



SOCCA, the Pandemic, and the Future

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It is a pleasure to write to the large audience of the *ASA Monitor* about the comings and goings of the Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists (SOCCA) (SOCCA.org).

To say that the last two years have been difficult is an understatement. And while our resolve has been tested, anesthesiologist intensivists have stepped up to the challenge. Each one of us had to make sacrifices to sustain our mission and support our patients' well-being, and this endeavor has been nothing short of inspiring precisely because of how strenuous and unending it is.

The pandemic – if any silver lining can be ascribed to it – has highlighted the role of the anesthesiologist/intensivist like no other event in our lifetime. With intensive care units filled to capacity, the need for expert critical care, and requirements for exceptional airway management, we have positioned ourselves at the forefront of the crisis. In so doing, we have showcased the relevance of our everyday work to the rest of our colleagues and general public.

Over the last two years, SOCCA embarked in a multipronged, multiplatform strategy to maintain relevance and increase the lines of communication with our members. We started a series of live monthly webinars that combined some of our annual meeting lectures with new, relevant material. These webinars, which provide CME credit, have been very well attended, and we provided them at no cost to all participants during their original broadcasts and made them available to SOCCA members on-demand.

SOCCA also increased its presence in social media (@SOCCA_CritCare) and bolstered our content in more conventional channels, like our regular newsletter – the Interchange – and email. To that effect, we created the SOCCA Drip, an aggregator of news, ideas, articles, and collaborations from our entire membership. The Drip aims to be varied in scope and latitude and works to highlight a significant article as much as an important event or occasion in your department. You can send your ideas to Vivian Abalama at vabalama@iars.org.

The society also produced the SOCCA Board Review Course, offered in the fall, which has been extremely well received and allowed critical care fellows to review topics identified as particularly challeng-



ing in the most recent certification examination. The course is also available on-demand to SOCCA members, making membership in our society an outstanding value even if only considering educational products.

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Engaging the younger generation has been a paramount mission of our society. To that end, we have waived the membership fee for residents, fellows, and first-year graduates, understanding the economic pressures present at the beginning of your careers.

We have also recently launched a mentoring initiative whereby members interested in connecting with mentors can access an online directory of gurus coming from many areas, including private prac-

tice and transitioning out of training, and includes information on how to start a career in research, education, ICU administration and leadership, among others. This is a great opportunity for growth and networking that we provide at no cost to our youngest members, recognizing they are the pillars of our future.

The strength of our society is measured not only by its size but by the involvement and enthusiasm of its constituents, and in that regard SOCCA has shown unparalleled success. To better serve our membership, we have increased the number and scope of our committees and task forces, making sure there's room and space for each one of us. As examples, we are expanding our clinical practice arm by creating task forces that reflect our most common workplaces: CTICU and neuro as well as our increasing involvement with ECMO. We are also creating spaces for colleagues in private practice and those within 10 years of graduation and for our female colleagues and their unique challenges. We understand that anesthesia critical care is an ever-expanding specialty, and we want to make sure that our tent is



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big enough, your voice is heard, and your needs are met.

The results of this strategy, a blitz of offerings and media channels, have brought very positive results, and at the time of this writing I'm very proud to report that our membership is at record levels, both in the educational and active categories, and the enthusiasm to participate in committees and task forces is also unparalleled.

Financially, a large portion of our expenses have shifted from hosting a location-based meeting to the costs associated with producing high-quality virtual products that meet the standards you have always expected. Our income depends nearly exclusively on our annual dues. We are committed to providing exceptional value for your membership and keeping the prices of future courses and meetings as low as we can. Now, more than ever, SOCCA depends on you to maintain our growth and strengthen our future. I recognize there are many competing interests for an ever-shrinking pool of resources, yet I can confidently tell you that from fellowship to retirement, no subspecialty society offers better value than SOCCA.

We have come a long way in this pandemic, and things are starting to look up. I invite you to join and participate at any level within SOCCA and to enjoy our virtual annual meeting, but perhaps more importantly, I will ask you to be present right there, at the bedside, helping those who need it the most. What we do as a professional group must always be rooted in terms of the patients who expect our devotion, commitment, knowledge, and compassion. ■

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