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President's Message

Saludos a todos los emergenciólogos de Puerto Rico.

I hope that you are all safe during these challenging times. Now that the 2020 is behind us, we can refocus and direct our efforts into continuing to provide the best care to the patients and attention to our love ones.

For 2021, we have you and your needs in mind...

We are working on another Emergency Medicine CME activity. This webinar will be focused on Pediatric Emergency Medicine. It will likely take place during the summertime. Further details will be provided soon. ACEP Puerto Rico has been working to improve our specialty recognition in the Island. As trained Emergency Medicine physicians, patient stabilization is intrinsic to our specialty. We excel at managing the unstable patients.

Our training and continuous education standards go beyond the short courses required to work in Puertorrican hospitals such as: ACLS, PALS, BLS etc. Therefore, we submitted a resolution in the recent "Colegio de Médicos de Puerto Rico" senate meeting. The resolution was titled: "Derrogación de Cursos Cortos". This resolution asked the "Colegio de Médicos de Puerto Rico" active involvement in the elimination of the requirements of ACLS, BLS, PALS, ATLS for board certified Emergency Medicine physicians.

During this meeting, another resolution was presented. It was title "Creación de Comité Asesor Departamento de Salud-Reglamento de Hospitales". Recently the Puerto Rico Health Department released the 2020 hospital regulatory procedures. We were against several key points concerning the Emergency Department. Therefore, the resolution stated that a committee composed from all specialties affected by these regulations needs to be created. This committee will be placed at

the disposition of the Puerto Rico Health Department for the development of future regulatory procedures.

For more details, please read the next article by our President-Elect, Dr. Fernando Soto.

Senate Meeting & EM in Puerto Rico Fernando L. Soto-Torres, MD, FACEP - President Elect

Last year the Emergency Medicine Chapter was reactivated at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Puerto Rico (Colegio de Medicos y Cirujanos). A few of our members participated in the process and ended up becoming part of the chapter at that institution. Some of the members include: Dr. Eddie Rodriguez as President and Dr. Miguel Agrait as Vice President, and myself as representative to the senate; among others.

As part of our responsibilities, we participated in the Senate meeting where discussions take place regarding the work, lives, and well-being of our fellow physicians throughout the island. This is a crucial forum where topics can find a platform from where ideas can be presented, discussed, and moved to become protocols, initiatives and, in some cases, laws or regulations.

The first two resolutions presented by our group- and in representation of PRACEP - involved the so- called “merit badging” required by certain institutions for us to work in the emergency department as well as the recently published “Reglamento 9184 de 1 de julio de 2020” also known as “Reglamento del Secretario de Salud para la Construcción, Operación, Mantenimiento y Licenciamiento de los Hospitales de Puerto Rico”.

In the first resolution ([see here](#)) we argued that the request to remain certified in ACLS, PALS, and ATLS by several hospitals and our own local licensing board (Junta de Licenciamiento Médico de Puerto Rico) in order to have a license and work is not necessary as per our own guidelines. ([See ACEP opinion](#) & [See ABEM letter here](#))

This resolution was withdrawn for amendments. Our colleagues at the senate believed that - despite our concerns that these courses contribute so little to our knowledge base and are not essential for our practice as board certified emergency physicians, they are still considered requirements by many institutions such as the Joint Commission and CMS. After further review we will resubmit at the next session.

The other resolution submitted was about the “Reglamento 9184 de 1 de julio de 2020” ([see here](#)). We recommended the active participation in the creation of these regulations for hospital operations in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. As was observed by many of our emergency medicine colleagues, this list of regulations - which went into effect on June 2020 - state, for example, that any general practitioner (GP) with even 1 year experience may act as director of the emergency department. It also states that all those who work in the ED must possess BLS, ACLS, etc; and furthermore, implement other guides on how to run our emergency departments and hospitals that affect us directly.

Through this resolution we requested that all hospital-based specialties have a say in the development of the regulations that will define the operation of hospitals in the island and the lives and working conditions for physicians. It was approved.

Starting next month, a committee will convene, and I will oversee the process. I will take all your requests and take them through the appropriate channels and, hopefully, institute change.

This is some of the work we have been doing but there is much to do. We will go as far as those who participate will take us. Keep active and interested. And keep in touch. If you have any suggestions or have any ideas that you believe can be addressed at the level of the 'Colegio de Medicos' or any other forum, [please let us know](#).

At the Puerto Rico Chapter of ACEP we are always concerned about what our colleagues are going through and thinking about ways to improve the lives of our physicians and the care of our patients. We believe that the best emergency care is provided by a board-certified emergency physician and we will continue to work so that every emergency is addressed by a specialized professional.

News from a Social Media Ambassador Pablo D. Vega-Parra, MD

These next few weeks will mark an important milestone for the social media of our chapter, as we are currently coordinating the strategy to follow with the new elected officials. The three media channels with which we currently have official accounts are: [Twitter @pr_acep](#), [Facebook.com/ColegioDeEmergencilogosDePuertoRico](#), and [Instagram.com/pr.acep/](#). Each have their limitations and benefits, and we are planning the most useful ways to get the best of them. The production and sharing of content are demanding tasks, but we are dedicated to making it happen.

Follow our social media channels and stay in the loop with everything our chapter and ACEP has to offer!

Do you have an idea or a suggestion that would improve our social presence, or is there something that you would like to see or know about? [Share it with us!](#) We want your input, and you are invited to collaborate with our ACEP Puerto Rico family!

Adriana's Corner

Would you like to contribute an article for the chapter newsletter? Although any article and topic are welcomed by any chapter member, we are particularly looking for articles from Residents and Medical Students.

This year, I would like to highlight a chapter leader or member in at least two-2 quarterly newsletters. Please [reach out](#) if you would like to highlight one of your colleagues and/or are interested in this new section for your chapter newsletter.

Please note a few potential, additional topics for your chapter newsletter: an interesting case and an inspiring COVID-19 story.

Articles do not have to be a particular length (usually 2-paragraphs) and can include images, links, or any references. Please refer to your [chapter website](#) under the Chapter News tab and click on the Newsletters tab to see examples of past articles. For more detailed information, please reach out via [email](#).

Welcome New Members!

A special welcome to the new members of the Puerto Rico Chapter. We are excited to have you.

Jennifer Santiago

Luis Emilio Miranda

You may wonder if you should get involved with Puerto Rico ACEP or EMRA or at the national level? We encourage you to please get involved!

If you are unsure about how to get involved, feel free to contact the chapter [directly](#).

FROM NATIONAL ACEP



Stay current with the [COVID-19 Center](#). It's your one-stop-shop for clinical and legislative updates.

New Resource: COVID-19 Data Visualizations

ACEP's newest resource provides visualizations of U.S. emergency department data across three categories: total visits, COVID-like illness visits, and influenza-like illness visits. The data are available at both national and Health and Human Services (HHS) regional resolutions and across several timescales (e.g., 7-day, 30-day, 90-day). It's sortable by time and region. Data is updated weekly. [View the visualizations](#).

The February 10 edition of the [Capital \(30\) Minutes webinar](#) provided updates on COVID relief, physician mental health and more.

Quick Links: [COVID-19 Field Guide](#) | [COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit](#) | [COVID-19 Microlearning Education](#)

The COVID-19 crisis is uniquely exhausting at work and at home. ACEP's [Physician Wellness Hub](#) can help you find the right support.

Regulatory News

Breaking Down President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act

Since taking office, President Biden has issued a plethora of [executive orders](#), mostly related to tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and reversing or adjusting policies implemented by the last administration. As a reminder, executive orders themselves do not effectuate new policies. Rather, in most cases, they call on federal agencies to examine or institute new policies—usually through regulations. On January 28, President Biden issued a broad sweeping [Executive Order](#) on "Strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act." [READ MORE](#)

Catch up on the latest federal regulatory news with ACEP's [Regs and Eggs](#) blog:

- [The New Medicare Add-on Code for Medication-Assisted Treatment in the Emergency Department—Got Questions? ACEP's Got Answers](#) - February 11
- [X-ing the X-Waiver: The Fight Continues!](#) - January 28, 2021
- [At the Buzzer! CMS' Last Minute Regulatory Actions](#) - January 21, 2021
- [Major Crisis Averted \(for Now\): Rather than Medicare Payment Reductions, a Raise May be Coming Your Way In 2021](#) - January 7, 2021

ACEP Member Benefit

ACEP Wellness & Assistance Program: Did you know your ACEP membership comes with three **free** counseling or coaching sessions available through phone, text or online chat? And for a small extra fee, you can add on **financial and/or legal assistance**. [Learn more about this free member benefit](#).

Prepare for your continuous EM board certification with **Critical Decision's 2020 LLSA Literature Review issue (free member benefit)**. Get the highlights from each ABEM article to make your studying faster and more productive.

Podcast fans: [ACEP's podcast family](#) includes *Frontline*, *ACEP Now*, *Annals of EM*, *Critical Decisions* and *JACEP Open + EMergence*, a new EM innovation podcast launching soon!

Peer Support Resource: Theater of War

Have you heard of Theater of War? The format includes presenting dramatic readings of seminal plays—from classical Greek tragedies to modern and contemporary works—followed by town hall-style discussions designed to confront social issues by drawing out raw and personal reactions to themes highlighted in the plays. ACEP hosted two Theater of War performances in 2020 and recently

partnered with the Infectious Disease Society of America on a [podcast](#) discussing how these performances can help EM physicians process the unprecedented hardships of working in the ED during a pandemic. [Learn more](#).

ACEP's Latest Pain Management and Opioid-Related Resources:

- Latest *Frontline* podcasts: [ACEP Pain and Addiction Care in the ED \(PACED\) Program](#) with Dr. Alexis La Pietra and Cathlyn Robinson & [California Bridge Program](#) with Dr. Alicia (Kurtz) Gonzalez
 - ACEP's **Managing Acute Pain (MAP) point-of-care tool** was recently updated. It's available on the [ACEP website](#) and within the emPOC app ([Mac App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)).
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Save the Dates: Virtual PEM21 and LAC21

ACEP's [Annual Leadership & Advocacy Conference](#) is now scheduled for **July 25-27 in Washington, D.C.** This is your chance to advocate for your specialty, engage with new members of Congress and connect with your peers. Join the Interest List for updates.

While you're marking your calendars, make plans to join us for this year's [Virtual Advanced Pediatric Emergency Medical Assembly April 19-21, 2021](#). Learn what's new and gain the skills you need to take on your next pediatric emergency.

CORD 2021 Academic Assembly

CORD is excited to launch its '**Virtually Unstoppable**' Academic Assembly on April 12-15, 2021. Registration information coming soon! Visit www.cordem.org for updates.

Nomination Deadlines Coming Up in March:

[ACEP Board & Council Officer](#) nominations (March 22)

[Wellness Center of Excellence Award](#) (March 1)

*[ACEP Leadership & Excellence Awards](#) (March 1)

*Some of the newest ACEP Leadership and Excellence Awards include:

- Community Emergency Medicine Excellence Award
- Disaster Medical Sciences Award,
- Diane K. Bollman Chapter Advocate Award
- Policy Pioneer Award
- Innovative Change in Practice Management Award
- Pamela P. Bensen Trailblazer Award

[Check out all ACEP Leadership and Excellence Awards](#)

From the Emergency Medicine Foundation:

- **Show your love for EM research this Valentine's Day!** For every EM practitioner who watches [this video](#), VapoTherm will donate \$10 (\$20 per EM resident) to the Emergency Medicine Foundation.
 - [EMF and AFFIRM have announced a new \\$40,000 grant in honor of Dr. Tamara O'Neal](#). Apply by March 31.
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News from ABEM

ABEM Issues Statement on its Commitment to Maintaining Certification Standards

Feb 08, 2021

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) understands that this past year was particularly challenging for emergency physicians, especially early career physicians. Every physician member of the ABEM Board of Directors is clinically active and understands the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruptions affecting our specialty have also affected ABEM certification. [Read the full statement here](#).

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