



June 2019 – Here's What's Up!

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Message from FSA President

Hello members,

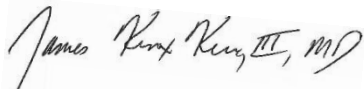
Our 2019 FSA Annual Meeting is next week, and our program committee has built a solid event filled with good information, relevant news, valuable sessions and workshops – and some fun! Some highlights of the meeting are presented below, and you can see the [program in its entirety on the FSA Website](#).



And while the months preceding this meeting were filled with planning and coordination by our program committee, the officers and several members of the Society were also extremely busy on the legislative front. Two successful trips were completed in the spring, to Tallahassee in March for FSA's annual Legislative Days, and to Washington, DC for the 2019 ASA Legislative Conference. Utilizing the wisdom of our long-time lobbying colleagues at Johnson & Blanton, coupled with our savvy PR team at Vancore Communications, 25+ FSA attendees brought the important message of safe, physician-led anesthesia to our state and national legislators. Our Legislative Affairs chair Dr. Jay Epstein provides a great report on our meetings in this newsletter. **Be sure to read this article.**

The annual meeting also brings to a close my term as your President. It's been my great honor to serve the Society in this capacity this year. I'm proud of the work we were able to accomplish and can think of no better way to wrap up my tour of duty than to participate with you in a great annual meeting, so I hope to see you next week at the Breakers.

And as always, thank you for your membership.



James Knox Kerr, III MD
FSA President

2019 Political Advocacy Update

Florida Society of Anesthesiologists Legislative Days in Tallahassee



FSA members and FL Governor Ron DeSantis, Tallahassee, March 26, 2019

In March a delegation of 25 FSA members went to Tallahassee to lobby for patient safety issues and to maintain physician supervision over nurse anesthetists, which is regulated mostly on a state level. A NA independent practice bill did pass the Florida House this year, but the FSA was able to block it in the Senate. We can expect another go at this next year.

Also defeated:

1. An attempt to remove physician supervision over NAs in office-based surgery
2. Advanced Birthing Centers, or ASCs for L&D, including C-sections and VBACs
3. Bureaucratic intrusions that would have made us explain to patients that they do not have to have opiates in their care plan
4. Recovery Care Centers, or 2-3 day stay ASCs
5. Medicaid-for-all payment system and several other bills which would have pegged physician payments to Medicaid rates

While in Tallahassee, FSA leadership had very good meetings with Governor DeSantis and Senate President Galvano, both of whom remain opposed to scope expansion or independent practice by NAs.

On the regulatory side, language solidifying AAs in state stature was secured and further work was done to disburse the funds authorized for an increase in Medicaid payments for OB anesthesia services.

The state loosened restrictions known as “certificate of need” to allow for the construction of more hospitals and specialty centers.

We are looking to enforce Florida “truth in advertising” and transparency laws to prevent the use of the terms “Dr” for Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Degree as well as “nurse anesthesiologist”, both of which the CRNAs have been using in public and in front of patients with more frequency.

The FSA conducted a public opinion poll that showed that Floridians overwhelmingly want a physician anesthesiologist taking care of them or leading the anesthesia care team. This was released to the media and shared with lawmakers.

Dr David Varlotta will be presented with the FSA’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, at the FSA annual meeting at the Breakers Hotel in June.

American Society of Anesthesiologists Legislative Conference in Washington DC

In May, 30 FSA members joined over 900 anesthesiologists from around the country at the ASA’s Legislative Conference in Washington DC. The chief advocacy effort was to level the playing field between insurers and carriers as it relates to out of network billing. “Surprise” medical bills have become a hot topic in DC and the financial impact on physicians is significant for OON charges as well as in network contracts. The effect is a significant downward pressure on physician payments. We met with several lawmakers, including Senator Rick Scott, Congressman Gus Bilirakis, and Congressman Charlie Crist, to discuss the impact of any payments that are based upon Medicare rates, which for anesthesia are 33% of commercial payments.

The ASA had a sizable lobbying and senior leadership presence in DC and is very focused on a favorable resolution to the OON issue.

This “33%” anesthesia Medicare problem was also discussed extensively, and solutions were put forward to bring our specialty’s payments level under governmental payers with others. Lawmakers were sensitized to the (-11%) margin that anesthesia groups have with Medicare patients, the large Medicare percentage of all patients in Florida, and the unsustainability of any commercial payment system or payment dispute resolution process that uses Medicare benchmarking.



FSA members meeting with Florida Senator Rick Scott, Washington DC, May 14, 2019

The ASA is also supporting a resident / student interest loan repayment deferral program and working to give anesthesiology doctors equal access (to be level as anesthesiologists) to Medicare Part A pass-through funds in rural areas.

As the chair of the ASA's Committee on Governmental Affairs State Affairs Task Force, I led panel discussions that reviewed what's happening nationally on a state level. I also gave a lecture before the conference on "Engaging your Legislator."

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you in the ASA and FSA,

Jay Epstein, MD

FSA Chairman of Legislative Affairs

FSA Annual Meeting 2019 - Highlights



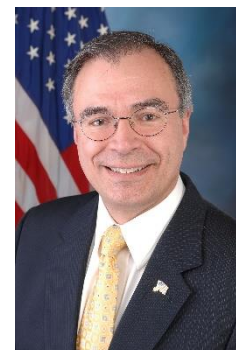
Addiction in Anesthesia John F. Dombrowski, MD, FASA - FSA is delighted to welcome back to our meeting former ASA Secretary and valued colleague Dr. Dombrowski to look at the current addiction crisis from an anesthesiologist's point of view. Friday, June 14 @ 8:30am

ASA Converse Lecture – FSA welcomes Mary Dale Peterson, MD, MSHCA, and ASA President-Elect to deliver this annual update on how ASA is addressing current and emerging opportunities in our profession. Saturday, June 15 @ 10:30am

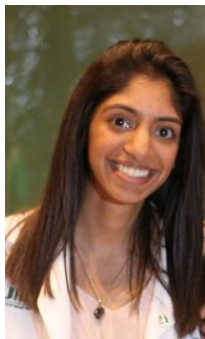


Poster Sessions – over 80 poster abstracts will be presented at this year's meeting – that's a record! Be sure to participate. Winning abstracts will be announced just before the Saturday Resident Jeopardy game. Presentations Friday and Saturday

Washington Update for Anesthesiologists – Congressman Andy Harris returns to our meeting to highlight anesthesia-related new developments on health care at the federal level Saturday, June 15 @ 11:30am



RESIDENT'S CORNER – FSA's Legislative Visits



by Richa Taneja, MD, PGY3, University of Miami

As physician anesthesiologists, we are uniquely positioned to drive positive change at a local and national level on behalf of our patients. Our state representatives in Tallahassee and congressmen in Washington D.C. are constantly tackling issues and pushing legislation that are acutely affecting our daily practice and care. I was given a unique opportunity to join the Florida Society of Anesthesiology (FSA) both in Tallahassee and Washington D.C. as our physician leaders fight for the safety of our patient care and integrity of our profession.

At the March FSA Legislative Day in Tallahassee, I saw firsthand the importance of forging and maintaining personal relationships with our legislators. With the practice of medicine constantly evolving, I saw how valued our opinions and experiences are as physicians. During a sixty-day legislature session filled with committee meetings, hearings, and votes on bills and resolutions, our representatives including Florida Governor DeSantis and Senate President Bill Galvano took time out of their busy schedules to meet with us physician anesthesiologists.

After this experience in Tallahassee, I was excited for the opportunity to join FSA once again in May at the ASA Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. I was thrust into the political environment, participating in meetings with Governor Rick Scott and Congresswoman Donna Shalala among many other representatives. By attending the conference, I was introduced to the countless avenues I have through the ASA to make an impact, even as a resident. I took steps to join the ASA Grassroots Network and Team 535 in order to become a key contact for legislators. I look forward to joining the ASA as a Resident Scholar next year in Washington D.C. as I work towards becoming the most effective advocate for my patients and profession.

We are incredibly lucky to that the physician leaders who make up the FSA are dedicated to maintaining our presence in Tallahassee and Washington DC. However, progress is threatened when we take it for granted. Young physicians are the future of medicine and it is our duty as residents to be leaders on a local and national level. It will take an army to fight for the best care for our patients, but as Margaret Mead once said, *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”*

FSA - Upcoming Events

August 9 & 10, 2019	FMA Annual Meeting	<i>Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek, Orlando</i>
October 19-23, 2019	ASA Annual Meeting	<i>Orange County Convention Center, Orlando</i>

A calendar of national anesthesia-related events is located on the [ASA Website](#).