



Neurological Surgery Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2022-2023

SONS Mission

The Section on Neurological Surgery (SONS) addresses issues common to pediatric neurosurgery patient management, continuing education, clinical research, and interaction with the members of the American Academy of Pediatrics in an effort to improve the care of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults with neurosurgical disorders.

Message from the Chairperson

Dear SONS Colleagues,

As I near one year into my term as Chair of SONS, I have an opportunity to reflect on where we have been and where we are going.

Most recently, Dr. Eylem Ocal, Dr. Brandon Rocque, and I returned from the AAP National Conference and Exhibition in Anaheim, CA. Drs. Ocal and Rocque presented a well-received seminar entitled “Hydrocephalus, Ventriculomegaly, and Macrocephaly: Who Needs Treatment?” Dr. Ocal and I then spoke on “Abusive Head Injury from a Neurosurgeon’s Perspective: What Pediatricians Need to Know.” In preparation for next year’s meeting, the AAP has asked for program proposals. If you have a topic idea, please contact me or another member of the Executive Committee.

Dr. Jason Hauptman and Dr. Eric Jackson authored this year’s SONS Focus on Subspecialties article. Their submission, entitled “Does site matter? Study addressed impact of ventriculoperitoneal shunt entry location” was published in the October issue of *AAP News*. This was sent to all AAP members and is also available on the AAP website.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the AAP’s flagship journal *Pediatrics*. In celebration of this milestone, the editorial board is asking all sections, committees, and councils of the AAP to submit a list of at least 3 seminal articles in our field from *Pediatrics*, along with commentary. Submissions are due December 19, 2022. If you have any articles you wish to submit, please contact me or another member of the Executive Committee.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery meeting in Washington, DC. We will be continuing with the SONS format started last year with a SONS educational session. This is being planned by Dr. David Hersh. We are also pleased to welcome on SONS lecturer, Dr. Jesse Erhenfeld, President-Elect of the American Medical Association. Special thanks to Katie Orrico from the Washington Committee for her help in arranging this exciting speaker.

In the coming year, SONS will continue its efforts in advocacy, policy, and education. In addition to educational activities directed at pediatricians, patients, and families, we will continue to advocate for the needs of pediatric neurosurgeons and their patients. We will also continue our collaborative work with other sections, councils, and committees for the benefit of all children and their families.

See you in Washington, DC!

Sincerely,

Gregory Albert, MD, FAAP
Chair, Executive Committee
galbert2@uams.edu



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SONS Mission	1
Message from the Chairperson – Dr. Gregory Albert	1
SONS Membership	2
Highlights from the May 2022 AAP Board Meeting.....	2-3
AAP National Conference and Exhibition (NCE).....	3
AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Meeting – Dr. Jesse Ehrenfeld	4
Policy and Advocacy Committee Update – Dr David F Bauer.....	4
Advocacy and SONS Contribution for AAP Section on Global Child Health – Dr Eylem Ocal	5
SONS Education, Newsletter, and Publications (ENP) Committee – Dr Brandon Rocque.....	5
GET INVOLVED!	5-6
Introduction to New AAP SONS Manager	6
SONS Executive Committee Roster	6

SONS Membership

Congratulations to our new SONS members who joined our Section in 2022! Membership will provide you with unparalleled access to resources allowing you to impact the patients and families you serve! We value members at all levels of training (medical students, residents, fellows, attending providers and allied health professionals). Together, we can shape the future of pediatric neurosurgical care.

Than Huynh
Michelle Park
Kayla Cooper
Carina Grain
Amil Ahsan
Jason Blatt

Janie Munoz
Aysha Arshad
Robin Bowman
Michael DeCuyper
Laura Hunnell

Colleen Rosen
Stacy Speck
Daisy Vazquez
Michelle Riedel
Christina Presmy

Tord Alden
Arthur DiPatri, Jr
Haldo Treviño
Reshma Pyala
Jash Patel

We would also like to thank our renewing members – your commitment to SONS is essential to the success of our organization!

Petr Ruzicka
Phuong Tran
Erin Woeste
Douglas Brockmeyer

Greg Albert
Srilaxmi Kishoor
Greg Olavarria
Eylem Ocal

Tadanori Tomita
Jeffrey Raskin
Ann Flannery
Sandi Lam

Erica Braun
Emily Waddick
Denise DeWhitt
Marie Chen

Highlights from the May 2022 AAP Board of Directors Meeting

The **Audit Committee** reported that the AAP’s audit firm, Plante Moran, will perform the annual audit this summer to review internal control policies and procedures, review contract agreements, and perform substantive testing of key areas. Auditors will report back to the Board on their findings at the Fall 2022 meeting.

The **Finance and Development Committee** recommended, and the Board approved a rewrite of the AAP Investment Policy to better reflect the organization’s mission, vision, and values. The policy now emphasizes environmental responsibility, social (relationships with employees, suppliers and communities) and governance (leadership), commonly known as ESG, as well as equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The new policy adds a specific focus on combating climate change and investments that reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gases consistent with the AAP policy statement, *Global Climate Change and Children’s Health* policy statement which notes that “Pediatricians have a uniquely valuable role to play in the societal response to climate change.” The policy was revised to add marijuana to the list of products the AAP will not invest in, which includes alcohol, tobacco and firearms. The committee also recommended, and the Board approved, a new balanced budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

The **Equity Committee** recommended, and the Board approved, the establishment of a national Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Excellence Award to recognize excellence in advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in pediatric medicine. Nominees will be solicited from AAP members via chapter, committee, council, and section communication channels. The Board Committee on Equity will constitute the selection committee and recommend a recipient to the Executive Committee for final approval. It is anticipated that the first recipient will be awarded at the 2022 National Conference and Exhibition. The Equity Committee also reported-out on the recent publication of the policy statement *Eliminating Race Based Medicine*. This policy statement addresses the elimination of race-based medicine as part of a broader commitment to dismantle the structural and systemic inequities that lead to racial health disparities. The committee highlighted the visibility and considerable volume of EDI sessions at the 2022 Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting in Denver, CO.

The **Governance Committee** recommended, and the Board approved the following member appointments:

- Inaugural Executive Committee members for the newly established Council on Healthy Mental and Emotional Development (COHMED)
- Inaugural members to the provisional CHILD Registry Data Committee
- New AAP National Committee Members beginning July 1, 2022
- AAP National Committee Member Re-Appointments beginning July 1, 2022
- One new voting member position on the Committee on Infectious Diseases

Continued on Page 3

The **Member Value and Engagement Committee** met to discuss recruitment and communication strategies for the AAP Enterprise Membership program and how to reach out to and welcome new fellow members across all districts.

The **Policy Committee** provided an update on current initiatives to align the development of new AAP policies with the strategic priorities of the organization. The group is also focused on working with entities across the AAP to close quality and development gaps and to optimize the use of technology to create efficiencies in the writing process. The committee recently approved a new process to expedite and update the *Red Book* between editions.

The **Strategic Planning Committee** recommended, and the Board approved \$523,000 in Friends of Children and Tomorrow's Children Endowment funding for 9 unique programs and projects for fiscal year 2022-2023.

AAP CEO/Executive Vice President, Mark Del Monte, JD, provided an **organizational and operational report** to the Board. It was reported that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization for a booster dose of Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 five months or more after they complete their primary vaccine series. The AAP Engaging Pediatric Health Care Providers for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations project is promoting confidence and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccines. As the national shortage of powdered infant formula continues, the AAP has been working hard to provide guidance to pediatricians and elicit immediate action at every level of government to increase the supply of safe infant formula in the United States. AAP recently wrote letters to the White House and Congress asking them to use every lever of authority available to rapidly address this crisis and get formula back on store shelves. The AAP and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention worked with experts from the National Institute of Mental Health to create the Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention— an educational resource to support clinicians in identifying strategies to support youth at risk for suicide. The Blueprint represents the first major interdisciplinary effort to infuse suicide risk reducing strategies into pediatric care and youth community settings. It also contains ways for pediatricians to engage in policy and advocacy strategies to support youth at immediate risk of suicide, and to address upstream risk and protective factors that can reduce suicide risk and is available at aap.org/suicideprevention. Mr Del Monte reported that the AAP continues to plan to meet in-person for both the 2022 Leadership Conference which is taking place August 4-7, 2022, in Itasca, IL and the National Conference and Exhibition (NCE) which will take place October 7-11, 2022 in Anaheim, CA.

Staff from the AAP Washington Office provided a comprehensive **advocacy report**. It was reported that AAP launched a State Advocacy Mental Health Awareness Campaign and contributed to the launch of the CAMHCoalition.org website which includes resources from a coalition of organizations dedicated to promoting the mental health and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. A federal judge recently granted a temporary injunction in *Eknes-Tucker et al v Ivey et al*, the lawsuit challenging Alabama's recently enacted felony ban on gender-affirming care. The temporary injunction prohibits enforcement of the ban on gender-affirming puberty suppression medication and hormone therapy and relies heavily on the AAP-led amicus brief. Staff shared that AAP plans to respond in the event that *Roe v Wade* is overturned. AAP is expediting the revision of AAP policy statements on pregnancy options counseling and confidential abortion care. It was noted that a flurry of state legislation both restricting and expanding access to abortion services is expected and AAP will be monitoring and communicating often with AAP Chapters. Congress has recently funded the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program at \$5 million and Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) will fund 50 initial slots. The AAP will continue to advocate to grow funding going forward. U.S. Senate passed the Safe Sleep for Babies Act, which will ban the sale of dangerous and unsafe crib bumpers and inclined sleepers nationwide.

AAP National Conference and Exhibition (NCE)

The 2022 AAP NCE was held in Anaheim, CA October 7-11. The SONS presented two educational sessions facilitated by Drs. Eylem Ocal and Brandon Rocque entitled *Hydrocephalus, Ventriculomegaly, and Macrocephaly: Who Needs Treatment?* and by Drs. Ocal and Gregory Albert who delivered a session on *Nonaccidental Head Trauma: What Pediatricians Need to Know*.

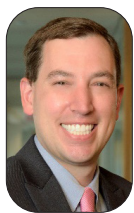
The SONS Executive Committee is seeking input for topic areas of interest that may be presented at the 2023 AAP National Conference and Exhibition scheduled for October 21-24 in Washington, DC. The target audience for these sessions are general pediatricians.

Topics selected will need to be developed into program proposals that will be reviewed and selected by National Conference Planning Group members. Program proposals are due December 1, 2022.

Please submit topics of interest, along with your willingness to assist with the development of a program proposal, to Melissa Marx (mmarx@aap.org).

AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Meeting

The 51st Annual meeting of the AANS/CNS Joint Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery will be held December 1-4, 2022, in Washington, D.C. The theme for this year's conference is *E Pluribus Unum: Advocacy, Health Care Policy, and the Future of Pediatric Neurosurgery*.



The AAP/SONS lecture will be delivered by **Dr. Jesse Ehrenfeld**, President Elect of the American Medical Association. This year's meeting will feature the *AAP/SONS Mini Scientific Meeting*, which debuted at the 2021 Section meeting. This session will highlight top abstracts, including the abstract that will be named the AAP/SONS Award winner. Last year's AAP/SONS Award winner was Dr. Wes Northam who submitted the abstract entitled, "MRI/MRA is Non-inferior to Catheter Angiography for Annual Follow-up of Pediatric Moyamoya Patients and is Associated with Cost Reduction: A Cost Outcomes Analysis."

Policy and Advocacy Committee

David F. Bauer, MD, MPH, FAAP



The Policy and Advocacy Committee has been active providing feedback and guidance to the AAP on multiple issues. We are appreciative of the many hours our volunteers have given to review these important topics to provide guidance to the AAP leadership.

The AAP was asked to endorse an American Academy of Neurology (AAN) update of a guideline for the diagnosis of brain death in pediatric and adult patients. Multiple societies provided members to a working group, created by the AAN, which used peer-reviewed literature and expert opinion through the modified Delphi method to create a combined adult and pediatric document to diagnose non-cardiac death by neurologic criteria. Our committee members provided feedback to AAP regarding this document. The document is nearing final publication.

Advocacy for firearm injury prevention has been discussed, and members have participated in writing a statement on this issue with the leadership of the American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons and the AANS/CNS Pediatric Section and Washington Committee.

Finally, we reviewed a document on Abusive Head Trauma in Infants and Children, co-authored by the AAP Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (COCAN) along with the Section on Ophthalmology, Section on Radiology, Section on Neurological Surgery, Society for Pediatric Radiology, American Association of Certified Orthoptists, American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and American Academy of Ophthalmology. Feedback was given to the AAP leadership.

Members who would like to know more about our committee or who have thoughts or ideas related to policy and advocacy should contact Dr. Bauer at dfbauer@mac.com.

2022 SONS Policy and Advocacy Committee

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Advocacy and SONS Contribution for AAP Section on Global Child Health

Dr Eylem Ocal, MD, FAANS, FAAP, FACS



Dr. Eylem Ocal is representing SONS on the board of Section on Global Child Health following Dr. Phillip Aldana's leadership in previous years. The SONS is committed to advocating equal access to neurosurgical care for all the children at home and abroad. AAP is joining forces with the surgical specialties. SONS will be on the forefront of these efforts with many of its members who are already active in global health and education. Be on the look for upcoming projects and opportunities to get involved in the Section on Global Child Health.

SONS Education, Newsletter, and Publications (ENP) Committee

Brandon Rocque, MD, FAAP



The ENP Committee strives to engage the membership to advance the mission of the AAP Section on Neurological Surgery.

AAP News

Drs. Eric Jackson and Jason Hauptman submitted this year's SONS Focus on Subspecialty submitted to AAP News. Their article, *Does site matter? Study addresses impact of ventriculoperitoneal shunt entry location*, details the results of the Hydrocephalus Clinical Research Network randomized trial of anterior versus posterior shunt entry site. The article, published in the September 1 edition of the AAP News, can be found here: <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/i1HZCxmABSxKWQRFv5Jyn?domain=nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com>

SONS Mini Scientific Session

Returning to the AANS/CNS Pediatric Section Meeting this year is the SONS Mini Scientific session. Abstracts selected by SONS as representative of work that advances the mission of the AAP will be selected for presentation in brief format at this session. The winner of the AAP/SONS Award will be selected from these abstracts.

Volunteers are always welcome to assist with judging of abstracts. Volunteers would need to attend the Section meeting, review abstracts, and participate in 2 short meetings to judge the winners.

If you have any ideas for SONS involvement in educational efforts, please contact Dr. Rocque at brandon.rocque@childrensal.org

GET INVOLVED!

Education: Contributions of proposals for educational sessions at the AAP National Convention, articles for *AAP News*, and judges for the SONS award at the Pediatric Section meeting are needed ANNUALLY. Exploring your state AAP Chapter for opportunities can provide you with access to a large target audience of your largest customer base- your referring pediatricians.

Policy/Advocacy: Do you have a specific advocacy interest? Join a council (<https://services.aap.org/en/community/aap-councils/>) and gain access to all that a 68,000-member audience can do to advocate for issues you are passionate about.

New opportunities in 2022: Subcommittees were recently developed to explore database creation, a SONS mini-scientific meeting at the pediatric section, and an advanced practice provider committee to drive APP engagement. Interested? [Join us!](#)

Engage with AAP on Social Media

Twitter is a powerful tool that allows individuals and organizations to amplify messages, connect with new and diverse networks, and gain access to local-, state- and federal-level decision-makers. As a pediatrician, Twitter also offers you the opportunity to be part of a community that encourages the exchanging of ideas around child health, while not being constrained by time or geography. To stay up to date on child health news, follow and engage with AAP on social media via @AmerAcadPeds, @AAPPres, @AAPNews, and @healthychildren. You can also subscribe to AAP's official #tweetiatrician list on Twitter by visiting <https://twitter.com/AmerAcadPeds/lists/tweetiatricians>.

Continued on Page 6

Sign Up for Advocacy Emails

Email at kids1st@aap.org with your name, AAP ID if known, and your preferred e-mail address. If you have questions about federal advocacy, contact the AAP Washington Office at 202-347-8600.

Hey all. Just a friendly reminder from your neurosurgical hype-man to GET INVOLVED. We have a number of opportunities for members to engage in education, advocacy, and policy.

Introduction to New AAP SONS Manager



Please welcome **Melissa Marx**, SONS' new Section Staff Manager, who will be overseeing and supporting the SONS members and their respective activities and initiatives.

While new to the SONS, Ms Marx has 16 years' experience with the AAP, most recently serving as Manager for the AAP's prehospital and emergency medicine continuing education training programs. She has also acted as lead staff to the American Heart Association (AHA) Advanced/Basic Pediatric Life Support Writing Groups who produce the guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care that are the foundation for the AHA and AAP's training programs. In her previous role, Ms Marx was integral in implementing new innovative learning modalities into her training programs which included a flipped classroom/hybrid approach, as well as simulation and virtual reality.

Ms Marx is thrilled to work with the SONS and can be reached by email at mmarx@aap.org.

AAP Section on Neurological Surgery Executive Committee

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Ex-Officio: **Andrew Jea, MD, FAAP** - dr.andrew.jea@gmail.com

Executive Committee Members:

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Jonathan Martin, MD, FAAP - jmartin03@ccmckids.org

Brandon Rocque, MD, MS, FAAP - Brandon.Rocque@childrensal.org

Katrina Ducis, MD - katrina.ducis@uvmhealth.org

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