

# Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### Be Sure to Take the Academy-and-Optometry Survey

Watch your email inbox for the Academy-and-optometry survey. *Academy Express* and *Washington Report Express* will have announcements at the time of delivery. The Academy wants to know your thoughts.

For more about the survey, read the December Current Perspective at [aao.org/optometry](http://aao.org/optometry).

### Year 2020: Educate, Celebrate, and Inspire

2020 is the year to focus the public's attention on eye health. Even though sight is the most valued sense, most Americans don't prioritize eye health. The year 2020 presents a unique opportunity to inspire people to take better care of their eyes and to educate them about the benefits of visiting an ophthalmologist.

This month, when media interest in eye health is high and when most people are rededicating themselves to health and wellness with New Year's resolutions, the Academy launches a public information campaign that puts ophthalmologists—and their unique credentials—front and center.

The Academy will begin this effort

## 2020 Year of the Eye



**2020 YEAR OF THE EYE.** Throughout the year, return to [aao.org/2020-year-of-the-eye](http://aao.org/2020-year-of-the-eye) for more information about the 2020 campaign, resources for patients, and how you can get involved.

by unveiling the results of a Harris Interactive Survey on American's attitudes and knowledge about eye health.

The poll uncovered significant disparities between what people think they know about eye health and what they actually know. For example:

- While 81% of adults say they are knowledgeable about eye health, less than 1 in 5 (19%) were able to correctly identify the three main causes of blindness in the United States: diabetic eye disease, macular degeneration, and glaucoma.
- Only around one-third (37%) of adults surveyed understand two key facts: that you do not always experience symptoms before you lose vision to eye diseases and that vision loss is not inevitable as you age.

The campaign will leverage these survey results as proof of the need to elevate eye health awareness and of the importance of ophthalmologists. The Academy's media-trained ophthalmol-

ogist-spokespeople, led by Academy President Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD, will press this case in the media, sharing their expertise and positioning ophthalmology as an essential specialty.

2020 is also a year to celebrate ophthalmology. The Academy will amplify the campaign's message with a series of short videos featuring members. These videos tell the stories of unsung heroes who bring eye care to the underserved, from Tennessee to Kenya, as well as the ophthalmologists who have transformed patients' lives with sight-saving breakthroughs.

Learn more about the 2020 campaign at [aao.org/2020-year-of-the-eye](http://aao.org/2020-year-of-the-eye) or email [media@aao.org](mailto:media@aao.org).

### EyeCare America Celebrates 35 Years

In 1985, the Academy started recruiting volunteers for EyeCare America. Thirty-five years later, the program ranks as one of U.S. ophthalmology's proudest



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achievements. Founded by a group of dedicated ophthalmologists committed to preserving sight, the organization has grown to include more than 5,000 volunteer ophthalmologists across the country who provide eye exams and eye care, often at no out-of-pocket cost to eligible patients. Since the program's inception, the Academy's public service program has helped more than 2 million people by providing sight-saving eye care and resources to underserved Americans.

This award-winning program has been recognized by every U.S. president since Ronald Reagan, who hailed it as "volunteerism at its finest"; it partners with multiple national organizations, such as Prevent Blindness and the National Eye Institute; and it has been recommended by AARP, *Reader's Digest*, Dear Abby, *USA Today*, and more.

In honor of its 35th Anniversary, EyeCare America would like to encourage ophthalmologists who are not already volunteers to enroll in this vital public service today.

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

## 2019 Orbital Gala Raises Almost \$200K For New Museum

By all measures, the 16th annual Orbital Gala last October was a success. The event was sold out and raised more than \$180,000 in support of the Academy Foundation's new Truhlsen-Marmor Museum of the Eye. The museum is being built at the Academy headquarters, located in the heart of the tourist-rich Fisherman's Wharf neighborhood of San Francisco.

Bruce E. Spivey, MD, former Academy Executive Vice President/CEO was the honoree of the evening. David W. Parke II, MD, Academy CEO, and others spoke of Dr. Spivey's contributions to the Academy, the Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Company, and the National Eye Care Project.

More than 400 guests attended the Hollywood-themed party at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco on Sunday, Oct. 13.

Learn more about the museum or donate at [aao.org/foundation/museum-campaign](http://aao.org/foundation/museum-campaign).



**CELEBRATION.** Joseph J. Chappell Jr., MD (right) and his ECA patient Pete Hastert mark the program's 35-year anniversary.

## TAKE NOTICE

### Don't Miss the Jan. 31 Deadline for 2019 MIPS

If you are using the IRIS Registry (Intelligent Research in Sight) to report the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) for 2019, Jan. 31 is a key date on three counts.

**1. Finish manually entering your MIPS information.** This deadline applies if you are using the IRIS Registry web portal to manually report quality measures, promoting interoperability (PI) measures, or improvement activities. If you successfully integrated your electronic health record (EHR) system with the IRIS Registry and if your EHR has 2015-edition certification, your MIPS quality data are automatically extracted from your EHRs, but you must report PI measures and improvement activities manually.

**Manually reporting quality data.** You can either enter patients one at a time or batch patients via a properly formatted CSV file.

**Include the data-completeness totals.** If you are manually reporting patients for a quality measure, you must submit to the IRIS Registry the total number of patients eligible and excepted from that measure.

**Don't "cherry pick."** If you report a quality measure on fewer than 100% of

eligible patients, CMS expects you to select patients that are representative of your performance for that measure. If CMS suspects that you have cherry picked patients to boost your performance rate, it may audit your reporting.

**2. Sign the data-release consent form.** Providers who are reporting as individuals should sign their own consent forms; providers who are reporting as a group can be included on a single consent form, which can be signed by the administrator. All your practice's ophthalmologists must be up to date with their 2019 Academy membership dues. You must sign a new consent form each year and can do so via the IRIS Registry dashboard. For instructions, see [aao.org/consent-form](http://aao.org/consent-form).

**3. Submit your data to CMS.** The final step is to confirm that your data are ready to send to CMS and click "submit." You'll know you are done when CMS sends a MIPS score estimate, which will display in your dashboard. (There is a limited exception to this Jan. 31 deadline: If you integrated your EHR system with the IRIS Registry, do not send your quality data to CMS until your dashboard indicates that you have a full year of data.)

Learn more about the IRIS Registry and MIPS at [aao.org/iris-registry](http://aao.org/iris-registry) and [aao.org/medicare](http://aao.org/medicare).

## Honor Your Colleagues

To recognize the achievements of ophthalmologists who have made incredible contributions to ophthalmology, the Academy would like your help in nominating recipients for the following awards.

**Laureate Recognition Award.** This award honors an outstanding ophthalmologist whose significant contributions to the field have shaped modern ophthalmology. The Academy is accepting nominations through Jan. 31, 2020, for the 2020 award, with nomination forms available at [aao.org/about/awards/laureate](http://aao.org/about/awards/laureate).

**Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award.** This award recognizes Academy fellows and members for outstanding contributions to humanitarian efforts, such as participation in charitable activities, care for the indigent, and

community service. It acknowledges those who have performed above and beyond the normal duties of an ophthalmologist. All nominations for the 2020 award must be received by March 13, 2020. To submit a nomination, visit [aao.org/about/awards/humanitarian](http://aao.org/about/awards/humanitarian).

### Volunteer Opportunity: Help Diversify Ophthalmology

The Academy's Minority Ophthalmology Mentoring program was created to increase diversity in the field of ophthalmology by helping underrepresented in medicine (URiM) students become competitive ophthalmology residency applicants. Medical students receive one-on-one mentorship and other guidance as they navigate the pathway to ophthalmology residency.

Volunteers are needed to promote the benefits of a career in ophthalmology and the value of the program to URiM students and diversity officers at medical schools in their area. Now is an optimal time to sign up because the deadline for students to apply is June 15.

Learn more by selecting Speak at [aao.org/volunteering](http://aao.org/volunteering).

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

### Leadership Development Program Welcomes Its 22nd Class

The Academy's Leadership Development Program (LDP) XXI held its graduation session during AAO 2019 in San Francisco. Concurrently, the Academy's 22nd LDP (LDP XXII) class met in an orientation session along



**GRADUATING CLASS.** Academy leaders Linda Tsai, MD (LDP Director), Michael Brennan, MD (International Envoy), and Kurt Heitman, MD (Secretary for State Affairs) join graduates of LDP XXI, Class of 2019.

## D.C. REPORT

# Academy Requests Prior Authorization Reform, Audit Oversight

The Academy continues to hold a seat at the table as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) works to reduce administrative burdens in Medicare. CMS marked the two-year anniversary of its flagship reform program, "Patients Over Paperwork," by convening the Academy and other medical groups for an invitation-only listening session and roundtable discussion of areas where barriers could be lessened between physicians and those for whom they care. The program has already resulted in decreased administrative requirements for ambulatory surgical centers (conditions of participation) and reduced E&M documentation requirements.

**More work to be done.** The Academy urged CMS Administrator Seema Verma, MPH, to take bold action to reform prior authorization, especially for surgical services. Additionally, the agency's proposed 2021 reform of E&M codes, which includes a reimbursement boost, is incomplete. The Academy is arguing that this fee increase must also be applied to post-operative visits. The Academy is working with the American Medical Association to push for this.

The Academy also called on agency officials to increase oversight of Medicare auditors. Too often these individuals lack clinical understanding of the specialties they're tasked with auditing, resulting in increased burdens and inconvenience for ophthalmologists.

with participants in the complementary Curso de Liderazgo class of the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology. The joint session was led by LDP Director Linda M. Tsai, MD, and Curso Director Zélia M. Corrêa, MD, PhD.

Each LDP class includes an international member who is chosen by a competitive selection process. The Academy's 22nd LDP class includes Jelena Potic, MD, PhD, of Serbia. Dr. Potic was nominated by the European Society of Ophthalmology.

She joins 19 U.S. ophthalmologists who were nominated by state, subspecialty, and specialized interest societies.

On Oct. 12, the Global LDP Alumni reception, inclusive of both the newly graduated and the incoming class, was held at the Inter-Continental Hotel in San Francisco.

Learn more at [aao.org/about/leadership-development](http://aao.org/about/leadership-development).

### Academy Hall of Fame Award Recipient Announced

During the Fall Council meeting in San Francisco, Stephen R. Powell, MD, of West Virginia was recognized by the Academy Secretariat for State Affairs as the 2019 Hall of Fame Award recipient. Dr. Powell has spent his career as a fierce patient advocate. For more than 30 years he has lobbied for high-quality eye care throughout the state of West Virginia and at the national level. The Hall of Fame Award annually recognizes an ophthalmologist for a long-term commitment to state advocacy efforts.



Dr. Powell

## ACADEMY RESOURCES

### Advance Your Patient Care With Practice-Ready Findings

Stay current on clinical topics, including corneal melts, migraine treatments, and

and more. *Focal Points* focuses on proven conclusions that make a significant difference for your patients. Each issue distills recent discoveries that are ready for you to integrate into your practice. Use the monthly audio version to conveniently earn CME credits and get up to speed while on the go.

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*.

Subscribe at [aao.org/focalpoints](http://aao.org/focalpoints).

## New AAOE Member Benefit

Need information on specific coding or practice management topics? Starting this month, American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE) members have free access to an online library of selected past annual meeting courses and webinars on topics such as coding, business operations, HIPAA, and cybersecurity. Each month new videos will be added so check back often to see the latest additions.

Find it at [aao.org/aaoe-resources](http://aao.org/aaoe-resources).

## Protect Reimbursements

Safeguard your practice's revenue with the most up-to-date and accurate coding references in ophthalmology. The Academy's 2020 coding books are shipping soon; order now and get yours as soon as they become available.

Learn more at [aao.org/codingtools](http://aao.org/codingtools).

## Position Your Practice for Success at the 2020 Ophthalmology Business Summit

Join the Academy's leadership-focused boot camp for the tools and tactics you need to sustain a healthy and viable practice. Physician leaders and senior administrators who attend as a team will benefit most from the results-oriented program. Start solving your most complex business challenges March 14-15 in Chicago.

Find the curriculum and register at [aao.org/business-summit](http://aao.org/business-summit).

## Follow @AAOjournal

Stay up to date on research from *Ophthalmology*, *Ophthalmology Retina*, and *Ophthalmology Glaucoma* via the

@AAOjournal Twitter handle. Content is posted every day, including articles in press, "Pictures and Perspectives," editorials, and new issue alerts.

## MEETING MATTERS

### AAO 2020 in Las Vegas

Attend AAO 2020, Nov. 14-17, preceded by Subspecialty Day, Nov. 13-14, at the Sands Expo/Venetian in Las Vegas. Discover the research, resources, and vision shaping the future of ophthalmology through instruction courses, exhibit hall showcases, and symposia, and more.

For more information, visit [aao.org/2020](http://aao.org/2020).

### Share Your Vision at AAO 2020

The AAO 2020 online abstract submitter for instruction courses and new Skills Transfer labs closes January 14.

There is still time to prepare your paper/poster or video abstract for AAO 2020; their online abstract submitter opens March 12 and closes April 14.

For more information, visit [aao.org/presentercentral](http://aao.org/presentercentral).

### AAO 2019 Meeting Archives

Missing a handout from AAO 2019? Want to view scientific posters or a video? Go to Meeting Archives to find these resources and more, including Subspecialty Day syllabi, the Meeting Program, and exhibition information.

Visit the Meeting Archives at [aao.org/aao-archives](http://aao.org/aao-archives).

### Deadline for APAO Congress Approaching

Register for APAO 2020 in Xiamen, China, by the end of February to receive the advanced rate discount. The APAO Congress (April 22-26) will celebrate Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology's 60th anniversary, its diamond jubilee.

For more information, visit [2020.apaophth.org](http://2020.apaophth.org).

## FOR THE RECORD

### Election Results

On Oct. 14, 2019, voting opened for

seven positions on the 2020 Board of Trustees.

The results are as follows:

- President-Elect: **Tamara R. Fountain, MD**
- Senior Secretary for Ophthalmic Practice: **Ravi D. Goel, MD**
- Senior Secretary for Annual Meeting: **Maria M. Aaron, MD**
- Trustee-at-Large: **Mary Louise Z. Collins, MD**
- Trustee-at-Large: **Ron W. Pelton, MD, PhD**
- Council Chair: **Sarwat Salim, MD, FACS**
- Council Vice Chair: **Thomas A. Graul, MD**
- **Amendment to Code of Ethics Rule B3—Approved.** This amendment more specifically defines the ethical responsibilities of ophthalmic researchers in order to advance the best interests of patients.
- **Code of Ethics Rule B18—Approved.** This new rule addresses harassment and discrimination as inconsistent with the ideals and principles of ethics in ophthalmology.

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

## Public Trustees

The Board of Trustees has appointed three public trustees to the 2020 board:

- **David C. Herman, MD:** Chief Executive Officer, Essentia Health. He begins his first term in January.
- **Paul B. Ginsburg, PhD:** Leonard Schaeffer Chair in Health Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, Professor of Health Policy at the University of Southern California, and director of the USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative for Health Policy.
- **James A. Lawrence:** Chairman of Lake Harriet Capital. He begins his first term in January.

For more information on the public trustees, go to [aao.org/bot](http://aao.org/bot).

## Nominations for the Academy Board

By George A. Williams, MD

As Past President of the Academy, it is my privilege to serve as Chairman of the Academy's Nominating Committee

in 2020. This committee represents a variety of interests within the Academy and is charged with identifying appropriate candidates for the open positions on the 2021 Board of Trustees.

The committee is interested in identifying leaders in our profession who have 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 2021:

**President-Elect (to serve as President in 2022).** 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 Advocacy (three-year term).** Coordinates the Academy's advocacy programs and activities developed through the secretariats for Federal and State Affairs.

**Two Trustees-at-Large (four-year**

**term).** These individuals should be Academy Fellows who demonstrate 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 (three-year appointment).** An Academy International Fellow or Member who practices exclusively outside of the United States and has 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 the perspective of international members to the Academy board.

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, 2020,** to George A. Williams, 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,** visit [aao.org/about/governance/board-nominations](http://aao.org/about/governance/board-nominations).



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### ABOUT THE NOMINATING PROCESS

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 considering 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 nominees of choice in a future year.