

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES



LAUREATE OF THE
AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

BERNARD BECKER, MD. The Laureate Recognition Award honors physicians who have made the most significant contributions to ophthalmology leading to the prevention of blindness and restoration of sight worldwide.



What's Happening

This Year's Laureate: Dr. Becker

The board of trustees of the Academy is proud to announce the selection of Bernard Becker, MD, as the recipient of the Laureate Recognition Award for 2009. Dr. Becker is renowned as a pioneer in ophthalmic research, clinical care, education and leadership, and is widely respected as an expert on IOP regulation and neuroprotection of the optic nerve.

Dr. Becker chaired the department of ophthalmology and visual sciences at the Washington Univer-

sity School of Medicine from 1953 to 1988. During that time, the department became internationally known both for exceptional research and for teaching. Many residents who trained with Dr. Becker now serve as department heads or hold other prominent positions in academic ophthalmology throughout the country.

In recognition of Dr. Becker's contributions to ophthalmology, the Academy acknowledges the debt owed him for his commitment to teaching and education, enabling many of his students to leave their mark on the profession.

EyeCare America Takes Home Several Awards

For nearly 25 years, Academy members have answered

the call to public service by volunteering with EyeCare America (ECA), the public service program of the Academy's Foundation. Each year, ECA volunteer ophthalmologists help tens of thousands of individuals receive sight-saving care.

In recognition of this service, the Obama Administration has awarded the program with two prestigious honors.

Richard P. Mills, MD, MPH, received the **Call to Service Award** for his ongoing and pivotal involvement with ECA. Dr. Mills is one of the program's original founders and is currently chairman of the ECA Steering Committee and an advisory board member of the Academy's Foundation.

Also, the entire ECA team of staff and volunteers received the **Presidential Volunteer Service Award** for the more than 1,000 hours of physician service provided in 2008.

In addition, the American Society of Association Executives will honor ECA's Seniors EyeCare Program with its **2009 Award of Excellence** later this year. The award recognizes organizations that improve the quality of life with innovative programs in education and community service.

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ENSURING SECURITY: New federal regulations are in place to prevent breaches of patient health information.

If you would like to volunteer with EyeCare America, contact Joanne Neuman at 415-447-0356 or jneuman@aao.org, or visit www.eyecareamerica.org.

Join the Vision 2020/ USA Team

Vision 2020/USA held its inaugural meeting in Bethesda, Md., this April. As a founding member, the Academy joined more than 20 organizations committed to working together to further the cause of blindness prevention in the United States and around the world.

Vision 2020/USA is part of Vision 2020: the Right to Sight, a program of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness,



RECOGNITION FOR SERVICE. B. Thomas Hutchinson, MD (right), chairman of the Academy Foundation's advisory board, presented Dr. Mills with President Obama's Call to Service Award in San Francisco this June.

which aims to eliminate blindness throughout the world by the year 2020.

"Our message is clear—preventing blindness and low vision makes sense emotionally as well as economically," said Louis D. Pizzarello, MD, chairman of the new organization. Already, similar national bodies have been established in 10 countries, including Australia, India and Brazil. "Our challenge is to show that we can do as good a job as—if not a better job than—our colleagues in these other countries," Dr. Pizzarello said.

All organizations involved in blindness prevention are welcome to join. Vision 2020/USA's next major event will take place in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 8 during World Sight Day.

For more information, e-mail vision2020.usa@gmail.com.

For the Record

Proposed Amendments to the 2009 Bylaws and Procedural Rules

The American Academy of Ophthalmology board of trustees recommends the following proposed amendments to the Academy Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Procedural Rules for consideration and adoption by voting fellows and members via official mail ballot to be forwarded to the voting fellows and members after the **Annual Business Meeting on Sunday, Oct. 25**, at the Moscone Center in San Francisco.

New language is underlined, and deleted words and phrases are indicated by ~~strike through~~. Only the affected portions of the cur-

rent documents are printed below.

An explanation of the nature or reasons for the proposed changes precedes the segment.

Board of Trustees Statement: *Modifying the definition of Associate members and removing the "not an ophthalmologist" language will give the Membership Advisory Committee more latitude to make decisions on Associate member applications on a case-by-case basis.*

BYLAWS

Article I. Membership

1.11. Associate Members. A person who holds a degree of Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Osteopathy, or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or Doctor of Philosophy in science, and who is not an ophthalmologist but is engaged in a field allied with or in a basic science related to ophthalmology, or a person who, in the judgment of the Board of Trustees, has made significant contributions to ophthalmology or engaged in full-time research in a science related to ophthalmology, shall be eligible for nomination to receive an invitation for membership as an Associate Member. A person thought to be an eligible candidate for invitation may be nominated by two (2) Active or Life Fellows or Members, on the form prescribed by the Board of Trustees. If the Board of Trustees, in its sole discretion, determines that the candidate should be invited for membership as an Associate Member, an acceptance form prescribed by the Board of Trustees shall be furnished to the

candidate. A certification attesting to the person's continued satisfaction of all the requirements for eligibility for nomination to membership in that class shall be required annually.

Board of Trustees Statement: *It is recommended that the Academy Bylaws regarding the term of the editor be amended to allow the Academy to retain a strong and talented editor for up to 12 years.*

BYLAWS

Article IV. Officers

4.02. Terms of Office.

(e) The Editor shall serve as an Appointed Officer for ~~one (1) full term of one (1) year, or until a successor is appointed, and shall be eligible for re-appointment to the same Office by the Board of Trustees for additional, successive terms of one (1) year each, with a maximum of eight (8) terms of four (4) years each.~~ any person who has served as Editor for one or more terms of one year may be appointed for one or more four (4) year terms, provided that his or her total service as Editor does not exceed twelve (12) years.

Board Approves Policy Revisions

The Academy board of trustees has voted to approve revisions to two policy statements—*Definition of Primary Eye Care and Guidelines for Appropriate Referral of Persons With Possible Eye Diseases or Injury*.

To read these policies and others, visit www.aao.org/about and click "Policy Statements."

WASHINGTON REPORT

Health Information Security to Impact Practices

With the growing push for physicians to move to electronic formats for all of their patient data, the threat of security breaches of personal health information (PHI) is becoming ever-more present. To deal with the issue, the federal government is instituting two new regulations: Federal Trade Commission (FTC) red-flag rules and data-breach notification requirements for HIPAA-covered entities and their business associates.

RED-FLAG RULES. Red-flag rules require entities (including physician practices) to develop and implement programs to detect, prevent and mitigate patient identity theft. The goal is to ensure that physicians are on the lookout for the signs that someone is using a false or stolen identity to receive services without paying or by leaving someone else responsible. The FTC

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determined that any entity that extends credit to “covered accounts” must comply. If you defer payments and bill patients or insurers at a later date, you fall under these rules. Red-flag rules will go into effect on Nov. 1.

Possible red flags can be identified through consumer reporting agency alerts or warnings, as well as by the presence of suspicious documents and/or identifying information.

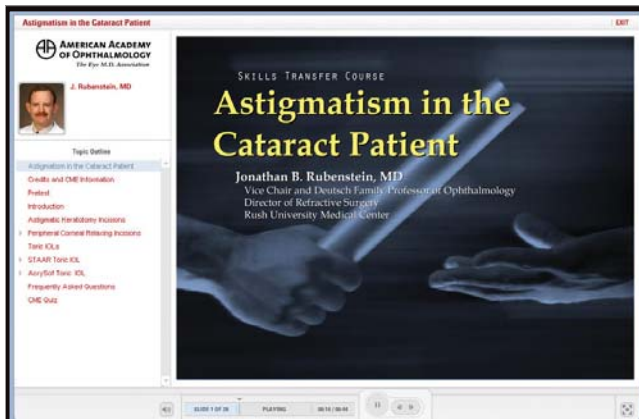
To comply with the new regulation, practices must institute policies on:

- patient-identity verification,
- address authentication and change confirmation, and
- identity-theft education and awareness.

Practices must also gather documentation if an incident occurs and determine where to report an incident. For more information, visit www.aa.org/advocacy/red_flags.cfm.

DATA BREACH NOTIFICATION. As of Sept. 15, the American Recovery and Re-Investment Act of 2009 will impose data-breach notification requirements for HIPAA-covered entities and their business associates. A breach occurs when there is unauthorized access, use or disclosure of either electronic or hard-copy PHI that compromises its security or privacy. When a breach occurs, notice must be provided to patients no later than 60 days after discovery. The media and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) must be notified if the PHI of more than 500 individuals has been breached. Business associates such as couriers and billing companies are also covered under this rule and must notify your practice if a PHI breach related to your practice occurs.

For more information on technologies that render PHI secure, visit the HHS Web site (www.hhs.gov). For more information on the proper destruction of PHI, visit the National Institute of Standards and Technology Web site (www.nist.gov).



ONLINE SKILLS TRANSFER COURSE. Learn how to plan and perform the techniques necessary to control postcataract astigmatism with *Astigmatism in the Cataract Patient*, the new online skills transfer course on the Ophthalmic News and Education (O.N.E.) Network. Adapted from the popular Annual Meeting program of the same title, this multimedia course covers intraoperative limbal-relaxing incisions, the use of toric IOLs and more. It also includes video from the Annual Meeting Instruction Course and wet lab as well as answers to frequently asked questions.

To get started, visit the O.N.E.'s Educational Content section at www.aa.org/one.

FYI

Benchmarking Survey Results Now Available

Nearly 200 practices submitted 2008 fiscal-year data for the Academy/AAOE benchmarking survey. A summary of findings is available to members at www.aa.org/benchmarking. 2009 fiscal-year data collection will begin in February 2010.

Ask the Ethicist:
Expert Witness
Qualifications

Q: A plaintiff's attorney has asked if I would serve as an expert witness in a case concerning macular hole surgery. I am a cornea specialist but would like to help if I can. Is this ethical?

A: Be very careful before

accepting this invitation. There's much for you to consider before you decide to serve as an expert witness.

In malpractice litigation, the courts rely on medical experts to establish the relevant standard of care and to determine whether a defendant physician fell below this standard (i.e., was negligent) in care of the plaintiff. The expert may also be asked to render opinions regarding causality between negligent acts and the plaintiff's injury, as well as the extent of that injury. This position demands extraordinary responsibility and requires not only scrupulous honesty and objectivity, but also true expertise in what may become a very detailed analysis of facts and circumstances.

As a cornea specialist, you may find that it's not sufficient to simply assert your knowledge about

Members At Large

macular hole surgery. You should be prepared to present credentials sufficient to convince the court of true expertise by reason of knowledge, experience, training or education.

If you are not sufficiently qualified to discuss the anticipated details, there are several potential pitfalls. First, the opposing counsel may challenge your testimony as inadmissible and your participation may be denied. Second, even if you are allowed to testify, you may be vulnerable to attack on cross examination. Third, you will be subject in court to peer scrutiny of your testimony for 1) accuracy in using medical knowledge to form expert opinions and 2) objectivity and freedom from bias. Under Rule 16 of the Code of Ethics, false, deceptive or misleading testimony is unethical. Last, in some states, inappropriate expert testimony may be grounds for discipline by the board of medicine.

For these reasons, a careful assessment of one's qualifications to testify in a particular case should be the foremost consideration in a decision to accept or decline the invitation to serve as an expert.

For more information about expert witness qualifications, visit www.aaopt.org/about and click "Ethics." To submit a question for this column, e-mail it to ethics@aaopt.org.

Visit the Academy Here and Abroad

The Academy will exhibit at two upcoming ophthalmology meetings.

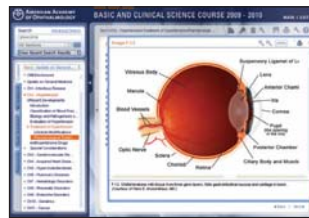
Be sure to stop by the booth and browse the latest

Academy products, learn about membership and get information on the Joint Meeting.

- Sept. 12–16: European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons, Barcelona, Booth #G8.
- Sept. 30–Oct. 4: American Society of Retina Specialists, New York City, Booth #237.

For more information, visit www.aaopt.org/aaopt-exhibits.

Academy Store



Check Out the New BCSC Online Research Edition

The new *Basic and Clinical Science Course Online Research Edition* (#0287-1009M) provides full BCSC content that can be accessed by multiple users at the same time. Featuring concurrent seat licensing, it is ideally suited for research libraries, clinics, hospitals and institutions.

This edition features more than 5,000 pages and 3,000 full-color images, enhanced search capabilities and reference links to the PubMed database. Pricing

is dependent on the number of users.

For more information, visit www.aaopt.org/bcsc-research.

Members At Large

People

The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology has awarded Jayakrishna Ambati, MD, with the 2010 Cogan Award. It is presented annually to one individual younger than 40 years of age who has made worthwhile contributions to research in ophthalmology or visual science that are directly related to disorders of the human eye



AT HOME IN THE WATER AND THE OR. Kent W. Small, MD (right), medaled in the 200-yd butterfly during the Masters National Swim Meet this May in Fresno, Calif. Dr. Small is president of the Macula and Retina Institute, a private practice in Los Angeles.

or visual system, and who shows substantial promise for the future.

"This award recognizes the important contributions that the talented young scientists in my research group have made in advancing the understanding of how macular degeneration develops and how it can be better diagnosed and treated," Dr. Ambati said.

The award ceremony is scheduled for the ARVO annual meeting in May 2010. Dr. Ambati is professor and vice chairman of ophthalmology and visual sciences at the University of Kentucky.

Who's in the News

Forbes magazine quoted Ravi D. Goel, MD, for a June 15 story on President Obama's discussion of health care reform during the annual meeting of the American Medical Association. "I thought the president hit a home run. He came to the house of medicine and had a frank discussion," said Dr. Goel. "The public plan does alarm people, but he sees it as a public option, not single payer."



DR. GOEL. Interviewed by *Forbes* magazine for a story on health care reform.

Academy Store

To order products from the Academy Store, visit www.aaopt.org/store or phone the Academy Service Center at 866-561-8558 (toll-free in the United States) or 415-561-8540.