

Dear Colleagues;

As your new Society President I would like to thank you for the trust you have placed in me. As one of my first official duties I would also like to extend a hearty "Thank You" to our now Past President Murray Willis, MD for the yeoman service that he has provided this Society, it's members, and the patients of Colorado for the last two years. We owe a great deal to him as much has been accomplished under his leadership, not the least of which is a long awaited and much deserved increase in Medicaid reimbursement for anesthesia services. I certainly hope that he will remain active in his new role as his expertise in the financial aspects of anesthesia care is indispensable. Again - Thank You, Murray!

As I'm sure you have read in Murray's farewell message, we start this new term with several challenges. Our efforts to preserve the safety of anesthesia care in Colorado by suing for a reversal of the Governor's opt out of the requirement of physician supervision for Medicare patients met with defeat from the state Supreme Court. I thank our legal team who argued the case superbly but were unable to overcome political expediency. I also thank the Colorado Medical Society, American Society of Anesthesiologists, American Medical Association, and all of you members of CSA for the help provided in the form of joint lawsuit, monetary support, amicus briefs, or any combination of these. Without this help and the support of our CSA members we would not have been able to get as far as we did. Currently the CSA board is contemplating with our legal and lobbying consultants the course of any further action to fiercely fight for the safety of Colorado's patients and the integrity and value of our profession.

While the success that Murray achieved in Medicaid reimbursement is significant, even he admits that the increase falls short of our goal of parity with Workman's Compensation rates. We are already planning our strategy to go back to the legislature with a request for another increase. Achieving parity in payment will be a multiyear endeavor involving many time-consuming discussions and meetings with the state Medicaid regulators, auditors, and legislators.

Based on these two issues it is vitally important for me to convey to you the absolute critical nature of being involved in advocacy for our profession. Yes – I'm talking about PAC contributions and other forms of political activism. Our profession is under assault from those who envy the stature our profession has gained through long periods of schooling and comprehensive training, and those who wish to devalue our contribution to patient care and find "cost savings" through us. Murray was successful in great part because we had a few members who contributed to the Committee for Physician Anesthesia Care, the Small Donor Committee, and ASAPAC. The funds available from the first two organizations opened doors at the state capitol which then allowed us to deliver our message. We need to redouble the efforts to replenish the fund because it took the sum total of our resources to attain our goal this past term. Please contribute the maximum allowable to the two PAC funds for our state – your money will be used wisely. Stay tuned for further updates on this subject.

Again, I wish to thank you for this opportunity to represent you – the Physician Anesthesiologists of Colorado – and to promote the medical specialty of Anesthesiology and to work to improve the state of health care delivery for our patients.



Daniel J. Janik, MD

