

# LAWSON WILKINS PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINE SOCIETY

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

October 2007

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I am writing to bring you an update about the affairs of our Society. The four months since I assumed the presidency have been busy for LWPES, with considerable progress in several important areas, about which most of you are likely unaware. Before discussing our exciting new initiatives, I want to remind you of where we stand, as of the last Business Meeting, held at our Toronto meeting in May 2007.

With Warmest Regards,  
Bob

## Management

We all benefit from the professional management team that was put in place by my predecessors. We could not be a modern and responsive organization without them. You may remember that Degnon Associates was engaged during **Lynne Levitsky's** tenure as president, and they assumed management of our office in May 2006, coincident with **Ken Copeland's** succession to the presidency. Under Ken's close oversight and skillful direction the society has undergone the transition from an old-fashioned, "ma-and-pa" operation where institutional records consisted of reams of paper accessed only through the institutional memory and down-and-dirty physical effort (leafing through dusty file boxes) of **Alan Rogol**, our secretary, and **John Kirkland**, our treasurer. Now our organization is run in an electronically-based, business-like way by a skilled and experienced office team. We all owe Ken, Alan, and John a great debt for their efforts during this transitional period, none more than me. The most obvious sign of this modernization is the appearance of our website. I would estimate that we are 95% or more along the way to putting in place the systems that we want. While we have made tremendous strides in modernizing, we occasionally run across unanticipated gaps in the informational or procedural trail, so please bear with us in this regard. Do view our website at [www.lwpes.org](http://www.lwpes.org).

**George Degnon** is our Executive Director. His background was summarized by Ken in his memo to the membership last summer. Briefly, I will remind you that he has considerable experience in pediatric health care management: he was long associated with the American Academy of Pediatrics, where he developed particular expertise in pediatric practice issues and government relations programs, having served as the first staff person for the Council on Pediatric Practice, serving as the first Director of the Academy's Washington Office and then rising to become the Academy's first Associate Executive Director. He founded Degnon Associates, Inc in 1979. With wife Marge and daughter Laura, they have an exceptionally dedicated management team of 15 employees that now provides management support for the Ambulatory Pediatric Association, the Association of Pediatric Program Directors, and the Society of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, and the newly created Council of Pediatric Subspecialties as well as LWPES. He is ably assisted on LWPES by two full-time employees, **Christy McGinty**, Association Manager, and **Nicole Ritchey**, Associate. These are your contacts for any questions that you may have about LWPES day-to-day business.

### We want to hear from you

The Board welcomes the comments and suggestions of members as we begin the process of revitalizing and enhancing the value of membership in the Society. Please send your ideas and observations to our new management team at [info@lwpes.org](mailto:info@lwpes.org) so that they can compile remarks for review at our upcoming board meetings (and copy me if you wish at [robros@peds.bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:robros@peds.bsd.uchicago.edu)).

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## 2007 Annual Meeting Review

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### Highlights

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#### Awards

The 2007 Society's awardees were announced. **Bob Blizzard** was chosen for the Van Wyk Award. Six new Research Fellowships and three new Clinical Scholar Awards were announced. Details can be viewed on the website by sponsor (Genentech, Lilly, Novo Nordisk, and Serono).

#### Website

The modernized website made its official debut. It is now managed from the LWPES office. The society's debt to **Larry Fox** for creating our first website years ago was acknowledged; Larry will stay active in the organization as Chair of the new Communications Committee.

#### Election Results

**Tom Moshang** is our new President-Elect and **Leona Cuttler** our new Director. They respectively replace **Lynne Levitsky** and **Frank Diamond** on the Board of Directors.

#### Membership

We welcomed into membership 28 Active members, 21 Associate members, and 1 Honorary member. The Society now has 926 members.

#### By-Laws

The eligibility criteria for Active Membership were simplified and changes made to restructure fiscal policy and management.

### Reports

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**John Kirkland**, Treasurer, reported that Bish & Haffey, PC, (Certified Public Accountants) audited and approved our 2006 financial reports. Internal Revenue Service Forms for 2006 have been submitted. A 2007 budget was approved by the Board of Directors. Degnon Associates as well as Bish & Haffey have recommended that LWPES convert to a 501(c)(3) organization to facilitate fund-raising. LWEEF is already a 501(c)(3) organization. An attorney was consulted to undertake this change. Fox, Joss, and Yankee, an investment management and financial planning firm, was selected as our financial advisor. All financial transactions in LWPES have been converted to electronic forms. Assets, Liabilities, Profit and Loss Statements as of the first 2007 quarter were reviewed for the membership. Questions and comments about our assets for the 2009 LWPES-ESPE Meeting were discussed.

**Lynne Levitsky**, immediate Past-President, reported the results of a membership survey, to which 40% responded. The membership is approximately 37% female, and approximately twice as many of these women (17%) are part-time as are men (7%). The nature of our society is changing: only 14% of us devote more than 50% of our time to research while 55% devote more than 50% of their time to the practice of pediatric endocrinology. Calculated relative value units indicate that our average physician sees 1.33 patients per hour of clinical care (75th percentile, 1.67 patients/hr). However, it is hard to generalize from these data since most of the respondents were to an appreciable extent in a university- or hospital-based practice. The members were divided about broadening the Society's membership criteria or changing its name.

### Committees

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Announcements were made of new and restructured committees. **Morey Haymond** will chair the steering committee for the new Study Network of Pediatric Endocrinology (SNoPE). **Larry Deeb** was appointed as co-chair with **Jay Cohen** of the Professional and Clinical Affairs Committee, and this committee was charged with facilitating the efficient clinical practice of pediatric endocrinology by partnering with established organizations on coding, reimbursement, and practice management issues. The Education Committee, chaired by **Jack Fuqua** was enlarged to encompass the Fellow's Forum by the addition of **Paola Palma-Sisto**; they will mount a new program for fellows in conjunction with the 2008 annual meeting of The Endocrine Society. **Pat Donohue** chairs the new Disorders of Sex Development (DSD) Committee. A complete list of LWPES committees can be found in the Directory or viewed on the website.

Interested in serving on a Committee? LWPES currently has 20 Committees and we are looking for volunteers. Please contact Tom Moshang, President-Elect, before December 1 at: [moshang@email.chop.edu](mailto:moshang@email.chop.edu).

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## Summer/Fall Progress Report

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### New Initiatives and Updates

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**Study Network of Pediatric Endocrinology (SNoPE).** Morey Haymond's initiative was overwhelmingly endorsed by our members according to our recent survey. Thirty-two percent responded, and 99% were in favor of the project, with 90% of these in turn being in favor of LWPES expending its own funds for pilot demonstration projects for 2 or more years until we can establish funding from public-private or industry-private partnership(s). The membership was passionate about this project, judging from the receipt of over 450 comments, pro and con. Consequently, the Board has now approved Morey's Steering Committee to take the next steps, which are to identify opportunities for collaborative interaction with established entities and to begin developing methods and protocol(s) for initial execution. The initial primary focus will be on setting up 1-2 small-scale projects on rare diseases that members can join as co-investigators for potential publication. The Children's Oncology Group (COG) is an attractive model, and Morey has already identified a potential collaboration with COG in a study of thyroid tumors.

**Committee on Maintenance of Certification in Endocrinology (MOCE).** The Program for Maintenance of Certification (MOC) in Pediatric Endocrinology is mandated by the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) to maintain Board certification in our subspecialty and will be implemented in 2010. Part 4 of the MOC requires that each individual practitioner demonstrate meaningful participation in a Quality Improvement (QI) initiative to monitor performance in practice. It requires Quality Assessment (QA), tools and programs by which pediatric endocrinologists assess the quality of care they deliver so that they can demonstrate systematic improvement in care.

To meet this need, LWPES has partnered with the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Endocrinology to form the MOCE committee, which is co-chaired by **Janet Silverstein** and **Bob Schwartz** and includes **Sue Rose**, **Steve Chernausek**, **Surendra Varma**, with **Alan Rogol** *ex officio* as the Board liaison. The August survey indicated that our members favored the development of QA/QI templates in the areas of diabetes mellitus and congenital hypothyroidism. Consequently, the committee will meet with the ABP later this Fall to begin developing templates for these disorders that will comply with ABP requirements.

Improving balance between the need for clinical research in children and the regulation of it is an agenda that I am pursuing at every turn. The Board shares my concern that the regulatory environment is unnecessarily bureaucratic and is stifling clinical research and the development of pediatric clinical researchers. A panel that I chaired on this subject at the Spring meeting generated vigorous discussion. This has been set as the topic at the opening forum of an October NICHD conference on "The Menstrual Cycle and Adolescent Health", and the Board is beginning to plan toward a workshop on the subject next year. It is our goal to bring together clinical and federal experts to find common ground to work toward streamlining the process.

An update on the **LWPES Sponsorship, Endorsement, and Affirmation Policies** has been posted on the website in the "Members Only" section under Policies and Procedures. This policy announcement now includes Society policies for reviews and surveys.

We are currently forming an *ad hoc* **Public Policy Committee**. **Scott Rivkees** will serve as Chair. Members who are interested in serving should promptly contact me directly.

**Society Survey.** To meet the needs of the membership, we need to better understand the professional interests and expertise of our members. To obtain this information, which will be for internal use only, we will send a survey with your next dues statement. You will be given an opportunity to update it annually or you can contact us in the interim, should you choose.

The **Drug and Therapeutics Committee** has been very active in reviewing topics of interest to our members. You soon will be seeing initiatives about vitamin D, aromatase inhibitors and use of IGF-I therapeutically—these have all been vetted extensively, submitted for publication and are in the last stages of review at the journals. In addition new initiatives are in the works.

LWPES endorsed The Endocrine Society White Paper, "Minority Involvement in Clinical Research".

### Challenges

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LWPES has worked and will continue to work with the pharmaceutical industry on non-promotional matters of mutual interest. In enabling LWPES to award funds for such activities as Research Fellowship and Clinical Scholar Awards, industry recognizes the importance of investigator-initiated clinical and basic research in our mission of optimizing the care of children with endocrine disorders. Beyond that, I want to echo **Ken Copeland's** comment at this time last year: LWPES is fortunate to have such a positive relationship with our sponsors who share wisdom and insights in advising us and helping us grow as a Society. The change in federal regulation of industry-physician relationships is hand-writing on the wall, however. It is forcing these sponsors to restructure their businesses, and this is impacting funding for the Society, as well as for our individual members. As a consequence, the Society has begun to explore additional new sources of support for our work.

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## Value of the Society

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You can see that the Society has become very active with several initiatives that span the interests of our membership—from clinical to research—with more in the planning stage. It appears that there is 70% overlap of pediatric endocrinologists in LWPES and the American Academy of Pediatrics. It should be apparent that it is important to every pediatric endocrinologist to be a member of the LWPES to stay abreast of new developments in our field, to have an opportunity to contribute to the pediatric endocrinology community, and to be able to take advantage of the benefits and initiatives from which each member receives value.

If you know of a colleague who is not a member, you would be doing them a favor by urging them to join. The process is now a quite easy and welcoming one—just check out the “Membership Information” pull-down menu on the LWPES website.

However, all of this added value comes at a cost. As a consequence, the Board has approved an increase in dues. The regular dues for Active Members will rise to \$200 annually; for Associate Members it will remain at \$20. For three years following completion of training, the dues for new Active Members will be \$100.

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## 2008 Annual Meeting - May 2-5 - Honolulu, HI

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**Mitch Geffner** and his Program Committee have done a wonderful job in organizing the 2008 LWPES meeting, which will again be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Pediatric Academic Societies and will be a joint meeting with the Asian Society for Pediatric Research. Our program will start with the **LWPES Presidential Citation Poster Reception** at 6:30 PM on Friday May 2, 2008 in Honolulu, Hawaii, and it will run through Monday May 5. The preliminary program can now be viewed at our website. Registration is now open and all information can be found at: [www.pas-meeting.org](http://www.pas-meeting.org). I urge you to promptly lay your plans to attend if you have not done so already; hotel space was going like hotcakes when I registered.

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## [www.LWPES.org](http://www.LWPES.org)

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The website now contains virtually complete details about the Society. Perhaps most notable is that the complete membership directory is now on-line in the “Members Only” section of the website. A bonus is the availability of **Ken Copeland’s** videotaped interviews of founders of our Society, archived thanks to the history project he mounted during his tenure as President. The LWPES website will be updated with exciting new information about the Society monthly. Members will receive an email notifying them of the updates.

If you are having trouble access the “Members Only” portion of the website, or need to change your contact information, please notify the LWPES office at [info@lwpes.org](mailto:info@lwpes.org) or 703-556-9222.

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