

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dr. Tuck Named Eye Health Hero Award Recipient

During the Global Welcome lunch at AAO 2018, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness presented Kenneth D. Tuck, MD, former Academy President, with the Eye Health Hero Award. Dr. Tuck was recognized for spearheading an international mentoring program when he was President.

Since its start in 2000, the Rotary Club Host Project has provided 122 young ophthalmologists from 57 developing countries the opportunity to experience the innovative educational programs and technology available at the Academy's annual meeting. Developed through the Academy's Host an Ophthalmologist Program and with the help of Rotary Clubs, Dr. Tuck has urged Rotarian ophthalmologists in the United States to host a young international ophthalmologist at their practice the week before the annual meeting. This allows guests time to acclimatize and see U.S. practices before attending the Academy's annual meeting, where they can access all courses, seminars, exhibits, and social events.

After stepping down as head of the Rotary Club Host Program last year, Dr. Tuck reflected, "We're building relationships and exposing these



EYE HEALTH HERO. Dr. Tuck with his rotary guest from Haiti, Regine Edouard, MD, and his wife, Sarah Tuck.

young doctors to other cultures and ways of practicing ophthalmology. I am so excited that we are building a global network of young leaders in ophthalmology who reach out and strengthen eye care in their own countries and, indeed, the world."

To learn more about the program and volunteering, visit aao.org/international/outreach/programs.

2018 Member Engagement Survey Results

The Academy relies on data to develop and enhance programs and services that are responsive and relevant to member needs. Direct feedback from members through surveys and focus groups allows us to both measure awareness and value of Academy member benefits and services and to determine the key drivers of member engagement and value perceptions.

Recently, the Academy enlisted Loyalty Research Center to conduct the 2018 Member Engagement Survey. Results are based on 1,165 responses collected from a representative sample of the Academy's membership.

U.S. practicing ophthalmologist members regard the Academy as an organization that offers year-round value, is forward-thinking, and understands their professional needs.

- 86% believe the Academy helps them to be better ophthalmologists.
- 90% see the Academy as the leading source for reliable ophthalmic information and education.
- 89% consider the Academy as the leading legislative and regulatory advocate for ophthalmologists.

Members say that the most critical issues affecting ophthalmology are reimbursement, optometry scope of practice, and legislation/regulation. These concerns remain unchanged from the 2015 survey findings. Members reinforce the need for the Academy to continue to champion fair physician reimbursement, stop the expansion of optometrists' scope of practice, and advocate for regulatory relief. Most rate the effectiveness of the Academy's advocacy efforts as excellent or very good. Eighty-nine percent feel the Academy provides a collective voice for the profession, and 63% feel the Academy is either very good or excellent at positively affecting federal regulatory and/or legislative issues important to ophthalmology.

International practicing ophthalmologist members see the Academy as a leader in ophthalmic education. The annual meeting, *Ophthalmology* journal, *EyeNet Magazine*, and the Ophthalmic News and Education (ONE) Network all receive best-in-class ratings. Most rank the annual meeting as the best



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ophthalmology conference in the world —with 96% rating the annual meeting as excellent, very good, or good.

TAKE NOTICE

MIPS: Applying for the EHR Hardship Exception?

In the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), the electronic health record (EHR)-based performance category is called promoting interoperability (PI). It is 1 of 4 MIPS performance categories and contributes up to 25 points to your MIPS final score (0-100 points). Typically, if you were to report no PI measures, your PI score would be zero and your maximum MIPS final score would be 75 points.

The significant hardship exception. You can apply to be exempted from the PI performance category if you are facing a significant hardship, such as insufficient internet connectivity or extreme and uncontrollable circumstances.

If the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) accepts your application for a hardship exception, PI's contribution to your final score will be reweighted to zero, and the quality performance category's contribution will be reweighted upward; thus you could still earn the maximum MIPS final score of 100 points despite not reporting any PI measures.

New for 2018: Special consideration given to small practices. If small practices can demonstrate that obtaining and maintaining certified EHR technology would cause undue hardship, CMS may grant them a PI hardship exception.

Submit your application by Dec. 31, 2018. For guidance on submitting this application, see aao.org/medicare/advancing-care-information-exceptions.

Enter the EyeWiki Contest

U.S. residents and fellows, November is your last opportunity to submit an original EyeWiki article for the chance to win an all-expenses-paid trip in April 2019 to the Academy's Mid-Year Forum in Washington, DC. Submissions, which will be judged based on quality of work, should pertain to 1 of the following categories:

- Cataract/Refractive Surgery/Cornea/

Anterior Segment

- Retina/Vitreous/Uveitis/Oncology/Pathology
- Glaucoma/Neuro-Ophthalmology
- Pediatrics/Strabismus/Oculoplastics/Orbit

To enter, use the gray "Enroll in Residents and Fellows Contest" submission button at the top of any EyeWiki article related to your entry. The submission deadline is Dec. 1, 2018. Multiple entries are allowed. See www.eyewiki.org/Residents_and_Fellows for details.

For international doctors interested in contributing to EyeWiki, visit www.eyewiki.org/International_Ophthalmologists for an international contest running through May 2019.

Submit Your Research to *Ophthalmology Glaucoma*

This summer, the Academy and the American Glaucoma Society collaborated in launching *Ophthalmology Glaucoma*.

This new journal provides an opportunity to disseminate your glaucoma research directly to those who find it most relevant. Joining the ranks of the Academy's esteemed *Ophthalmology* and *Ophthalmology Retina*, *Ophthalmology Glaucoma* provides readers with innovative, peer-reviewed works.

Submit your research at <https://www.evis.com/profile/#/OGLA/login>.

Subscribe at www.ophtalmologyglaucoma.org.

Remember the Foundation on Giving Tuesday

After the holiday shopping rush on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, kick off your year-end charitable giving on Giving Tuesday, Nov. 27. Entering its sixth year, this global day of philanthropy encourages donating to initiatives that are important to you.

This year, consider supporting Academy programs including the Ophthalmic News and Education (ONE) Network, EyeCare America, global outreach, and the Museum of Vision campaign. Your tax-deductible gift can be made in honor or memory

of someone special.

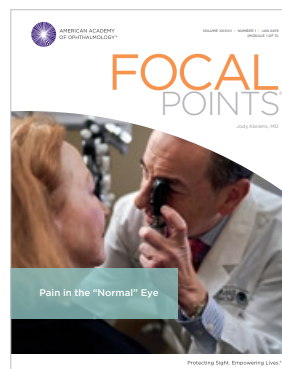
To donate, visit aao.org/foundation/giving-options.

ACADEMY RESOURCES

Evidence-Based Solutions for Your Practice

Starting in 2019, each issue of *Focal Points* will tackle important new

research and provide practical tips on how to efficiently integrate new treatments and methods into your practice. Topics for 2019 include "Pain in the 'Normal Eye,'" "Gene and Stem Cell Therapy for Retinal Disor-



ders," "Corneal Endothelial Surgery," and "Optical Coherence Tomography in Glaucoma Progression and Diagnosis."

Subscribe to *Focal Points Digital* to get a new issue every month, plus access to the digital archive. Print subscribers get 12 print issues, plus all the benefits of *Focal Points Digital*. Visit aao.org/focalpoints.

Order 2019 Coding Tools to Maximize Reimbursements

Your coding tools for 2019 are now available. Whether you're a beginner or experienced coder, whether you work at a comprehensive or subspecialty-specific practice, the Academy has the coding references and training guides to ensure you're appropriately reimbursed for the services you provide.

Browse the offerings at aao.org/codingproducts.

New Coding Audit Success Toolkit Available

Stay compliant with payer requirements and proactively navigate the audit process using the Academy's new Coding Audit Success Toolkit (#0120444V). This downloadable PDF includes valuable checklists and helpful guidelines you can use daily.

Order today at aao.org/audit-toolkit.

New Business Handbook for Retina Practices

Strategically Grow Your Retina Practice (#0121003V), the first of 3 handbooks in the new Profitable Retina Practice series, reveals the essentials for growing a retina practice and provides real-life case studies to guide implementation.

Order today at aao.org/business-of-retina.

MEETING MATTERS

AAO 2019 in San Francisco

AAO 2019 will take place Oct. 12-15, preceded by Subspecialty Day, Oct. 11-12, at The Moscone Center in San Francisco. Be inspired at the world's largest and most comprehensive ophthalmic meeting, offering hundreds of courses and sessions on topics ranging from cataract complications to artificial intelligence in ophthalmology.

For more information, visit aao.org/2019.

2019 Abstract Deadlines

Want to create content for AAO 2019 in San Francisco? Submit your ideas for an instruction course or new Skills Transfer lab. Abstracts will be accepted from Dec. 13, 2018, through Jan. 8, 2019.

To submit, visit aao.org/presenter-central.

Claim CME for AAO 2018

AAO 2018 and Subspecialty Day registrants whose attendance was verified onsite in Chicago received an email with a link and instructions for claiming Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits online. Starting Thursday, Dec. 13, attendees can claim credits (if they did not already do so at the meeting) and obtain transcripts that include AAO 2018/Subspecialty Day credits at aao.org/cme-central. The Academy transcript will not list individual course attendance, only overall credits claimed for educational activities.

For more information, visit aao.org/annual-meeting/cme.

View the Virtual Meeting

The Virtual Meeting is a free online

D.C. REPORT

Academy Promotes Veteran Eye Care

For veterans, the risk of eye injury is much higher than for the general U.S. population.

Advocacy. Committed to ensuring that veterans and active-duty service members receive the highest quality eye care, the Academy's recent advocacy efforts have focused on a wide range of issues, including the following:

- maintaining a VA directive, which mandates that only ophthalmologists will perform laser surgery in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities;
- promoting the VA's new Technology-Based Eye Care Services program, which is expanding veterans' access to basic eye care services;
- supporting the joint Department of Defense/VA Vision Center for Excellence, which was created to improve the care of American military personnel and veterans affected by combat eye trauma; and
- advocating for increased funding for research related to combat-related vision trauma.

Volunteering. In addition to its advocacy work with the federal government, the Academy also engages in hands-on acts of service to aid veterans.

As part of this service, each year the Academy collaborates with a state ophthalmology society at the National Convention of the American Legion, the largest U.S. wartime veterans service organization. This year, the Academy joined forces with the Minnesota Academy of Ophthalmology (MAO) to provide glaucoma screenings for veterans during the convention from Aug. 24-30 in Minneapolis.

Over the course of 3 days, Minnesota ophthalmologists screened more than 140 veterans for glaucoma and other eye diseases. MAO volunteers identified several glaucoma suspects and assisted 1 veteran with a vitreous hemorrhage who needed immediate surgery.

"This [was] a special opportunity for the MAO to honor our nation's service members at their 100th national convention and provide them with a valuable public service," said Jill S. Melicher Larson, MD, President of the MAO and participant in the screening event.

Next year, the Academy will continue this public service tradition and reach out to the Indiana Academy of Ophthalmology to solicit volunteers for the American Legion's 101st convention in Indianapolis.



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED OUR COUNTRY. Dr. Melicher Larson performs an eye exam on a veteran during the American Legion National Convention.

component of AAO 2018. View 13 archived sessions from Chicago (approximately 20 hours of educational content) through Jan. 31, 2019. Access the Virtual Meeting with your Academy login and password. The AAO 2018 Virtual Meeting cannot be reported for CME credit.

For more information, visit aao.org/virtual-meeting.

Want to Own Content From AAO 2018?

Enjoy AAO 2018 all year. Meetings on Demand offers 8 Subspecialty Day meetings or the AAOE Program; or save and buy the complete package, which includes AAO 2018 highlights—nearly 200 hours and 1,000 presentations.

To learn more, visit aao.org/ondemand.