Louisiana Anesthesiology 2017 Recap
The Louisiana Society of Anesthesiologists held our annual meeting “Louisiana Anesthesiology 2017” on March 25 with a great kick-off party on March 24. The meeting was held at the Renaissance New Orleans Arts Warehouse District on Tchoupitoulas Street and was accredited for 7.25 AMA Category 1 CME Credits.

Over 100 members attended the very successful meeting. Member feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Highlights of the meeting included an ASA update by current ASA President, Jeffrey Plagenhoef, M.D., and several other presentations including Pediatric Anesthesia for the Non-Pediatric Anesthesiologist, The Perioperative Surgical Home: Myth or Reality, and Difficult Communication Up and Down the Hierarchy Ladder. Resident members were in the spotlight this year with two different sessions. First was the Resident Paper Competition, won by John Singleterry, DO from LSU Health Shreveport and at the conclusion of the day was the very popular and entertaining resident Jeopardy game, won this year by Seth MacMahon and Jay Trusheim from Ochsner.

After a really tasty lunch, which was included in the program, problem-based learning discussions were held allowing attendees to choose an area of focus with an expert. The afternoon also provided attendees options of several workshops including a social media workshop, a risk management workshop and two different workshops on trouble-shooting of modern anesthesia delivery systems.

Join us for Louisiana Anesthesiology 2018!
We are excited to announce that Louisiana Anesthesiology 2018 will be held on Friday April 13 and Saturday April 14, 2018, which coincides with the French Quarter Festival, making for a special weekend. We hope to attract a wider national audience for this educational meeting so pass on the dates to your friends around the country to come to New Orleans for French Quarter Fest and pick up some CME at the same time. We will be returning to the Renaissance Arts Hotel for our program, so when the learning is done, you can head out to the French Quarter Fest. Mark your calendar and make plans now to join us for what promises to be another excellent event.
The American Society of Anesthesiologists Legislative Conference was held in Washington, D.C. on May 15 – 17. This annual event consists of three days of education and updates on the many legislative and regulatory issues that are facing physician anesthesiologists and all physicians at state and national levels. This meeting drew several hundred interested physician anesthesiologists to our nation’s Capitol.

The Louisiana Society of Anesthesiologists was well represented at the Legislative Conference by seven LSA members and 3 resident members. The LSA pays for the registration for the meeting, but the individual volunteer member covers travel expenses. The LSA does provide $500 reimbursement for interested resident members to attend.

The first day of the meeting focused on state issues. This year the APRN Compact and Consensus model were discussed, as well as the out-of-network billing issues that have become such a hot-button issue in Louisiana. The second day focused on national issues and speakers include Congressman, representatives from regulatory agencies such as CMS, as well as ASA staff and members.

A focal point of the Legislative Conference was the tremendous response by members and laypersons with regard to the VA Nursing Handbook proposal to remove physician supervision of nurse anesthetists. As you may remember, in December 2016 the VA published its final rule, which specifically continued the requirement for physician supervision of nurse anesthetists. The VA followed the advice of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, bi-partisan Congressional input, and over 125,000 comments submitted against removing physician supervision of nurse anesthetists. The ASA SafeVACare campaign allowed for citizens to stand-up for veterans undergoing anesthesia and protect their ability to have their anesthesia care provided or supervised by a physician. The LSA is proud to have played a significant role in this campaign and that is a testament to all of us as members. Unfortunately, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists is supporting H.R.1783, which would ignore the public comments and thorough debate and remove physician supervision of nurse anesthetists in the care of Veterans. ASA is strongly opposed to this legislation and we remain vigilant.

Another issue discussed this year was the opioid epidemic. Regardless of your position on this issue, it is clear that it has risen to the attention of regulators and lawmakers and physician anesthesiologists are uniquely qualified to serve as resources and active participants in how this issue is addressed. We support programs that allow for education of patients on safe storage and disposal of unused medications. Additionally we advocate for insurance coverage for multi-modal and multi-disciplinary pain management. The ASA also supports increased education of physicians on safe and effective opioid prescribing techniques and support for research for decreasing opioid usage.

While at the Legislative Conference we were further educated on MACRA implementation. We support a proposal to hold physicians harmless from 2016 PQRS reporting negative adjustments in 2018. Additionally, due to the complex and dramatic nature of this program, we advocated that additional time be allocated to MIPS reporting allowing a “pick you pace” option into 2018.
CMS needs to recognize the specialization of anesthesiology and develop APMs that apply to our practices more directly. In short we support a more gradual implementation of MACRA with more physician education and more timely publication of requirements.

It would have been impossible to hold a Legislative Conference without a discussion of the recent passage by the House of the American Health Care Act (AHCA). The House passed this legislation on May 4, 2017, allowing very little time for many, including legislators, to fully understand the implications. As such, we, the ASA, did not take a position on the legislation, but rather reiterated our positions as physician anesthesiologists. First, we fully support the value of physician-directed care and anything that decreases that safety net for patients is unacceptable. We also support access to affordable health services for patients. We support choice of physician, insurer and type of health plan, including physician-led care regardless of geographic location. We advocate for access to anesthesia and pain services by preserving coverage for essential benefits and continued insurance coverage for patients with preexisting conditions. There is no doubt that debate will continue on this legislation and the current Affordable Care Act. ASA has the staff and leadership in place to help guide us through this process.

Finally, armed with information, we headed to Capitol Hill on Wednesday May 17, 2017, which happened to be a record heat day in Washington, D.C. and we felt right at home. The LSA attempts to set up appointments with our entire Congressional delegation weeks in advance. This year we were able to have appointments with each office except one. We are always interested and excited to speak with Congressional staff about our issues and they are very receptive and knowledgeable. We were especially lucky this year to have personal meetings with Senator Cassidy, Majority Whip Scalise, Congressmen Abraham and Higgins, and briefly with Congressman Graves. These are rare moments of access that allow us to communicate directly with our leaders, and it is our job as LSA representatives to communicate our complicated issues in a concise and effective manner. We did our job well this year as always. Three resident members in our delegation were very effective speakers and offer a glimpse into our advocates of the future.

The ASA Legislative Conference is an eye opening and for some, life-changing experience. It is very hard to ignore the challenges that we as physicians, and especially physician anesthesiologists, face on behalf of our patients and our professions. We must make our voices heard and we can't shy away from our responsibilities to ourselves and our patients. Now is the time to get active and get involved. I believe it would be impossible to attend this conference and not come home with a change in attitude and an overwhelming need to get involved. If you are interested in attending next year’s ASA Legislative Conference please contact Janna and we can get you involved now.
On April 11, 2017, the Louisiana Society of Anesthesiologists held its first LSA Day at the Louisiana Capitol. LSA members and some interested medical students spent the afternoon meeting with several state legislators educating them on the critical role of physician anesthesiologists in the care of our patients, their constituents. These one-on-one interactions with state legislators give us the opportunity to discuss our issues and allow them to ask any questions that they may have regarding the practice of anesthesiology in the State of Louisiana. This is no substitute for interactions back in your district with your legislators, but it does allow us a great platform.

We were excited to be able to set up an exhibit table in the Capitol Rotunda, which was the first public display of our new LSA travel kit. Our travel kit consists of a tablecloth with the LSA logo, two large vertical banners, each displaying information about physician anesthesiologists, and new LSA folders which can be used to hold our informative handouts, which this year included several of the ASA When Seconds Count... informational handouts. This LSA travel kit made for a great display and visual draw to legislators. We are excited to announce that the travel kit is available for your use in your area. If interested in using the LSA travel kit, please contact Janna Pecquet, LSA Executive Director, at janna@lsa-online.org.

The highlight of the day was the acknowledgement of our efforts and dedication as physician anesthesiologists to the care of our patients. This recognition came in the form of House Resolution Number 4 by Representative Frank Hoffman, Chair of the House Health and Welfare Committee, and Senate Resolution Number 4 by Senator Fred Mills, Jr., Chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee. On behalf of the LSA, we thank both Representative Hoffman and Senator Mills and the Louisiana House and Senate for recognizing the first Louisiana Society of Anesthesiologists Day at the Capitol. Please join us next year for another great LSA Day at the Capitol and a chance to educate your legislators on the critical role physician anesthesiologists play in the care of our patients.

For information on how to arrange a meeting with your state representative or senator, please contact Janna Pecquet, LSA Executive Director, at janna@lsa-online.org.