



## President's Message

Mark E. Linskey, M.D. - President

Well, it appears to be official. The whole California county Covid 19 colored tier system with its associated graduated regulations for holding public events (regulations that were only put in place recently on April 16<sup>th</sup>), appears to have officially, suddenly, and completely collapsed and disappeared from the Governor's Office website June 15<sup>th</sup> with the opening of the state from the pandemic. Hotel meeting venues have quickly reacted and are now negotiating contracts and planning events as if we will be back to business as usual with no restrictions in January 2022. We certainly hope that Covid does not turn out to be seasonal, and that we have enough vaccination population penetration to avoid another November/December surge that might bring restrictions back in some form at the last minute.

Good news is that the Neurosurgical Society of America (NSA) became the first neurosurgery professional society to hold an in-person, un-restricted, meeting since the pandemic in Stateline, Nevada from June 20-23. From all second-hand reports, the meeting came off without a hitch. The AANS/CNS Spine Section will be next with their in person, meeting in San Diego, July 28-31. This will be the first neurosurgery professional society to hold an in-person, un-restricted, meeting in California and we will be monitoring their experience very closely.

At this point I think it is safe to say that CANS will indeed hold a face-to-face meeting January 15-16, 2022 over Martin Luther King birthday weekend in either south Orange County or San Diego County. This will be our first in-person meeting in two years and promises to be a great opportunity to see friends again, renew old acquaintances, network, and catch up on the latest developments in surgical devices and supplies with our valued cooperate vendor/sponsor colleagues. At this point our venue short list has been reduced from four to three, and each venue has been re-toured with an eye toward a main "no-restrictions" space plan as well as a back-up social distancing plan. In addition, most of our requests for contract modifications to allow for unexpected recurrent surge contingencies have been met and we are now in the process of reviewing the written contracts with an eye towards signing one in the very near future. Stay tuned for the announcement of the final venue choice in the July CANS newsletter. Please be sure to reserve January 15-16, 2022 over Martin Luther King birthday weekend right now on your calendar for our meeting.

In terms of healthcare news on the national front, this month by a 7-2 vote, the Supreme Court denied a challenge by 18 states to throw out the Affordable Care Act due to the elimination of the penalty portion which was the crux of the court's prior sustainment of the act as a legal form of congressional federal tax. The ruling did not address the issue of whether the act still constituted a tax, but rather, denied the suit on the basis that the plaintiffs did not define any injury resulting from the act. This is the third Supreme Court challenge to the act that has failed, and the longer it survives (11 years now), the greater the likelihood that it will continue to survive by default as it becomes more and more established as a familiar standing piece of our national healthcare fabric.

Among several important policy actions arising from the recent June AMA Special Meeting (<https://www.ama-assn.org/house-delegates/special-meeting/top-10-stories-june-2021-ama-special>

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[meeting?&utm\\_source=BulletinHealthCare&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=061821&utm\\_content=MEMBER&utm\\_campaign=article\\_alert-morning\\_rounds\\_daily&utm\\_uid=2188466&utm\\_effort=MRNRD0](#) ), one of the most significant focused on the observation that while the use of telehealth exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic, critical issues related to health inequity, separate individual state medical licensure requirements, regulation and payment must be addressed for this mode of care to continue to flourish beyond the public health emergency. The AMA is working to try and ensure that these critical issues are addressed and potentially resolved in order to allow telehealth to continue, cross state lines, and be reimbursed after the pandemic is over. Whether this will succeed or not, remains to be seen.

On the California state front, the legislature is currently considering a proposal to create an Office of Health Care Affordability (OHCA) under the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. This proposal includes major policy changes and has far-reaching implications for the health care delivery system. As currently drafted, the proposal will create enormous bureaucratic complexities within the health care delivery system and is overly burdensome on physician practices. The California Medical Association is working to oppose this proposal, but needs all the help and support they can get.

In our April newsletter we alerted you to the California Assembly Bill AB 615, [Higher education Employer – employee relations act: procedures relating to employee termination or discipline] introduced February 12, 2021 by Assembly Member Rodriguez. As of the writing of this message, the bill has passed through its third reading in the Assembly on May 27<sup>th</sup> and on June 9<sup>th</sup> was referred to both the Committee on Labor and Employment as well as the Committee on Public Employment and Retirement, by the state Senate (<https://openstates.org/ca/bills/20212022/AB615/> ). We will need to watch this bill closely as it will have potential significant effects on our California neurosurgery residency training programs.

The CANS Board will be holding our next Board meeting either the first or second weekend in August. The meeting must be early this year because the CSNS will be holding its Fall 2021 meeting prior to the AANS meeting in Orlando, Florida. The CSNS resolutions need to be considered by the CANS Board prior to the CSNS meeting. Please let me know if there are any topics or issues that CANS members wish to be brought up or considered at our next meeting.

Please continue to stay safe everyone. Please consider getting involved. We are always in need of concerned, aware, and engaged neurosurgeons. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you would like to get more involved with CANS at [mlinskey@hs.uci.edu](mailto:mlinskey@hs.uci.edu). Even if you cannot dedicate your own time and effort, please consider financially supporting CANS, the national Neurosurgery Political Action Committee (Neurosurgery PAC) (<https://www.aans.org/en/Advocacy/NeurosurgeryPAC>), and the CMA Political Action Committee (CalPAC - <https://www.cmadoocs.org/calpac/donate> ). Please do whatever you can to support CANS, the NeurosurgeryPAC and the CMA, they are fighting for you.

All the best! ❖

## **Juneteenth Day – Freedom Day!**

*Moustapha Abou-Samra, MD – Associate Editor*

It is official. Juneteenth Day is a Federal Holiday!

It seems as if everyone agreed that it is time to recognize this day as an important one in our Nation's history. Well, not everyone. 14 Republican congressmen voted against the bill, two of whom are from California. Douglas Lee LaMalfa, who represents the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional district is a politician about whom I know nothing, and Thomas Miller McClintock, who represents the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and who used to represent Ventura County when he was in the California Assembly. They are both misguided and wrong, in my opinion.

The name Juneteenth comes from June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas, issued General Order #3, which announced that in accordance with the Emancipation Proclamation, "all slaves are free."

Below is an essay I wrote 14 years ago, about Juneteenth Day and what it meant to me. Clearly, much has changed. Our dear friend Ann Brown died four years ago and Willis Brown, one of my mentors and my dear friend, is now retired much like I am. And I have moved politically in a much more liberal direction ... But what has not changed is my love for this Country. More than ever, I feel that Juneteenth Day was in 1980 and continues to be my Freedom Day!

I hope you enjoy reading this.

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*Twenty-Seven years ago, on Juneteenth Day, 1980, I became a "Naturalized US Citizen." I still remember the emotions that I experienced that day. And I remember the pride!*

*Ann and Willis Brown were with us, Joanie and me, as my witnesses, when I took the Oath of Citizenship. There were many other new citizens. I barely remember the "Speech" given by the president of the Zoo ... but I do remember that it was not appropriate for the occasion. I particularly remember the faces of my fellow New Americans, mostly from Mexico. And I remember their new outfits, some very traditional and folkloric.*

*The first thing I did, as soon as I left the Federal Building in San Antonio, Texas, was to buy my very first-of-many- cowboy boots! I wore them for the rest of the day, even though they were not particularly comfortable, and they made me feel as if I were wearing high heels. I felt as American as apple pie, but ... with an accent!*

*Prior to that I was a "Legal Alien," carrying what was called a "Green Card," a card I considered to be the equivalent to a "Green Light." It allowed me to do everything that any American does, except vote.*

*And prior to becoming "Legal," I was for a brief period of time, "Illegal." When I married Joanie, an American Citizen, of Irish and Scottish background, I lost my "official student visa status" and needed to*

*immediately apply for an "official" change in status, but I didn't know it. I learned that when a nice Canadian immigration officer told me that he would not allow me to enter the Canadian side of Niagara Falls for dinner. We were spending our honeymoon on the American side and decided to go to Canada for the evening. The year was 1973.*

*He was kind to write me a note indicating that I never entered Canada. We turned around and traveled the length of the Rainbow Bridge again, only to be faced by an American immigration officer who told me that I may not enter the US again without an "official" change in my status, a change that would have taken several months! It took every ounce of persuasion I had in me, to convince him that I would apply for "official" change ASAP ... and I did.*

*But then, I waited longer than the required period to apply for citizenship. I wanted to be absolutely convinced that I wanted to live and die as an American, and that I wanted to raise my children as Americans. I did not want to become a citizen simply because it was convenient, and back in the late 1970s, it certainly was a convenient thing to do.*

*I decided that I must become a citizen during the period leading to the 1976 Presidential election. In fact, I convinced myself that Gerald Ford, whom I favored, lost because I could not vote for him. I remember vividly the Pride I felt while waiting in line to vote for Ronald Reagan, a mere four months after becoming an American Citizen.*

*I have worked hard to be a good Citizen, and I know that America is the very best Country for my family and me. America is the best country in the world. I also know that it is a better Country, now, because my five wonderful children live here. I am convinced that each of my fellow "San Antonio New Americans," class of 1980, justifiably feels the same way.*

*The immigration debate has been very disappointing to me; it is not addressing the basic reason people are clamoring to come here. Indeed, everyone wants to work, and a lot of people come here illegally to find work. And indeed, a solution must be found to make this a legal and humane process ... but let us not lose sight of the fact that everyone who comes to America does so because of a "Dream."*

*Everyone who yearns to come to America contributes to this great Country, in some way. Some contribute more than others, but is this not the nature of citizenship? In fact, we are lucky in this Country because there is a self-selection process: people who come here to work and eventually stay are generally young and healthy and they are dreamers. They all imagine one day becoming assimilated in this great Country, and as they become assimilated, they put their stamp on our beautiful culture. This includes not only folkloric dress, food, and family traditions, but also the heartaches and emotional turmoil that new immigrants experience as they adjust to this wonderful place.*

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

*"The New Colossus," by the nineteenth-century American poet Emma Lazarus.*

*I don't see any reference in this beautiful poem to educational qualifications, nor did Lazarus anticipate requiring immigrants to bring a working capital ... People come here because of what America is. They*

come here because of what America represents: an "Ideal" that everyone in the world dreams of achieving, an "Ideal" that was so well articulated in our Constitution by our Founding Fathers.

Yes, this ideal requires an individual who wants to be an American Citizen to become an American. This requires more than anything else "Love" for this Country and, of course, hard work.

I am comfortable in knowing how much I love this Country. No one can love it more. And I know that I enjoy working hard. I am very grateful to have been given the "Green Light" to enter "The Golden Door" and become a US Citizen, but I am even more proud to have become an AMERICAN! ❖

## CANS MISSION STATEMENT

'TO ADVOCATE FOR THE PRACTICE OF CALIFORNIA NEUROSURGERY  
BENEFITTING OUR PATIENTS AND PROFESSION'

### Tidbits

#### Call for Resolutions – CSNS at AANS

The Council of State Neurosurgical Societies will hold a full in-person meeting on **Friday, August 20 and Saturday, August 21, 2021**, preceding the AANS meeting in Orlando, FL at the Orlando Hilton Hotel.

**Deadline for resolution submission is Friday, July 9, 2021.**

Any CANS member who wishes to submit a resolution for discussion at that meeting should contact our President Dr. Linskey ([mlinskey@uci.edu](mailto:mlinskey@uci.edu)) for assistance in writing the resolution. Any resolution to be considered must come from a state society or from a CSNS delegate like Dr. Linskey

#### California does well in rankings

*US News & World Report* has published their "Best" report on hospitals for 2021. California Neurosurgery did well, getting 4 of the top 11 national spots for Neurology & Neurosurgery (UCSF Med Center, No. 2; UCLA Med Center, No.8; Cedars-Sinai, No. 10, Stanford Hospital, No. 11).

The report also ranked Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and Children's Hospital of Stanford in the national rankings of kiddie institutions (Nos. 5 and 10 respectively). ❖

# Observation for the Month:

*Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that continues to count - Winston Churchill*

**This meeting wouldn't be possible without our Exhibitors!**



**Meetings of Interest for the next 12 months:**

AANS/CNS Joint Cerebrovascular Section: Annual Meeting, July 26-30, 2021, Colorado Springs, CO

AANS/CNS Joint Spine Section: Annual Meeting, July 28-31, 2021, San Diego CA

AANS: Annual Meeting, August 21-25, 2021, Orlando, FL

CSNS Meeting, August 20-21, 2021, Orlando, FL

NERVES Annual Meeting, August 18-20, 2021, Orlando, FL

Western Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, Santa Ana Pueblo, NM, September 10-13, 2021

North American Spine Society: Annual Meeting, September 29-Oct. 2, 2021, Boston, MA

Congress of Neurological Surgeons: Annual Meeting, October 16-20, 2021 Austin, TX

CSNS Meeting, October 15-16, 2021, Austin, TX

International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery: Annual Meeting, November 14-18, 2021, Singapore

AANS/CNS Joint Pediatric NS Section: Ann. Meeting, December 7-10, 2021, Salt Lake City, UT

Cervical Spine Research Society: Annual Meeting, December 2-4, 2021, Atlanta, GA

**CANS, Annual Meeting, January 15-16, 2022; Location TBA**

North American Neuromodulation Society: Mid-year Meeting, July 15-17, Orlando, FL

Southern Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, February 17-19, 2022, Hollywood, FL

California Neurology Society: Meeting, November 12-15, 2021, Santa Barbara, CA

AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pain: Annual Meeting, TBA

Neurosurgical Society of America: Annual Meeting, 2022 TBA

Rocky Mountain Neurosurgical Society: Ann. Meet., 2022, TBA

New England Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, 2022, TBA

Any **CANS** member who is looking for a new associate/partner/PA/NP or who is looking for a position (all California neurosurgery residents are CANS members and get this newsletter) is free to submit a 150 word summary of a position available or of one's qualifications for a two month posting in this newsletter. Submit your text to the CANS office by E-mail ([emily@cans1.org](mailto:emily@cans1.org)) or fax (916-457-8202)—Ed. ❖

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