to [www.wsoa.org](http://www.wsoa.org) and download the application. Fax completed applications to 206-441-5863 or mail to WSOA, 2033 6th

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