

# Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### State Societies Honored

On Nov. 13 during AAO 2017, the Academy's Secretariat for State Affairs recognized 2 societies with its 2017 Star Award. The Star Award program provides special recognition to state ophthalmology societies for outstanding efforts on programs or projects they have implemented in the previous year. The winning societies are as follows.

**North Carolina Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (NCSEPS)**—for its Ocular Melanoma Cluster Response project, which focused on investigating and increasing patient awareness about an increased rate of diagnosis of ocular melanoma among younger people in the Huntersville, North Carolina area. With other health care organizations, NCSEPS encouraged citizens to get eye examinations to screen for ocular melanoma and other eye diseases.

**Virginia Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (VSEPS)**—for its Protecting Patients' Access to Emerging Technologies effort, which worked to pass legislation that protects physicians' right to evaluate and adopt new technologies that may improve patient care.

To date, the Secretariat for State Affairs has recognized 64 state ophthalmology society programs and projects with the Star Award. State ophthalmol-



**STAR AWARDS.** From left to right: Alan L. Wagner, MD, FACS, (VSEPS Past President), Michael R. Keverline, MD (VSEPS Membership Chair), Anthony J. Viti, MD (VSEPS President-Elect and Academy Councilor for Virginia), Geoffrey G. Cooper, MD, FACS (VSEPS Past President), and Kurt F. Heitman, MD (Academy Secretary for State Affairs).

ogy societies may apply for this award by responding to the Secretariat for State Affairs' annual organizational survey of state societies.

### State Societies' Outstanding Executive Directors

Each year, the Academy Secretariat for State Affairs publicly acknowledges state ophthalmology society executive directors for their outstanding contributions to their state societies and for their partnership and collaboration with the Academy on its national efforts. During AAO 2017 in New Orleans, the Secretariat recognized executive staff of 2 state ophthalmology societies for their work.

**2017 Outstanding Executive Director: Organizational Development**—Debra Alderman, Executive Director, Washington Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons ([www.waeps.org](http://www.waeps.org)).

**2017 Outstanding Executive Director: Political Action**—Alan Skipper, Executive Director, North Carolina

Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons ([www.nceyemed.org](http://www.nceyemed.org)).

The Academy Secretary for State Affairs, Kurt F. Heitman, MD, applauded the dedication and professionalism of all executive directors on behalf of state societies and ophthalmologists across the country. "State society executive directors are crucial members of ophthalmology's team, and we in State Affairs value their expertise and their commitment to preserving quality eye care in their states."

## TAKE NOTICE

### Nominate a Colleague for the Laureate Award

The Academy is accepting nominations through Jan. 31 for the 2018 Laureate Recognition Award. This award honors an outstanding ophthalmologist whose scientific contribution to the field has shaped modern ophthalmology.

To submit a nomination, visit [aao.org/about/awards/laureate#nominations](http://aao.org/about/awards/laureate#nominations).



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## Don't Miss the Jan. 15 Deadline for MIPS

If you are using the IRIS Registry to report the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), Jan. 15 is a key date on 2 counts.

**Finish manually entering your MIPS information by Jan. 15.** This deadline applies if you are using the IRIS Registry web portal to manually report quality measures, advancing care information (ACI) measures, or improvement activities. If you successfully integrated your electronic health record (EHR) system with the IRIS Registry, your MIPS quality data is automatically extracted from your EHRs, but you can only report ACI measures and improvement activities manually.

**Submit a signed data-release consent form for each provider by Jan. 15.** The IRIS Registry won't submit a provider's MIPS data to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) unless it has received the signed consent form by Jan 15. You must submit a new consent form each year and can do so via the IRIS Registry dashboard. For instructions, visit [aao.org/consent-form](http://aao.org/consent-form).

To learn more about the IRIS Registry and MIPS, visit [aao.org/iris-registry](http://aao.org/iris-registry) and [aao.org/medicare](http://aao.org/medicare).

## International Blindness Prevention Award

Established in 1992, the International Blindness Prevention Award is presented at the Academy's annual meeting to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the prevention of blindness or restoration of sight. The deadline for 2019 nominations is Feb. 20.

To submit a nomination, visit [aao.org/about/awards/blindness-prevention](http://aao.org/about/awards/blindness-prevention).

## Seeking Outstanding Ophthalmologists

Would you like to nominate a colleague for next year's Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award? The Academy must receive your nomination by March 16, 2018. This award recognizes Academy fellows and members for outstanding contributions to human-

itarian efforts, such as participation in charitable activities, care of the indigent, and community service. It acknowledges those who have performed above and beyond the normal duties of an ophthalmologist.

To obtain a nomination form, please contact Member Services by phone, 866-561-8558 (toll-free) or 415-561-8581; by fax, 415-561-8575; or by email, [member\\_services@aao.org](mailto:member_services@aao.org). You can also complete a nomination form at [aao.org/about/awards/humanitarian](http://aao.org/about/awards/humanitarian).

## Follow @AAOjournal for the Latest Academy Journal Articles

Stay up-to-date on research from *Ophthalmology* and *Ophthalmology Retina* via the @AAOjournal Twitter handle. New content is posted every day, including new articles in press, fascinating "Pictures and Perspectives," thought-provoking editorials, and new issue alerts.

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

### ACS Election

Sarwat Salim, MD, has been elected to the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), the largest organization of surgeons in the world with over 80,000 members. Dr. Salim said, "I am honored to represent ophthalmology and look forward to working with ACS leadership in raising the standards of surgical practice across the board through education, quality, advocacy, and health policy."



Dr. Salim

### LDP in Sri Lanka

Madhuwanthi Dissanayake, MBBS, MD, a graduate of the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology's (APAO) Leadership Development Program (LDP) and now president of the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka (COSL), presented LDP faculty and Academy past president Michael W. Brennan, MD, with "A Tribute" booklet. It highlights Dr. Dissanayake's



**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE WORLD.** Drs. Dissanayake and Brennan during the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology's (APAO) Leadership Development Program (LDP) master class session held Sept. 29 through Oct. 1 in Sri Lanka.

collection of poems in honor of teachers who were instrumental in steering her career, including a poem for the faculty at the APAO LDP. Dr. Dissanayake wrote that the APAO LDP was "a unique experience during a period of 2 years expanding into 3 countries. The journey started in Japan, was followed by the APAO LDP Masterclass in Vietnam, and then wound up in China." The Academy's 20th LDP class meets in San Francisco Jan. 12-14. The Academy continues to collaborate with its counterpart LDPs from the supranational societies, including APAO, European Society of Ophthalmology, Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology, and the African Council of Ophthalmology.

### OWL Awards

Ophthalmic World Leaders (OWL) is a U.S. not-for-profit organization dedicated to driving ophthalmic innovation and patient care by advancing diversity in leadership. On Nov. 12 during OWL's signature event at AAO 2017, OWL's president, Heather Ready, presented Cynthia Matossian, MD, FACS, with the Visionary Award. The OWL Awards are given to those who best exemplify OWL's core values and vision.

## Who's in the News

Brian Boxer Wachler, MD, was featured on Great Day Washington Morning Show (WUSA9) with hosts Chris Leary, Markette Sheppard, and Meaghan Mooney to discuss his new book, *Perceptual Intelligence: The Secret Behind Perception Revealed*. Via concrete examples and case studies, the book explains why senses do not always match reality and describes how we can influence the world through perceptions.

For more information, visit [www.perceptualintelligence.com](http://www.perceptualintelligence.com).

## ACADEMY STORE

### Jan. 10 Webinar on New Cataract Surgery Technologies

Join experts Sonia H. Yoo, MD, Eric D. Donnenfeld, MD, Douglas D. Koch, MD, Rachel A. Lieberman, MD, and Bruna V. Ventura, MD, on Jan. 10 for a live, interactive webinar that will expand your repertoire of techniques for achieving improved refractive outcomes. *New Technology in Cataract Surgery and Multifocal Implants* will deepen your understanding of both manual and femtosecond laser-assisted techniques for limbal-relaxing incisions and multifocal toric intraocular lenses (IOLs). Presenters will also share pearls in patient selection and surgical planning.

Visit [aao.org/store](http://aao.org/store) to sign up for the webinar or purchase the recording.

### Help Your Patients Remember What You Tell Them

Nearly half of American adults find it challenging to comprehend basic medical information, and many immediately forget the information and instructions provided by physicians. To save time, improve recall, and mitigate your risk, give your patients the Academy's easy-to-understand, ophthalmologist-reviewed brochures and handouts.

To order brochures, visit [aao.org/patientbrochures](http://aao.org/patientbrochures).

To subscribe to handouts, visit [aao.org/patienthandouts](http://aao.org/patienthandouts).

### Now Shipping: Ophthalmology's Leading Coding Tools

The Academy's complete suite of 2018

## D.C. REPORT

# Major Quality Program Changes and Stable Payments

The 2018 Medicare fee schedule will provide some relief for ophthalmologists. The policy, unveiled by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in November, adopts much of what it proposed in the summer of 2017, including several major Academy wins. Highlights of the CMS policy include the following:

- All proposed, retroactive changes to the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) have been finalized. This reduced the number of required quality measures physicians must report on. This change stemmed from the Academy spearheading a months-long regulatory relief campaign, and it is a significant win for ophthalmology.
- All proposed, retroactive changes to meaningful use were finalized.
- All changes to the value-based modifier, including a 50% cut in value-based modifier penalties, were finalized.
- There was a zero net change, overall, for ophthalmology during 2017—CMS generally spared us from major reductions.
- All revised work values proposed by the Academy and the AMA/Specialty Society RVS Update Committee were accepted.

**Changes to legacy quality programs stick.** CMS will adopt changes to legacy quality programs, including PQRS, meaningful use, and the value-based modifier. In doing so, the agency reduces the requirements on which you'll be scored. It will not, however, reopen PQRS submissions for 2016. The Academy devoted many hours to convincing CMS that these were necessary changes to the existing policy, as they provide significant relief for affected physicians.

**Slight uptick in physicians' conversion factor.** CMS increased the physician conversion factor to 35.99. This is an increase from 2017's 35.8887.

**CMS limits what the public will see on Physician Compare.** The Physician Compare website will not share your value-based modifier results. This is significant because the public lacks the necessary context to understand this program.

**No overall reduction in payments.** There are some reductions to the low-volume services. These stem from the time for these procedures, which has changed significantly over the years. Overall, though, payments for ophthalmic services will remain stable for 2018.

coding products are now available for shipping. These updated coding tools developed by coding experts ensure you're coding correctly so you can maximize your reimbursements and avoid audit triggers. Save 10% when you buy 4 or more.

Visit [aao.org/codingproducts](http://aao.org/codingproducts).

### Jan. 5 Webinar on 2018 Coding Updates

Make sure you're up to date by attending the 2018 Coding Update on Jan. 5. The 60-minute webinar will spotlight

the most significant coding and reimbursement changes impacting ophthalmology. If you can't attend, you can purchase a recording.

To register, visit [store.aao.org/webinar-2018-ophthalmology-coding-updates.html](http://store.aao.org/webinar-2018-ophthalmology-coding-updates.html).

### Codequest 2018 Is Coming to a City Near You

Get expert instruction from the recognized leader of ophthalmic coding programs at the Academy's Codequest 2018 course, a 4-hour course presented



with the ophthalmic state societies. Stay up-to-date on changing regulations, get strategies for maintaining compliance with federal and commercial payers' rules, and learn the latest tactics to maximize your reimbursements.

For a list of 2018's first 16 Code-quest events, see page 52.

To learn more and sign up, visit [aao.org/codequest](http://aao.org/codequest).

## FOR THE RECORD

### Nominations for the Academy Board

*By Cynthia A. Bradford, MD*

As past president of the Academy, it is my privilege to serve as chairman of the Academy's Nominating Committee in 2018. This committee represents a variety of interests within the Academy and is charged with identifying appropriate candidates for the open positions on the 2019 Board of Trustees.

We are interested in identifying leaders in our profession with experience in confronting the critical issues facing organized medicine and who reflect the strength and diversity of our members. The Academy's leaders should be knowledgeable, experienced, and prepared to devote the time and energy required by a large organization in these challenging times. This work is both demanding and rewarding for those interested in helping to assure the Academy's success and responsiveness to members. With these characteristics in mind, I ask you to assist the committee by suggesting appropriate candidates for the following positions in 2019:

**President-elect (to serve as president in 2020).** Nominees should have leadership experience within the Academy as well as demonstrated leadership qualities in clinical practice, in their own ophthalmic communities, and in other medical or ophthalmological organizations.

**Senior Secretary for Clinical Education (3-year term).** This senior secretary coordinates the programs and activities of the Academy's education division including curriculum development, online education, lifelong learn-

ing and assessment, and educational publications.

**Trustee-at-large (4-year term).** This individual should be an Academy Fellow who demonstrates strong leadership potential and would be able to represent and articulate the needs and concerns of the membership to the Academy board.

**International trustee-at-large (3-year term).** This individual should be an Academy International Fellow or Member who practices exclusively outside of the United States. He or she should have a strong affinity for the Academy and broad experience and understanding of his or her region. This individual should be able to represent and articulate to the Academy board the perspective of international members.

**Public trustee (a renewable 3-year appointment; an advisor to and member of the Board of Trustees).** The bylaws allow the board to appoint up to 3 public trustees. We currently are served by Paul B. Ginsburg, PhD. Public trustees provide insight on how ophthalmology can better work with the rest of medicine, the public, government, and industry. The nominating committee will be pleased to receive suggestions for individuals, who may include physicians from other medical specialties or leaders in industry, government, public policy, or advocacy.

Thank you for your interest and

participation in this process. Membership participation is vital, not only for the Academy but also for our collective goals of being able to provide appropriate, accessible, and affordable eye care to the public. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, I look forward to receiving your suggestions as we seek to identify our profession's future leaders.

**Send your confidential suggestions by Jan. 31** to Cynthia A. Bradford, MD; Nominating Committee Chair, American Academy of Ophthalmology, P.O. Box 7424, San Francisco, CA 94120-7424. Suggestions can also be e-mailed to [nominate@aao.org](mailto:nominate@aao.org) or faxed to 415-561-8526.

For more information, go to [aao.org/about/governance/board-nominations](http://aao.org/about/governance/board-nominations).

### Election Results

On Nov. 13, voting opened for 5 positions on the 2018 Board of Trustees. The results are as follows:

**President-Elect:** George A. Williams, MD

**Senior Secretary for Advocacy:** Daniel J. Briceland, MD

**Trustee-at-Large:** William S. Clifford, MD

**Chair, the Council:** Lynn K. Gordon, MD, PhD

**Vice Chair, the Council:** Sarwat Salim, MD, FACS

For more information about the elections, visit [aao.org/about/governance/elections](http://aao.org/about/governance/elections).

#### ABOUT THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Academy nominating process has been carefully crafted to be inclusive, fair, and efficient. This process encourages a broad base of nominations from the entire Academy membership. The Nominating Committee composition is delineated by the bylaws, and it considers a number of factors when screening potential candidates. These include integrity, ophthalmology leadership ability, special expertise, past committee and leadership experience and performance, and knowledge and interest in the multitude of issues currently facing ophthalmology. In addition to nominations from the current year, the committee reviews prior-year nominations to ensure a wide range of potential candidates for each position. Following months of confidential deliberations, the committee presents final recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval. This single-candidate method avoids the loss of valuable future leaders, as there are no public "losers" in the election. Often, those considered but not selected for an open position one year become the nominee of choice in a future year.