

The Official Publication of the Florida Society of Anesthesiologists | Serving Anesthesiologists and Patients



Jeffrey S. Jacobs, M.D.
President, Florida Society of Anesthesiologists

Presidential Pennings *Legislative Session Hot Topic: Balanced Billing*

“The FSA is in favor of protecting the ability of each of our members to receive fair payment for services rendered. Prohibiting balanced billing would force anesthesiologists to contract with each insurance company, even at potentially unfair rates.”

As I sit back and think of the recent weather reports from across the United States, I realize how fortunate we are to reside in Florida. We have surf, sunshine, great theme parks and diversity. Most importantly, we never have to “dig out” to get to work! Sometimes, though, we need to avoid digging out of trouble in other arenas: our professional ones.

March heralds miserable weather conditions across the country, and it rings in legislative season in Florida. This year our elected officials are debating topics that are far reaching. Some of these could affect us, and without the outstanding lobbying team we have in Tallahassee, it would be up to us, individually, to read the proposed bills and to interpret how each might cause us grief. Thankfully, we often know what’s coming before it is official, and your FSA can prepare and strategize as needed.

We hope that this legislative session will be a bit tamer than last year’s two-month marathon when we constantly implored you, our members, to make calls and take action. It was primarily through your dedication, PAC contributions and efforts that our specialty came out unscathed. The big-ticket item on the table this year is balanced billing. For the uninitiated, balanced billing is when you care for a patient covered by an insurance company with which you have no contract, and you attempt to get fairly paid for your services. This practice is being scrutinized by some of our legislators, and different options are being actively discussed.

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Unless otherwise noted, all articles are the opinions of the contributors, and the FSA does not agree, disagree or endorse any services or products.

Presidential Pennings, from page 1

The FSA is in favor of protecting the ability of each of our members to receive fair payment for services rendered. Prohibiting balanced billing would force anesthesiologists to contract with each insurance company, even at potentially unfair rates. Balanced billing ensures that insurance companies negotiate in good faith. Clearly this bill has the potential to directly affect each group's bottom line, which is all the more reason to stay engaged and to contribute to your PACs. A \$250 investment now is pennies on the potential number of dollars you stand to lose.

In addition to this issue, there are always surprises that could arise before session ends. That's why it's also important to become part of the emergency text "net"work that we will cast *only in an emergency*. Note that those of you who have already shared your cell number with the FSA have never been contacted. I intend to keep our promise and only notify you if and when needed. Text FSA to 33733 to join the FSA Legislative Action Alert.

So, instead of shoveling snow and scraping ice, please make your PAC donations and subscribe to the text network, and thank your lucky stars you belong to your FSA. 

FSA Mission Statement

Florida Society of Anesthesiologists:
Patient Centered, Physician Driven

FSA Values

As members of the Florida Society of Anesthesiologists, we believe in and are committed to the following values:

- **Integrity** – We believe this is the center of all our activities.
- **Advocacy** – We are working for our patients and members.
- **Safety** – This is our patient care focus.
- **Education** – We believe in continuous learning.
- **Leadership** – We look to guide the future of our specialty.
- **Accountability** – We believe in taking responsibility.
- **Compassion** – Because WE care.



THE FLORIDA SOCIETY OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS

ANNUAL MEETING

June 12-14, 2015 | The Breakers Resort & Spa | Palm Beach, Florida

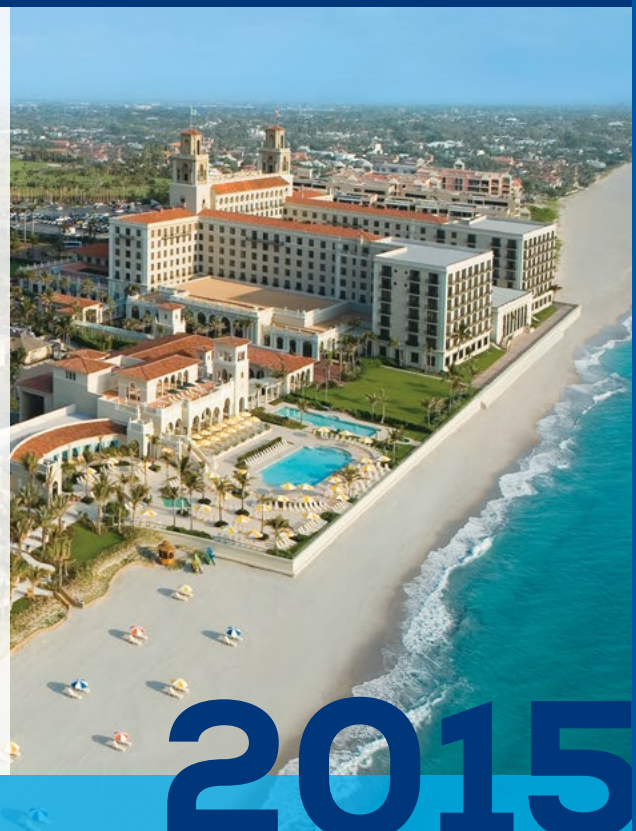
"The Perioperative Surgical Home"

The 2015 FSA Annual Meeting will focus on the Perioperative Surgical Home (PSH), introducing attendees to what the southeastern states are doing to implement this new paradigm of practice. Both private and public practice groups will present on what they have done over the last 18 months as well as where they are going with the PSH. Topics will include preoperative and intraoperative strategies, metrics to measure, defining success and making the PSH fiscally possible.

Additionally, dynamic ASA leaders will share their thoughts on nationwide issues, and we are very proud to welcome back Andy Harris, M.D., the first anesthesiologist in the U.S. Congress, who will present his unique perspective on what's happening in Washington, D.C.

Registration is Open!

View the [Advanced Program](#).



Same great location!

2015

Tallahassee Report

Tucker and Twain Got It Right: No One Is Safe When the Legislature Is in Town

By Jon Johnson, FSA Legislative Consultant

As I write this article, we are in the middle of the 2015 Legislative Session. While American lawyer Gideon John Tucker is probably the originator of this pithy quip, Mark Twain is often quoted as saying, "No man's life, liberty, or property is safe while the Legislature is in session." Once again this is true for the medical profession.

This year due to some egregious air ambulance and medical transport billings that received lots of media attention, the issue of balance billing has again reared its ugly head. Legislation was filed by Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville) and Representative Carlos Trujillo (R-Doral/Miami) to limit the ability to balance bill in emergency medical situations. The problem is the legislation applies broadly to a statutory definition of emergency medical care and services, which includes labor and delivery services. The balance bill prohibition would not stop with emergency transport but would follow the patient through his or her care.

The bill has insurance companies pay non-participating providers the greater of three amounts: Medicare reduced by copayment; an amount generally used by the insurer to determine a reimbursement amount, such as usual and customary; or the amount negotiated with another participating provider. Once payment is provided, a physician provider would be prohibited from billing for any excess amount for the services. The obvious problem with this is why would an insurance company need to negotiate with a physician provider if this legislation passes?

Another important and recurring issue for anesthesiologists is supervision of anesthetists. Independent practice legislation for nurses was filed this session by Representative Cary Pigman (R-Sebring). As a reminder, this legislation would allow nurse anesthetists to practice independently. So, once again we are defending patient safety by making sure anesthetists are supervised by a physician.

As in past years, we find ourselves defending on many fronts. I encourage you to get involved with the legislative workgroups and the PAC to find out how you can assist in our efforts to protect the anesthesiology profession. [FSA](#)



Text FSA to 33733 to Join the FSA Legislative Action Alert!

We are excited to announce that we have secured text messaging capabilities to provide for instant communications capability with our membership. Thank you to the nearly 300 members who have already opted in to our alerts!

Communicating with members through LIMITED text alerts will provide us with an immediate and real-time platform for engaging membership on critical legislative issues. You will continue to receive regular email communications from us with the text message feature reserved only for the following:

1. Reminders to contact specific legislators via text/tweet/phone regarding a particular piece of legislation; some texts will be accompanied by a suggested message you can forward
2. Important legislative updates

We are very sensitive to member privacy and have developed strict protocols to ensure that the FSA's text outreach will take place only during the most critical moments of our legislative efforts.



ASAPAC: Your Society Needs You

Each year you are bombarded by requests for donations to our ASA Political Action Committee (ASAPAC). I know that the regular email reminders and flyers we send out during the summer months are annoying. However, I do not offer apologies for this minor infringement on your cyberspace—the message is so important. Our profession is under attack. We face very serious scope of practice issues that if enacted would not only impact your ability to work but also the safety of our patients. There are constant attempts by legislators to reduce your payments; funding for educating the next generation of anesthesiologists is also under threat—and the list goes on.

The AANA, unlike many of our members, sees the opportunity that a well-funded PAC creates. AANA members give at almost 100 percent (as compared to about 20 percent of our members).

Please consider these issues and make a gift. A gift that you feel comfortable with! It will feel so good that you have joined the team.

Michael C. Lewis, M.D.

Please Make a Contribution to the ASAPAC! It's Easy:

1. Go to the ASA webpage: www.asahq.org
2. Log in at top of page
3. Click on ASAPAC tab
4. Donate



Contribute Today!

What Is FSAPAC?

How we practice our profession, our ability to be compensated and who gets to provide anesthesia services—all these crucial topics are dictated in Tallahassee. The **FSA's Political Action Committee** serves a vital function for our profession, emphasizing to our legislators the importance of physician-led anesthesia.

The recent successes of FSAPAC are due to our strong advocacy efforts. Tremendous efforts have been put forth, not only by our Tallahassee team, but also by physician volunteers and your FSA board, working on behalf of you and our patients. **Every Florida anesthesiologist needs to be part of these efforts.**

How Can You Help?

Donate! Contributions to FSAPAC can be used *only* for state political activities and go directly to promote the practice of anesthesiology here in Florida. A strong PAC indicates to legislators an engaged constituency and allows us to support those legislators that support the practice of medicine.

Also keep in mind that FSAPAC, unlike the federal PAC, can accept corporate contributions. A single voice can inspire a group. Encourage your colleagues to support the practice of anesthesiology here in Florida.

Contributions

To contribute to FSAPAC, visit the FSAPAC page on the FSA's website:
www.fsahq.org/donate-to-the-fsa-political-action-committee-pac

Contribution Suggestions*

- Chairman's Council - \$1,000
- Circle of Distinction - \$500
- Active Member - \$200
- Retired Member - \$200
- Affiliate Member - \$75

**PAC donations can also be made in monthly installments.*


Society News

FSA Speakers Bureau Promotes Patient Education and Safety

FSA promotes patient education and safety through a number of initiatives including our Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau is composed of FSA members who are available to speak on a variety of important health care and medical topics including:

- What Patients Should Know and Questions Patients Should Ask
- The Education, Training and Responsibilities of Your Anesthesiologist
- The Importance of Physician-Led Anesthesia
- Prescription Drug Safety
- Healthy Approaches to Pain Management
- Patient Safety in the Operating Room

If you are interested in participating in the Speakers Bureau or if you know of a group that would like to have a speaker, please email speakers@fsahq.org.

FSA will take care of scheduling your speaking opportunity and can provide talking points and additional support. 

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Asset Protection While Growing Wealth

SPONSOR OF THE 2014 AND 2015 FSA CONFERENCE IN PALM BEACH

Dennis Michels, CFP™ will provide insights into how he has helped guide physicians through a series of solid techniques including:

- Asset protection
- Defer and deduct up to \$200,000 per year into a qualified retirement plan
- How to draw tax free income from your investments during retirement
- How to earn 7% in a world of zero percent interest rates

407-691-5357

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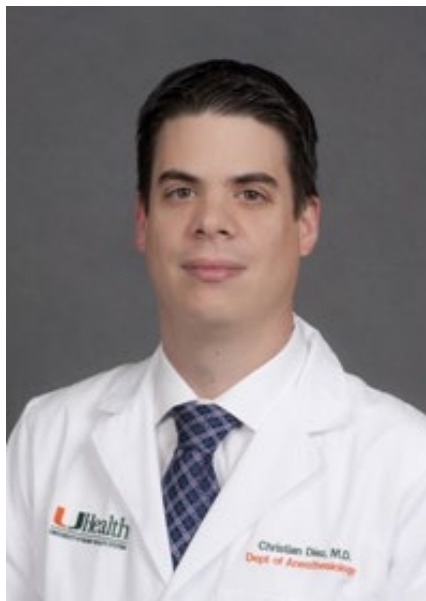
Meet Your Leaders

Who Is the FSA? We Are You.

In each edition of FSA Today, we profile a member of your FSA board of directors to help you get to know your leaders better...

FSA Assistant Treasurer Christian Diez, M.D., M.B.A.


Christian Diez, M.D., M.B.A., was born and raised in South Florida. He obtained his undergraduate, medical school and master's in business degrees at the University of Miami. He completed his anesthesiology residency at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital, where he was chosen as chief resident. He has been faculty at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine since 2008 and currently serves as the medical student clerkship director and associate vice chair for clinical affairs. He specializes in trauma anesthesia, in which he has assisted overseas, and he was selected by the Department of Health and Human Services to serve on its Multi-Specialty Enhancement Team.



Christian Diez, M.D., M.B.A.



Dr. Diez with his wife, Jennifer, and their daughters

Chris met his wife, Jennifer, in college, and they have been married for eight years. They have three daughters, Grace (6), Juliet (4) and Abigail (1). He enjoys spending his free time with his family, and his hobbies include running and reading. 

What's your FSA membership worth?

- CME and Annual Meeting Savings\$ 954
- Preventing Medicare Payment Cuts\$ 103,670
- Preserving our specialty by promoting physician led anesthesia practicePRICELESS!



FLORIDA SOCIETY OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS

Join now or renew your membership to experience these benefits and more!

FSA Calendar

June 12-14, 2015

FSA Annual Meeting

The Breakers
Palm Beach, Fla.

www.fsahq.org/meeting/2015-annual-meeting

June 26-28, 2015

Annual Perioperative Surgical Home Summit

Hyatt Regency
Huntington Beach, Calif.

www.asahq.org

October 24-28, 2015

Anesthesiology 2015: ASA Annual Meeting

Leaders in Perioperative Medicine

San Diego, Calif.

www.asahq.org/Annual-Meeting.aspx

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