

American College of Emergency Physicians  
**Observation Medicine Section Meeting**  
*ACEP20 Unconventional*  
October 28, 2020  
**MINUTES**

**Participants**

Section members participating for all or part of the meeting included: Matthew Wheatley MD, FACEP, Chair; Christopher Caspers, MD, Chair-Elect; Anwar Osborne, MD, FACEP, Immediate Past Chair; Maria Aini, MD, Secretary/Newsletter Editor; Kristy Ziontz, DO, FACEP, Councillor; Alexei Wagner, MD, Alternate Councillor; Robert Bennett, MD, FACEP; Robert Bramante, MD, FACEP; Michael Granovsky, MD, MPH; Qasim Kazmi, MD; Raashee Kedia, MD; Eustace Lashley, MD, FACEP; Elizabeth Lee, MD; Ryan McMorries, MD; Troy Myers, MD, FACEP; Brenda Oiyemhonlan, MD; Anwar Osborne, MD, MPM, FACEP; Hetal Patel, MD; Margarita Pena, MD, FACEP; Adam Rodos, MD, FACEP; Anthony Rosania, MD, FACEP; Michael Ross, MD, FACEP; Mohammed Saif, MD; Nathaniel Scott, MD, FACEP; Lauren Southerland, MD, FACEP; Scott Strumpfler, MD, FACEP; Vaishal Tolia, MD, FACEP; Carissa Tyo, MD, FACEP; and Jonathan Yeo, MD.

Others participating for all or part of the meeting included: Michael Carter, MD, FACEP; Sergio Ibarra, MD; Peter Jacoby, MD, FACEP; Osama Kendab; Phil Magidson, MD; David McKenzie; Vinay Mikkilineni, MD; Elrasheed Salih, MD; Michael Turturro, MD, FACEP; Arvind Venkat, MD, FACEP; R. Anthony Cirillo, MD, FACEP, Board Liaison; Sandra M. Schneider, MD, FACEP, ACEP Staff Liaison; and Julie Wassom, ACEP staff.

**Agenda**

Welcome and Review of Last Year's Business  
Section Officer Election Results  
Service Line Updates, OPPS Changes/Section Grant  
Observation Innovations in the COVID Era  
Councilor Report  
Newsletter Update  
Incoming Chair Introduction  
Observation Billing Issues  
Open Forum

**Major Points Discussed**

Dr. Matthew Wheatley opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He then quickly reviewed last year's business and shared the results of the recent section elections, announcing the following new officers:

Chair-Elect – Margarita Pena, MD  
Secretary/Newsletter Editor – Maria Aini, MD  
Alternate Councillor – Adam Rodos, MD

Following that announcement, Dr. Wheatley covered new business. He shared that the comment period for the OPPS was now closed, and that there were not any substantive changes regarding observation medicine. He also explained that the section would have an opportunity during this next year to review,

along with the Emergency Medicine Practice Committee, the 2015 policy statement “Emergency Department Observation Services” and related 2011 policy resource and education paper (PREP) “State of the Art: Observation Units in the Emergency Department.” The section would need to determine whether the policy statement and PREP should be reaffirmed, rescinded, revised, or allowed to sunset, and then they would have until next October 2021 to make changes if revisions were necessary. Following discussion and consensus that both documents should be revised, Dr. Wheatley encouraged section members interested in working on these to contact him. A workgroup will be created, along with members of the Emergency Medicine Practice Committee. Both documents will be posted to the section’s engagED site after the meeting.

Following that discussion, Dr. Aini and Dr. Lee from Thomas Jefferson University gave a presentation on “Observation in the Time of COVID-19.” They highlighted the things that were done at their institution, which is a high volume, high acuity urban academic center, before, during, and after the COVID peak, along with new normals and plans moving forward. Discussion then ensued regarding changes that occurred at other section member’s institutions due to COVID-19.

Dr. Ziontz provided a report on the virtual Council that was held this year. There were 44 resolutions on a variety of subjects, including an award highlighting ED programs that destigmatize addiction, as well as topics such as ethics, telehealth, and personal protective equipment. There were no topics that dealt directly with observation services this year. However, there were two topics that might impact the section. One dealt with allowing fellowship time to be counted towards obtaining FACEP status, which was approved. The second dealt with using more subspecialty faculty in ACEP meetings, which was not approved, since most felt that the ACEP Meetings Committee and team did a good job of balancing those rosters. Dr. Ziontz then thanked the section for allowing her to serve in this role. Dr. Wagner shared about three other resolutions of interest, one regarding identifying disparities and biases, one regarding billing transparency, and one regarding contract protections for new graduates.

Dr. Aini shared that the section newsletter was recently sent out. Considering the projected surges in COVID-19 around the country, she encouraged members to submit articles that addressed how their institutions had and were handling COVID-19 patients.

Dr. Wheatley then introduced Dr. Caspers as the new section chair. Dr. Caspers thanked Dr. Wheatley for his leadership. He then shared that he is planning to schedule a meeting with the other section officers in the near future to determine the pulse of the section and goals and priorities for the next 12 months.

Following that introduction, David McKenzie, ACEP’s reimbursement director, gave a brief presentation on observation billing and reimbursement. Following the presentation, Dr. Wheatley inquired about how the section could be helpful to the work of the Reimbursement Committee. Mr. McKenzie asked section members, since they are the experts in clinical observation, to review the reimbursement FAQs, especially the ones for physician coding, facility coding, and behavioral health, for accuracy and to determine if additional information is needed. He also asked them to be willing to help update the FAQs when necessary. It was decided that the section would contact ACEP’s DC office to work on promotion of the two midnight rule, since it should be the standard for driving patient decisions.

Dr. Wheatley ended the meeting by encouraging non-section members to join the section, so they could participate in the work and advocacy of the group.

With no more information to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.