

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

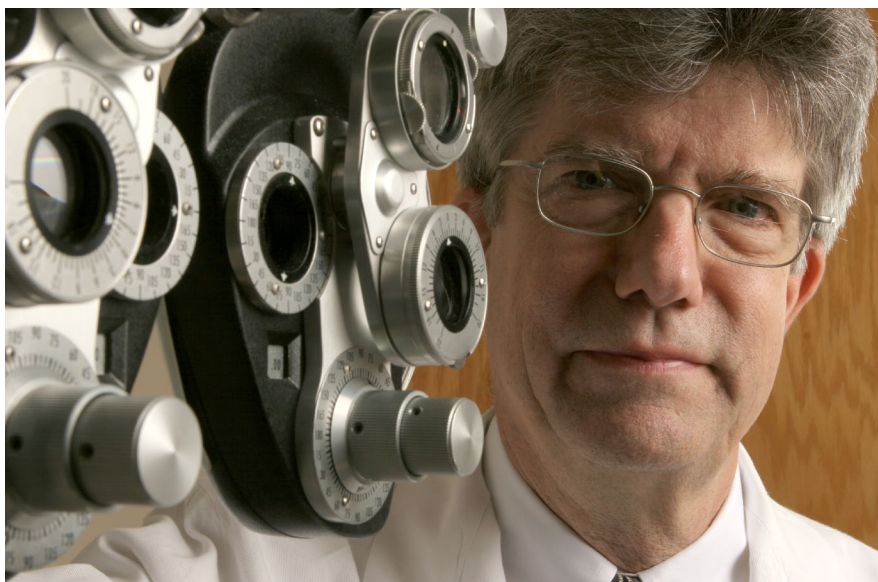
WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dr. Mills, Past President of the Academy, Dies at 76

Richard P. Mills, MD, MPH, died on May 9 of complications from COVID-19. He was 76. He played integral roles in the Academy, starting in the 1980s, when his work on a Washington state pilot program was instrumental in the launch of the National Eye Care Project, now EyeCare America (ECA). His leadership roles included Academy president (1995), *EyeNet Magazine* chief medical editor (2002-2016), and ECA chair (2007-2013). He served in myriad other Academy positions and was honoree of the Foundation's Orbital Gala in 2016.

Academy CEO David W. Parke II, MD, referred to Dr. Mills' contributions to the Academy as protean. "He believed fervently that every ophthalmologist had a responsibility to serve others, rather than (as he referred to it) 'hitchhike' on the contributions of others . . . His laugh was unmistakable, and his comments were pithy and humorous. Dick was one of the good guys—the best guys. We will miss him."

Dr. Mills was active with other organizations, including the American Glaucoma Society, American Board of Medical Specialties, American Board of



CLINICIAN, TEACHER, LEADER. Richard P. Mills, MD, MPH (1943-2020).

Ophthalmology, the American Ophthalmological Society, and the Washington state society, to name a few.

In 1968, he graduated from Yale University Medical School. He did his residency at the University of Washington (UW) followed by three fellowships, two in neuro-ophthalmology, one in glaucoma. In 1972, he joined the faculty at UW, rising to professor and acting Chair of Ophthalmology. In 1999, he completed a master's in public health at UW. He served briefly as Chair of Ophthalmology at the University of Kentucky.

He was an important contributor in glaucoma clinical research, notably the Collaborative Initial Glaucoma Treatment Study trial. He also took pleasure in his private practice at Glaucoma Consultants Northwest, sometimes incorporating patient encounters into *EyeNet* editorials.

He is survived by his wife Karen, daughters Lianne, Lissa, and Emily, and seven grandchildren: Savanna, Murrion, Audrey, Hannah, Max, Frankie (Francesca), and Evey.

Adapting to a New Normal: Resources for Your Practice

This year's pandemic presents practices with unprecedented challenges. How does your practice maintain its operating income? What's the best way to keep patients and staff members safe? Do you have a checklist of steps to take if a physician or member of staff becomes ill with COVID-19? Physicians and their staff members must be nimble in navigating the evolving health care landscape.

Help is available. For authoritative ophthalmology-specific coronavirus materials, go to aao.org/coronavirus and click "For Practice Management." Among the resources posted there, you will find the following:

The AAOE's road map for practice recovery. The American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE) has developed a detailed step-by-step guide to practice recovery and is adding to it each week.

Updates on the rapidly changing regulations. Starting from the earliest days of the pandemic, the AAOE's prac-



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tice management experts—working closely with the Academy’s D.C. staff—have helped practices keep up with frequent changes in government rules and policies. From checklists and tip sheets to videos and webinars, AAOE and Academy resources have highlighted the critical information that ophthalmologists need to know.

Until July 31, selected AAOE resources are free to Academy members. To help practices in their recovery, the AAOE is giving Academy members temporary access to some of its member benefits, including its Practice Management Resource Library at aao.org/aaoe-resources, which features practice efficiency tools, videos, webinars, and more. If staff members have downtime, they can work their way through five one-hour coding courses.

Explore the other newly opened resources at aao.org/practice-management/resources/coronavirus-resources.

Crowdsource solutions with AAOE. If you are a member of the AAOE, use the e-Talk listserv to share tips, post queries, and find out what has and hasn’t worked for other practices. Not an AAOE member? Visit aao.org/join-aaoe.

Michigan Society Teams With Leader Dogs for the Blind

Two years ago, the Michigan Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (MiSEPS) rekindled its relationship with Leader Dogs for the Blind. Both organizations realize that the work they do is complementary. At one of the first meetings with the charity, MiSEPS Public Service Chair Anne M. Nachazel, MD, was discussing how hard it is for ophthalmologists when they realize that they can do no more for a patient and that they need to connect the patient to resources to support them in a new phase of life as visually impaired or blind.

Since then, MiSEPS and Leader Dogs for the Blind have supported each other’s events, distributed informational resources, and raised awareness about their respective missions. MiSEPS President Paul A. Edwards, MD, serves on the charity’s board. MiSEPS has featured the organization’s puppies

and handlers at both its 2018 and 2019 annual conference banquets, and at an EYES Cream Social with MiSEPS members and their families.

On March 6 in Detroit, a MiSEPS group—including Dr. Edwards and Dr. Nachazel—gathered at the charity’s annual Dinner in the Dark benefit. They met people whose lives have been transformed by the freedom and companionship that Leader Dogs provide them. During dinner, each sighted guest put on a blindfold to experience what it’s like to eat as a blind person.

“This was our last big social outing before everything changed with the pandemic,” Dr. Edwards said, adding, “MiSEPS is moved and impressed by the transformational work Leader Dogs for the Blind does.” MiSEPS hopes to welcome Leader Dogs for the Blind to its annual conference from Aug. 6-8 on Mackinac Island.

TAKE NOTICE

Volunteer for Clinical Currency Review

Do you enjoy CME activities from the Academy? If so, consider volunteering to review educational materials for clinical currency.

Projects include reviewing everything from interactive cases to book chapters to learning plans, and more. Deadlines and time commitments vary by product, so reach out to the education division (clinical_education@aao.org) to find a project that works for your schedule.

Volunteers must have no financial relationships with industry and must have experience formally teaching, managing, or collaborating with the publication’s target audience.

For more information about this volunteer opportunity, visit aao.org/volunteering and select “Clinical Currency Review” under the “Review” tab.

Use the IRIS Registry for MOC and MIPS

The American Board of Ophthalmology can help you to create an Improvement in Medical Practice project that can earn you credit for both Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and the Merit-

Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS).

Do you have an EHR system? If you have integrated your electronic health record (EHR) system with the IRIS Registry, you can use data from your IRIS Registry dashboard to design and implement a quality improvement project.

Design your plan. Start by identifying one or two IRIS Registry measures that you would like to improve, set goals for those measures, and determine the steps needed to achieve those goals. The ABO can provide details of what needs to be in your plan.

Submit your plan to the ABO no later than Aug. 31, 2020. The ABO has said that you should expect the review and approval process to take up to two weeks.

Implement your plan. Use the IRIS Registry dashboard to check on your progress and fine-tune your processes if necessary. Once the project is complete, review its effectiveness and send a summary to the ABO.

Earn credit for MOC and MIPS. To get credit for MOC, you must implement your plan for at least 30 days. If you implement it for at least 90 days, you might meet the requirements of a medium-weighted MIPS improvement activity—IA_PSPA_2: Participation in MOC Part IV. For a detailed guide to that MIPS improvement activity, see aao.org/medicare/improvement-activities.

Read the IRIS Registry’s comprehensive guide to the process at aao.org/iris-registry/maintenance-of-certification.

Visit the ABO’s website to learn more at <https://abop.org/IRIS>.

Learn About the Impact of Academy Donors

In the Foundation annual report, *For A Better Tomorrow*, learn about the invaluable impact that donor support has had on the success of Academy programs.

Foundation funding of the ONE Network, IRIS Registry, and EyeCare America makes projects like correcting a 22-year case of strabismus, performing 532 cataract surgeries in the Philippines, and restoring a 107-year-old’s vision

possible. Through these donor-supported programs, Academy members are protecting sight and empowering lives every day.

Access the report at aao.org/foundation/2019-annual-report/overview-2019.

Read the Latest Edition of *Scope*—Spring 2020

Channel your inner ophthalmic historian and read the Spring 2020 edition of *Scope*, the quarterly newsletter for senior ophthalmologists.

In this issue, children of ophthalmic icons tell their fathers' stories, including "Claes Dohlman, MD: A Leader in American Ophthalmology and Proud Son of Sweden," written by Henrik Dohlman, PhD, and "Lorenz E. Zimmerman, MD: A Legacy in Ophthalmic Pathology," written by his daughter, Mary Louise Z. Collins, MD.

In the column "What We're Doing Today," M. Bruce Shields, MD, editor of *Scope*, highlights the many hobbies of retired ophthalmologists, and this issue features avid birder Robert Forester, MD.

Read the feature on ergonomics, by Samuel Masket, MD, and explore *Scope's* book review column for a variety of reads suggested by your colleagues.

For these stories and more, visit aao.org/senior-ophthalmologists/scope.

ACADEMY RESOURCES

Don't Miss Important Updates to the BCSC

The 2020-2021 edition of the *Basic and Clinical Science Course (BCSC)* is available for advance order and will ship by mid-June. The *BCSC* is rigorously reviewed by more than 100 ophthalmologists and is organized so you can find the information that is most relevant to you. Practicing ophthalmologists and residents worldwide use the *BCSC* to ensure the highest-quality patient care.

The new 2020-2021 edition includes major revisions to the following sections:

- Section 4: Ophthalmic Pathology and Intraocular Tumors
- Section 10: Glaucoma
- Section 11: Lens and Cataract

D.C. REPORT

Progress in Averting Drug Shortages

In recent years, ophthalmologists had reported problems in obtaining critical diagnostic tools (such as fluorescein strips) and essential drugs (including atropine, dorzolamide, and erythromycin). Ensuring that patients won't lose vision because ophthalmologists lacked such drugs became a priority of the Academy, which has been pushing the issue with the Food and Drug Administration, drug manufacturers, and legislators.

Building a base of support in D.C. The Academy—in concert with several other health care organizations—has worked assiduously to enlist the support of federal lawmakers in tackling the problem of drug shortages. During this long-term effort, the Academy has educated legislators about the fragility and opaqueness of the drug supply chain, as well as the problem of manufacturers discontinuing production of low-profit drugs.

The MEDS Act showed promise. Thanks, in part, to the Academy's advocacy, there was bipartisan support when Sen. Susan M. Collins (R-Maine) and Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.) introduced the Mitigating Emergency Drug Shortages (MEDS) Act in late 2019. Throughout the political turbulence of early 2020, the Academy continued to remind lawmakers about the importance of getting the MEDS Act signed into law.

COVID-19 crystallizes the issue for many legislators. As the coronavirus crisis heightened concerns about the integrity of drug supply chains, the Academy's earlier advocacy efforts bore some fruit: Elements of the earlier MEDS legislation were incorporated into the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into law on March 27. For example, to help mitigate a drug shortage, the CARES Act requires the FDA to prioritize and expedite reviews of drug applications and inspections of manufacturing facilities.

More work to be done. While the CARES Act is an important step forward, there are still issues that need to be addressed. For the latest news on the Academy's ongoing campaign against drug shortages, check your email each Thursday for *Washington Report Express*. To find out how you can help with the Academy's advocacy efforts, visit aao.org/volunteering.

Buy the print and/or eBook version.

Choose from the print or eBook format (eBooks are also available starting mid-June). Purchase an individual section or save when you buy a complete set of all 13 sections of the *BCSC*.

Take the Self-Assessment Program.

Efficiently identify and fill knowledge gaps while earning Self-Assessment CME credits with the online companion, the *BCSC* Self-Assessment Program, which is the only resource with questions and discussions derived directly from the *BCSC*.

For pricing, visit aao.org/bcsc.

Drive Your Practice Success With Benchmarking

The Academy/AAOE AcadeMetrics practice management benchmarking survey closes July 31.

Enter your 2019 practice management data by the deadline and use the AcadeMetrics benchmarking tool all year to compare your financial data to that of similar practices. Get valuable insight into optimal staffing levels, number of satellite offices, and more.

Find out more about these free member tools at aao.org/practice-management/analytics.