

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS, INC. NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1987

VOL. XIV, No. 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Neurosurgical Excellence - Onward and Upward"

Melvin L. Cheatham, M.D.

Another year is almost past - a year which has been very eventful for CANS. We have seen our membership rise by nearly 10%. Our treasurer reports that CANS is once again financially healthy. This has enabled us to develop new areas of member services.

In October we had the first of two billing procedure seminars for members and their office personnel. A second, and expanded, seminar will be held in Southern California on Friday, January 15, immediately preceding the annual CANS meeting.

Our first seminar was well received and is detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter. With implementation of suggestions derived from that meeting, the next session should be even more successful. These seminars are intended to offer useful information regarding office procedures and billing matters during these difficult times.

CANS owes its beginning to the ideas and vision of neurosurgeons whose prominence in California Neurosurgery speaks for itself. Through the years, a continuing lineage of dedicated leaders and board members have forged the trail which has led CANS to its present high level of endeavors.

During this past year, we have again been favored with an outstanding Board of Directors, laboring tirelessly in dedication to maintaining the goals set forth in our articles of incorporation and bylaws, quoted in part: "To promote in all respects the medical practice, continuing education and advancement of the discipline of neurological surgery, to promote scientific and professional exchange between members of this Association, to maintain and strive constantly to improve the high quality of neurosurgical care for the people of California.

We can be justly proud to be Neurological Surgeons in the first place, and equally proud to be members of our outstanding California Association of Neurological Surgeons.

In communicating with neurosurgical training program directors, I am constantly impressed, as are they, with the great numbers and the high caliber of applicants. These young physicians who aspire to become neurosurgeons are frequently AOA, often have graduate degrees and may have excelled in sports, music and other areas as well. How exciting to see this continuing trend in our specialty!

In spite of all of these good things, CANS will never be any better than the willingness of its members to be actively involved. With this thought in mind, may each of our members feel the desire and the responsibility to be actively involved in, and supportive of the California Association of Neurological Surgeons. CANS NEEDS YOU - and those of us who are active in CANS believe you need us!

Please plan to attend the annual membership meeting of CANS, January 15-17, 1988 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Laguna Niguel, California. ■

Guest Article

"MERGING A.A.N.S. AND C.N.S."

Paul C. Bucy, M.D.

In his Editorial of July 1987 Dr. Frank P. Smith has again stated very clearly why the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons should merge into one organization. This has long been my opinion. There are many reasons why such a merger would be advantageous, but the major one is that with the one organization there would no longer be any doubt as to who represents neurological surgery. At the present time other organizations including various branches of the government would have no doubt as to where they should turn when it becomes necessary to deal with our specialty. The creation of one neurosurgical society would greatly strengthen our position.

JCSNS MEETINGS - BALTIMORE OCTOBER 23-24, 1987

The meetings of the Joint Council of State Neurosurgical Societies, just prior to the Annual Meeting of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, began on Friday evening, October 23, with the usual caucuses of the quadrant representatives, as well as the special committees. It was within this segment of the program that further developments were related in sessions during the following day.

On the Saturday morning, the various reports were made relative to the quadrant and committee deliberations. The issues were entirely reminiscent of the same problems of recent years.

At the Saturday luncheon, those attending had the advantage of listening to comments from the President of the Congress and the President of the AANS. Dr. Don Quest, CNS, described the new program for potential placement of residents in practice after completion of their residency training. It was interesting that this seemed to be an end product of our survey conducted by the Manpower Subcommittee of the JCSNS. Anyone involved and responsive in that survey would be very happy to know that there has been some fruition. Dr. Quest described activation of a Professional Conduct Committee, to which members of the Congress can bring complaints about professional conduct of other neurosurgeons. He also spoke about activities in law reform in dealing with medical malpractice. He indicated enthusiasm for pursuit of establishing a true relative value schedule, and endorsed the concept of the survey being presented to all neurosurgeons.

Dr. Henry Garretson, AANS, paid tribute to various members working for the good of the specialty of neurological surgery, and paid particular tribute to the programing for prevention of head injuries. He outlined the concept of the registry for head and spinal cord injury cases. Emphasis was given to the 92% of serious injuries in which seat belts were not attached.

Dr. Garretson emphasized the need for all neurosurgeons to participate in filling out the questionnaire relative to the extensive survey being sent to all neurosurgeons. There was some questioning, with a salvo from one member of the audience in particular who asked in a fairly provocative manner as to what was going to be done about the results of the survey after they had been obtained. This led to further questioning as to how any specific decisions could be made for neurological surgery with the division of authority between the AANS and the Congress. Dr. Garretson fielded these questions quite well, explaining the interrelationship of the AANS and the Congress, but there was much left unanswered relative to the primary posture of the alleged spokesman for neurological surgery.

It would be incumbent upon any reporter to relate that all went well with the JCSNS in Baltimore. A fairly critical analysis would have to relate that many states were not represented. There was a certain "ho-hum"

attitude in general, and probably the entire program would have been a total flop if there had not been representation by the President of the AANS and of the Congress at the noontime meeting. A writer from the New Yorker magazine would probably say that Dr. Merwyn Bagan was the most interesting and enthusiastic essayist. In his report, he described various aspects of changes in methods of reimbursement of fees. He discussed the element of participating versus non-participating physicians, and mentioned the various types of forms to be filled out in the future. He indicated that the program for studying various issues at the Harvard based panel is "moving along."

For programing and enthusiastic infusion in the next meeting of the JCSNS, it probably will be more and more difficult to gain commitment for attendance, just prior to the AANS meeting, of those who have always considered themselves active delegates. We lost attendance from quite a few of the states in Baltimore, and next year in April we may be lucky to have attendance from the allegorical enthusiasts of the original JSEC. ■

REIMBURSEMENT PROBLEMS IN NEUROSURGICAL PRACTICE

The California Association of Neurological Surgeons has initiated a new program, beginning in October 1987, for offering to neurosurgeons and their office staffs the details relative to securing reimbursement for neurosurgical services provided to patients. The first format was provided at the Renaissance Hotel in San Francisco, on October 13, 1987, in conjunction with the sessions of the American College of Surgeons. Essayists included the President of CMRI, Dr. William Moncrief, as well as Dr. John Tupper, senior authority of the American Medical Association. The practical elements for billing relative to Medicare-Blue Shield were provided by Ms. Eileen Turner, and CMA representative Barbara Donaldson, coding expert.

Various aspects relative to the mundane problems of medical-legal billings were presented by Dr. George Ablin, CMRI Board member.

The main advantage of this type of exposure was that it gave an opportunity for various office secretaries and bookkeepers to present their questions and burning issues to those who sit in prime positions for the average neurosurgeon recovering payment for services rendered. It was attended by about 65 interested individuals in the San Francisco Bay area, and a similar program is planned for Southern California, just prior to the Annual Meeting of CANS, at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, January 15, 1988. It will be a morning session with luncheon and a short afternoon program. This should be an area where those who have had problems with billing can come into the discussion arena, and hopefully gain answers that would not otherwise be available. The programing is provided through financing of CANS dues, with the concept that members will appreciate participation in maintaining our specialty in California.



California Association of Neurological Surgeons, Inc.
Sacramento Office

SURVEY ALERT

2740 Fulton Ave., Suite 208A
Sacramento, CA 95821
(916) 971-3524

Dear **CANS** Member,

Our national neurosurgical organizations, AANS and CNS jointly are in the process of conducting a nationwide survey. This comprehensive questionnaire will be distributed to all neurosurgeons in the next several weeks.

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Past President

George Ablin, M.D.

Directors

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George H. Koenig, M.D.
Edwin W. Amyes, M.D.
Jay Levy, M.D.
Gerald D. Silverberg, M.D.
William O. Wild, M.D.

The survey covers information on demographic data, manpower, socio-economics and professional liability. The questionnaire is necessarily long and may seem overwhelming. However, most questions can be answered easily and a part of the questionnaire can be completed by your office staff.

The analyzed results of the survey will be very important to neurosurgery in several ways, including as data base in negotiations with government and other third party payors. Such data have not been available to neurosurgery to date.

You are asked to make time, please, and to make the effort to complete the survey promptly. Please make a copy and keep for your own reference.

The separate annual California survey via CANS will also arrive shortly, with more emphasis on fees and professional liability costs. Please complete that one too as the data from the national survey may not be readily and freely available to the state neurosurgical societies.

Best of the holiday season to all of you. See you at the Annual CANS Meeting at the beautiful Ritz Carlton Hotel in Laguna Niguel.

Very Sincerely,

Randall W. Smith, M.D.
Secretary

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CANS Annual Session Program 1988
Ritz Carlton Hotel — Laguna Niguel

Friday, January 15

- 9-6 Registration - **Ballroom Foyer**
10-3 Reimbursement Seminar - **Pavilion 1-2**
3-5 Board of Directors Meeting - **Pavilion 3**
6 pm Welcoming Cocktail Party (no host) -
Pavilion 1-3
All Day Scientific Exhibits - **Promenade**

Saturday, January 16

- 8 am Continental Breakfast - **Promenade**
8:30-noon Meeting - **Pavilion 1-3**
Afternoon at leisure
6:30 pm Cocktails (open bar) - **Pavilion 1-5**
7:30 pm Banquet - **Pavilion 1-5**
All Day Scientific Exhibits - **Promenade**

Sunday, January 17

- 8 am Continental Breakfast - **Promenade**
8:30-11 am Meeting - **Pavilion 1-3**
11-noon CANS Annual Business Meeting -
Pavilion 1-3
8-noon Scientific Exhibits - **Promenade**

Tennis and Golf Fans!!

Make your arrangements with the hotel in advance.

CANS AWARD

At its most recent meeting, November 7, 1987, the Board of Directors of the California Association of Neurological Surgeons founded the CANS Award to be given to California neurosurgeons who have made outstanding contribution to the art and science of neurological surgery.

KUDOS FOR CANS MEMBERS

N. Edalatpour, M.D.

Elected to the Board of Directors of CMRI for District 6.

Philipp M. Lippe, M.D.

Elected President of the American Academy of Pain Medicine.

**REACTIONS TO POSSIBLE MERGER
AANS-CNS**

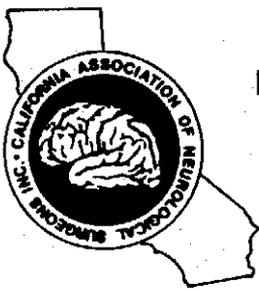
In the July 1987 issue of the CANS Newsletter, attention was paid to the potential for merging the AANS with the CNS. The whole matter came into focus at the recent JCSNS meetings in Baltimore, just prior to the Annual Meeting of the Congress. The various factors have been reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter.

In gaining opinions from various authorities, including past presidents, current presidents, and president-elects of the AANS and the CNS, correspondence has shown that the main advantage for keeping the two organizations separate is that the Congress serves as a training ground for those who would prove to be future leaders of the AANS. This concept in itself endorses the total problem, namely that the former President of the Congress is completely loyal to the concept of checking with his former allies before making any decisions as President of the AANS. There is nothing wrong with this, except that it takes endless amount of time and has the possibility of never actually developing the decision-making process.

There are many advantages to merging the two major organizations. The Congress could take over much of the educational activity related to the various subspecialties that now occupy too much time of the administration of the AANS. The Congress could maintain its interim meeting in September, and this section could continue to publish the outstanding journal, *Neurosurgery*. Current members of the Congress who are not Board certified could be accepted as Associate members of the AANS. Thus, members of the one-spokesman society could all work together in fulfilling the destiny of our specialty. A potential table of organization has been developed, with reference to various allocations of responsibility, and anyone interested may procure this material by writing to the Editor of this Newsletter, Frank P. Smith, M.D., 880 Cass Street, Monterey, CA 93940.

Check the 1985 Directory, if your picture is not there please send us one. (Black and white, 4" x 5", upper torso and head only.) Please note any corrections and let us know that as well.





REIMBURSEMENT PROBLEMS IN NEUROSURGICAL PRACTICE

A "How To" Seminar

A Member Service Presentation of the California Association of Neurological Surgeons, Inc.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 1988

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

To Be Held At:
RITZ CARLTON HOTEL
Laguna Niguel, CA

SPEAKERS INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM:

Medicare — Blue Shield and TransAmerica Occidental
California Medical Association
Bureau of Industrial Accidents

PROGRAM:

Speakers will give formal presentations from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Lunch from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. — A chance to share with other office personnel what works and what doesn't.

1:30 - 3:00 p.m. will be round table discussions with the speakers.

BRING YOUR "FAVORITE" PROBLEMS WITH YOU!!!

Send a photocopy of the registration form below with your check to CANS.

REIMBURSEMENT SEMINAR ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM

January 15, 1987 • 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Ritz Carlton Hotel — Laguna Niguel, CA

(Name(s):

_____ x \$25 (Lunch) _____

_____ x \$25 (Lunch) _____

TOTAL _____

Business Address _____

Make checks payable to **CANS**
Mail to **CANS**, 2740 Fulton Ave., #208A
Sacramento, CA 95621

FEE SCHEDULE FOR SEMINAR:

FREE to members of CANS and their staff

\$50 - Staff of non-members of CANS

\$75 - Neurosurgeons who are not member of CANS. (\$25 will be credited toward application fee when applying for membership in CANS)

\$25 - Lunch (all attendees)

**California Association of
Neurological Surgeons, Inc.**

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SACRAMENTO, CA 95821