

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dr. Chiang to Take the Helm at NEI

The National Institutes of Health announced the appointment of **Michael F. Chiang, MD**, as director of the National Eye Institute (NEI). He is expected to begin his new role in late 2020.

Formerly on the Academy Board of Trustees (2016-2019), Dr. Chiang has been an active member of the Academy. He currently serves on the IRIS Registry Executive Committee and is chair of the IRIS Registry Data Analytics Committee; he is a program director for 2020 Pediatric Ophthalmology Subspecialty Day; he also serves on the editorial boards for *Ophthalmology* and *EyeNet*. He previously chaired the Medical Information Technology Committee.

At Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in Portland, he is Knowles Professor of Ophthalmology & Medical Informatics and Clinical Epidemiology and associate director of the OHSU Casey Eye Institute. His clinical practice focuses on pediatric ophthalmology and adult strabismus.

As NEI director, Dr. Chiang will manage an annual budget of nearly \$824 million, including 1,600 research grants and training awards that will primarily support vision research.



NEI DIRECTOR. Dr. Chiang, a former Academy Board Trustee-at-Large, has been appointed director of the NEI.

"The position of NEI director is one of the most important in ophthalmology," Academy CEO **David W. Parke II, MD**, said. "It oversees and sets the agenda for the most substantive vision research portfolio in America. Mike Chiang brings a remarkable interest and expertise at a critical time in biomedical informatics, artificial intelligence, telehealth, and big data population research. Equally important, he has rich experience as a practicing clinician with the interface between investigation and patient care. Our profession and our patients will benefit tremendously from his appointment."

Dr. Chiang's own research involves telemedicine and artificial intelligence for diagnosis of retinopathy of prematurity and other ophthalmic diseases, as well as implementation and evaluation of electronic

health record systems, modeling of clinical workflow, and data analytics. He has been a principal investigator on multiple NIH grants since 2003, and his research group has published more than 200 peer-reviewed papers.

Over the years, Dr. Chiang has mentored more than 50 postdoctoral fellows, medical students, and graduate students. He codirects both an OHSU-wide vision science training program for predoctoral and postdoctoral students and a mentored clinician-scientist program in ophthalmology, both of which receive funding from the NIH.

Dr. Chiang earned his bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering and biology from Stanford University; his master's degree in biomedical informatics from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; and his MD and master's degree in medical science from Harvard Medical School and Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

Dr. Blankenship, Past President of the Academy, Dies at 79

George W. Blankenship, MD, died on Sunday, July 26, due to complications of COVID-19. An Academy member since 1973, Dr. Blankenship was a Life Fellow and served as Academy president in 2001. He was active on several Academy committees throughout his prestigious career, serving on the Diabetic Retinopathy



Dr. Blankenship



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Outcomes Task Force, the Membership Advisory Committee, and the EyeCare America Diabetes Eyecare Program Committee. During his career he was a member of the faculty of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami and then chair of the department of ophthalmology at Penn State University in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He was awarded the Academy's Senior Achievement Award in 1994.

EyeWiki Contest: Read the Eight Winning Articles

EyeWiki is the Academy's collaborative online encyclopedia where physicians, patients, and the public can view content written by ophthalmologists covering the spectrum of eye disease, diagnosis, and treatment. Each year EyeWiki hosts two writing contests. One is for U.S. residents and fellows, and the other is for ophthalmologists outside the United States.

In August, winners of the 2020 International Ophthalmologists contest were announced.

- Koushik Tripathy, MD, FRCS, FICO, Kolkata, India: *Pupil Expansion Devices and Mechanical Stretching of the Pupil*
- Tiago Morais-Sarmento, MD, Évora, Portugal: *Vitreous Wick Syndrome*
- Ana I.M. Miguel, MD, FEBO, PhD, Avranches, France: *Deep Sclerectomy*
- Sahil Agrawal, MBBS, MD, FICO, New Delhi, India: *Eyelid Reconstruction*

These authors won free access to selected Academy online products.

Earlier this year, winners of the 2019 Residents and Fellows contest were announced.

- Travis Peck, MD, Wills Eye Hospital: *Refractive Error After Cataract Surgery*
- Minh T. Nguyen, MD, University of Washington: *Ocular Surface Disease in Patients With Glaucoma*
- Ahmadreza Moradi, MD, California Pacific Medical Center: *Frontalis Suspension Procedure*
- Ivy Zhu, MD, University of Illinois: *Ebola Virus*

These authors won free trips to the Academy's Mid-Year Forum in Washington, D.C.

Next contest deadlines. For a chance to win a trip to the Mid-Year Forum, U.S. residents and fellows must

submit an article by Dec. 1. International ophthalmologists must submit an article by June 1, 2021, for a chance to win online Academy products.

To read the winning articles and submit to either contest, visit aao.org/eyewiki.

TAKE NOTICE

Life Achievement Honor Award Recipients

Individuals who have cumulatively earned 60 points and have made significant contributions to ophthalmology, as determined by the Academy's Awards Committee, were nominated to receive this award.

George B. Bartley, MD
Peter A. Campochiaro, MD
Peter C. Donshik, MD
Henry D. Jampel, MD, MHS
David C. Musch, PhD
Dan Z. Reinstein, MD
Richard B. Rosen, MD
Kazuo Tsubota, MD
Matthew W. Wilson, MD

More online. See a list of Senior Achievement, Achievement, and Secretariat Award recipients posted with this article at aao.org/eyenet.

Urgent MIPS Notice—Get Started on Your 90-Day Performance Periods

Under the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), you will be evaluated on up to four performance categories. Two of these—promoting interoperability and improvement activities—have a performance period that must be at least 90 consecutive days and that must be completed no later than Dec. 31, 2020. (For the other two performance categories—quality and cost—the performance period is the full calendar year.)

How to start. Visit aao.org/medicare for detailed descriptions of the promoting interoperability measures and the 62 improvement activities that are most relevant to ophthalmology. You can also visit aao.org/eyenet/mips-manual-2020 for at-a-glance lists that link to those detailed descriptions.

Don't delay. Do not wait until the last moment (Oct. 3) to start per-

forming improvement activities and promoting interoperability measures. An earlier start will provide you with some leeway if you run into difficulty with your MIPS procedures. Once you have completed your performance period, you can use the IRIS Registry web portal to manually attest to your performance. Note: The performance period for promoting interoperability does not have to start on the same day as the performance period for improvement activities.

What about COVID-19? For the latest information on the "extreme and uncontrollable" circumstances exception, see aao.org/medicare/resources/MIPS-extreme-hardship-exceptions.

Write EyeSmart Articles for the Public

Are you passionate about educating the public about eye health? EyeSmart is a physician-reviewed resource for information about eye diseases, treatments, eye health news, and tips for a lifetime of good eyesight, and the Academy needs your help to bring this valuable content to the public.

Volunteer to author EyeSmart articles for the public. You'll work with Academy staff to choose a topic and write an article for the public, to be published in the EyeSmart section of the Academy's website. Authors are credited on the article, with a link to their Academy biography.

To get started, head to aao.org/write-eyesmart.

Ask the Ethicist: Patient's Gift to Ophthalmic Technician

Q: A patient from out of town thanked one of my technicians for going above and beyond in helping him during his recent emergency by giving her a large cash tip. My technician at first said no, but the patient pressed the issue and would not take no for an answer. Was it ethical to accept the gift? What have others done in this situation?

A: The medical literature is sparse on the question of gifts from patients to staff. The best literature we found on this subject indicates that acceptance

should be on a case-by-case basis and not related to:

- patient expectations of future preferential treatment
- gifts of a personal nature
- extravagant gifts
- timing related to future care

None of these issues seem relevant to the circumstances you described. Based on the description, the patient appeared to be truly grateful and it gave him pleasure to reward your technician. It doesn't appear that there is any reason to take any action about this gift except to thank the technician for being a good ambassador for your practice.

To read the Code of Ethics, visit aao.org/ethics-detail/code-of-ethics.

To submit a question, reach out to the Ethics Committee at ethics@aao.org.

OMIC Tip: Dangers Posed by Systemic Medications

Ophthalmologists examine many patients who are taking systemic medications that can cause ocular toxicity and a temporary decrease in visual acuity or, at worst, irreversible blindness. Ophthalmologists may be the first clinicians to note adverse effects, or they may be asked to monitor for them. An issue of the *OMIC Digest* reviews closed claims involving hydroxychloroquine, ethambutol, gentamicin, and amiodarone, and it suggests risk reduction strategies for ophthalmic practices to implement: omic.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Digest-No-1-2019-FN.pdf.

OMIC offers professional liability insurance exclusively to Academy members, their employees, and their practices.

ACADEMY RESOURCES

International Retina Journal Club Webinar With APVRS

The Academy is now hosting a virtual international journal club to discuss important retina papers.

The next webinar, developed by the Academy working in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Vitreoretinal Society, will take place Oct. 13 at 8:00 p.m., U.S. Eastern Time. Moderators Christopher R. Henry, MD, and Andrew A. Chang, MBBS, MD, will discuss three papers

D.C. REPORT

One Ophthalmologist on the Nov. 3 Ballot, Another Falls Just Short

Academy member and Iowa State Senator Mariannette J. Miller-Meeks, MD, is the Republican nominee for Iowa's 2nd congressional district, while the race of Academy Board Trustee-at-Large and Air Force veteran William S. Clifford, MD, ended at the primary.

A win in Iowa. Earning 47.7% of the vote, Dr. Miller-Meeks won the June 2 Republican primary for Iowa's open 2nd District seat in the House of Representatives. In 2008, 2010, and 2014, Dr. Miller-Meeks ran unsuccessfully against Rep. David Loebsack, the incumbent, who is retiring this year. She rebounded from those losses, winning a state senate seat in 2018 by running as an avowed advocate for patient-centered health care. She highlighted her background in eye care during discussions with voters in her district. She previously served as head of Iowa's state health department.

Dr. Miller-Meeks would provide an immediate, valuable medical perspective for health care issues facing Congress. As a leader in the Iowa state senate, she was instrumental in stopping legislation that would have expanded the optometric surgical scope. She will face Democratic nominee Rita Hart on the ballot in the general election Nov. 3. Learn more at her website (millermeeks2020.com).

A loss in Kansas. She's not the only Academy member who sought a congressional seat in 2020. In the Aug. 4 Republican primary for Kansas' open 1st District seat, Dr. Clifford came second to the state's former Lieutenant Governor, Tracey Mann.

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with authors Dennis S. C. Lam, MD, Paisan Ruamviboonsuk, MD, and Timothy Y Lai, MD, FRCOphth, FRCS.

Register at aao.org/clinical-webinars.

Use IRIS Registry to Create MOC Improvement Project

If you have an electronic health record (EHR) system and have integrated it with the IRIS Registry, you can use data from your IRIS Registry dashboard to implement an improvement project that can earn you credit for Maintenance of Certification (MOC).

How to get MOC credit. Using the IRIS Registry dashboard, select one or two quality measures in which to improve your performance. Then, set goals for those measures, make a plan for achieving those goals, and submit that plan to the American Board of Ophthalmology (ABO). If the ABO approves your plan, implement it for 90-120 days. Use the IRIS Registry

dashboard to track your progress, and fine-tune your processes as needed. Once the project is complete, review its effectiveness and send a summary to the ABO.

There was an Aug. 31 deadline for creating new MIPS projects. If you also wanted your new improvement project to get credit for the improvement activities performance category of the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), you had to submit it for approval by Aug. 31. However, there are two preapproved improvement projects that you can use, one involving tobacco counseling and a glaucoma-based project that involves closing the referral loop.

Learn more at <https://abop.org/iris>, where you can click "preapproved template" to learn about the two pre-approved projects. You also can see the IRIS Registry's guidance at aao.org/iris-registry/maintenance-of-certification.