



1997 Year in Review

When I assumed office in November, 1996, the most significant issue facing the Congress of Neurological Surgeons was impending litigation related to pedicle screws. Fortunately, the CNS was dismissed from that lawsuit in December, 1996. However, that relief was short-lived as shortly thereafter an even more important threat to Neurosurgery arose—the Medicare RBRVS Practice Expense issue. This legislation had potentially devastating effects for Neurosurgery through proposed changes in the Practice Expense component of the Medicare fee schedule, with an estimated 30-40% reduction in reimbursement for Neurosurgery. Fortunately, under the direction of the Washington Committee and the AANS/CNS Joint Officers, organized Neurosurgery was able to mount an effective campaign through a coalition of specialty societies. Neurosurgeons were mobilized to contact their Congressional representatives, and this grass roots effort was effective in implementing a one year delay in the legislation. In addition, Congress mandated that the new Practice Expense formula must be based upon valid accounting principles. Despite this initial success, this particular issue will continue to be important as the specifics of the new formulation are developed over the coming year. Neurosurgeons should stay on top of this issue and be ready to respond as they have this past year.

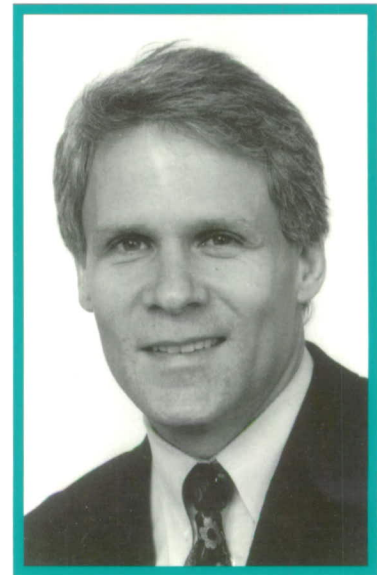
The mission of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons is as follows:

The Congress of Neurological Surgeons exists for the purpose of promoting the public welfare through the advancement of Neurosurgery, by a commitment to excellence in education and by dedication to research and scientific knowledge. The Congress of Neurological Surgeons maintains the vitality of our learned profession through the altruistic volunteer efforts of its members and the development of leadership in service to the public, to our colleagues in other disciplines, and to the special needs of our fellow neurosurgeons throughout the world and at every stage of their professional lives.

During the past year, the CNS has fulfilled this mission through several ongoing and new educational and altruistic initiatives. The new programs include two fellowships; a clinical fellowship in Clinical Outcomes analysis and an International Visiting Scholar fellowship. The clinical outcomes fellowship will support a neurosurgeon to do advanced studies in health care policies and clinical outcomes-topics which are increasingly important in the current health care arena. The International Visiting Scholar fellowship will enable neurosurgeons in practice to spend time doing Neurosurgery in underserved areas around the world. Both of these new initiatives are in concert with the CNS mission of education and international outreach. In addition, the CNS has just initiated a leadership Development Program, which will identify young neurosurgeons with leadership potential and foster these skills through increasing responsibility in CNS activities.

Ongoing educational and service programs of the CNS over the past year have included several cooperative ventures with the AANS Under

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the direction of the Joint Officers, the two organizations are collaborating on a wide variety of projects important to Neurosurgery, including the Joint Sections, the JCSNS, the Washington Committee, the SMART Marketing Initiative for Lumbar Stenosis, and NEUROSURGERY://ON-CALL. Other ongoing CNS programs include our journal, *Neurosurgery*, the Annual Meeting, and Concepts in Neurosurgery, to name a few. I am particularly proud of the CNS involvement in providing neurosurgical care, equipment and education to underserved areas around the world. The International Committee, under the direction of Hunt Batjer, has been extremely effective in all of these areas.

Much of CNS activity during any year revolves around our primary educational product, the Annual Meeting. This past year is no exception, and this CNS Annual Meeting in New Orleans should be the best ever. As you may know, the CNS has only two full time employees and depends upon the dedicated work of large numbers of volunteers to provide services to its members. It is this volunteerism that has kept CNS dues extremely low while maintaining a high level of benefits. In this regard, the challenge for the CNS will be to stay focused on important issues in neurosurgical education, while maintaining a volunteer effort and developing young leaders who will guide organized Neurosurgery into the future.

Marc R. Mayberg, M.D.
*President of the
Congress of Neurological Surgeons*