

ASMBS Connecticut Chapter of the ASMBS, Annual Meeting-June 11, 2024 5:30 pm PST
ASMBS Annual Meeting – Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina, Santa Rosa Room, 1st Floor, South Tower and via
Zoom

Meeting Notes Submitted by Katy Dunay, Executive Director for CT Chapter of the ASMBS

Members In Attendance: Dr. Neil Floch, Dr. Danielle Friedman, Dr. Craig Floch, Dr. Saber Ghiassi, Dr. Darren Tishler, Jane Sweeney, Dana Cantiello, APRN, Meagan Moskowitz, Dr. Pavlos Papasavas, Vicky DiNardo, Dr. Patrick Dolan, Dr. Nik Sekhar, Dr. Sherard Chiu, Dr. Jim Healy, Jacob Clark, Dr. Dale Bond, Aimee Fucci, Tammy Piel, Connie Santana, Joel Amoakohene, Dr. Karen Gibbs, Dr. Devika Umashanker, Dr. Raza Shariff, Dr. Mia Shapiro, Dr. Joshua Hrabosky, Dawn Garcia, APRN, Dr. Jon Aranow, Dr. Jennifer Schwartz, Gabrielle Berthiaume, APRN, and Katy Dunay

Call to Order 6/11/24 @ 8:34 pm EST

1. **Introductions & Welcome:** Thanks to all attendees in person and via zoom for joining attendance taken in person and via zoom
2. **Treasurers Report:** delivered by Katy Dunay – questions fielded related to the report out
3. **Obesity Summit 2025 – Save the Date – January 16-17, 2025**
 - Call for folks to join the Planning Committee – Dr. Ghiassi invites anyone who is interested – there is some time commitment – usually bi-weekly meetings via Zoom progressing to weekly
 - Dr. Papasavas describes the meeting planning commitment – activities – work through outreach to folks for lectures
 - General theme, topics, speakers, people having contact and content experts – recruiting
 - Dr. Tishler – challenge with sponsors – many more attendees – had reached a max for what we could ask for meal sponsorship – did not have a great profit last year – solution to get more sponsors, good opportunity to see who can come to our meeting while at this meeting – American Board of Surgery will come – there are some other opportunities, look carefully and this is the way to make this profitable, will get bigger not smaller
 - Exhibits here smaller, pharma and vitamins – downsized – nobody makes decisions for buying things for hospitals at these conferences – the surgeons don't get to make these decisions – more local
 - Dr. Tishler talked with John Romanelli – Mass/NE Chapter – there is an official chapter for NE but not active for multiple years – there is an active MA chapter that is not recognized by the ASMBS – were at NE Surgical Society – organized meeting but not official chapter – NE is that it is incorporated and cannot be broken off unless it was broken off – not independent (Partners Health)
 - We can reach out to the president (permanent) and other surgeons in the state want to be more active – we can send invitations to all surgeons in the NE area – John Romanelli will help with that – but not through NE Chapter of ASMBS, no involvement
 - NY has been in communication with us – cross promotion of meetings – tri state society – Dr. Neil Floch notes there is room to expand – can get bigger and then make a profit – as we go up in people we need more sponsors
 - Dr. Chang Obesity Medicine Tri-state chapter – some experts in obesity medicine – maybe Thursday evening and then Friday Surgical – sponsors who work with them for Obesity Society – Comprehensive Program that patients are looking for together – Dr. Aranow – get list of members – NY, NJ & CT – over 100 members as part of the chapter
 - Thursday was a difficult day for us start earlier – have less pressure on Friday to get in the 8 hours – and also not staying until 5 pm
 - Dr. Papasavas discusses meeting content – goal should not recreate what has been done with Obesity Week – is a surgical meeting – but collaboration with medical and panel discussions have expansion we can work with Dr. Umashanker to incorporate more colleagues to participate – comprehensive treatment plan – will attract PCP – if we want to educate – focus on some of the focus on medicine

- One of the benefits of having \$\$ in the bank, we were able to put the deposit down – the first couple of meetings – we had to get sponsors, we juggled at the beginning – one of the reasons to make \$\$ to support getting a bill passed
 - Dr. Aranow – the list for sponsors – comes out late – we can keep a running tally and keep us updated – gives the surgeons another opportunity for the sponsors updated and informed earlier – may open up some additional sponsors – earliest we have had the meeting – we can actually start recruiting sponsors – once we get one we can get the competitors to join
 - Communicate the sponsorship and increase participation in planning – many details will get done by planning committee
 - Dr. Craig Floch will work on getting new robot to the meeting
4. **Walk from Obesity 2024: Save the Date – 9/29/24:** Beth & Jane collaborating – Jane is taking the lead with her team and the Walk will be in Meriden – point of pride for us – thanks from Dr. Ghiassi
- Start time 10 am 9/29 at Hubbard Park – it is a Sunday this year
 - Internal list for sponsors has been shared
 - Dr. Aranow suggests we need more exposure – Dr. Neil Floch asks that we invite politicians and get them to the walk – they may bring people – Dr. Craig Floch will invite Senator Blumenthal – Vicky also notes she has a connection with Senator Blumenthal – Yale and HHCMG – reach out through channels – it is an important event and should be covered – raising awareness, raising money for research, support for disease
 - Dr. Aranow asks about the opportunity to spend money for a limited commercial to advertise the walk – not TV but maybe radio – members can work with hospital media departments to advertise on our behalf
5. **Relaunch of social media:** Dr. Ghiassi mentioned Dr. Floch assisting with this – Renee will work on this
- Twitter & LinkedIn for the physicians – nice for patients to know we are coordinated, work together and are collaborative – different audiences and different purpose – next 1-2 years more awareness of bariatric surgery – life saving treatment – Be Wise videos, the more we can promote, the better awareness, theme for next year is decrease obesity stigma
6. **Advocacy:** Dr. Tishler notes that major societies have a seat at AMA – ASMBS is at risk of losing the seat because they do not have enough members – 20% -1 seat, 40% 2 seats – we are short 1 seat – we need to confirm if this is just for physicians – Dr. Umashanker is a member of AMA, discount to join \$200 50% off
- AMA has a lot of money and obesity is now a topic for primary care and non-surgical world – surgeons are not typically part of the AMA, all of the discussions around treating obesity act, surgery, AMA is more powerful
 - While you join AMA, in CT also become part of the CSMS – AMA topics get to state chapters so we want to be on good terms – will start promoting this, we need more members in the AMA, ASMBS is close
 - There are some benefits and discounts – house of delegates of AMA important and lobbying (70% for urology) they are at risk – we need to boost us up – if you become a new member in the near future – let Darren Tishler & Danielle Friedman know – will reconcile the member ASMBS list with the AMA list – when you join the AMA do they ask about being a part of other societies
 - They have made a lot of progress and help from AMA, especially in Louisiana, a lot to do with AMA support -we know that one thing we have been fighting for is better coverage for bariatric surgery in CT – there has been a change when Inflation Reduction Act was passed, in the bill – changes to essential health benefit is no longer covered by state, is the federal government – CT is being targeted by ASMBS to replicate this – DST meeting with Chris Gallagher to hear framework – what we don't know is how to change the essential health benefit – possible governor can change, some states insurance commissioner, some states if state governing bodies bring it forward – there has been \$4million dollar cost for ACA plan – problem has been the money – it also means that we don't need to go through the process with a bill – this is a big win for patients who would not otherwise have it –
 - Meetings in the past with the insurance commissioner, never went well because of the dollar amount, she brought us in to say stop asking, there would be no cost, we may have a window, we will have more info – DST will get Friedman on this, use reps and senators in the past to help us open the doors – will have a bit more clout with insurance commissioner go to our local reps and senators and see who can open the door – if we don't have to go through the bill process, may not be necessary – may be coverage –
 - Per Dr. Aranow, the reference plan has to meet essential health benefit – no change since ACA was launched – index plan – depends state by state with the process – DST having meetings this week to

better understand, spoke with folks in Louisiana, they are working on the toolkit – Dr. Aranow offers to help – report back from Dr. Tishler on roadmap for process – Dr. Neil Floch also offers to assist - thinks we should leverage and work with someone from government – Dr. Tishler reached out to Eric Berthel – he did not know there was a change to Inflation Reduction Act – state will move fast before fed govt will change their mind – Dr. Tishler will report back – this may affect patients on the exchange so there is no mandate now and there are a lot of our patients – dollars would be covered by federal government – not just people on the exchange, would be all – they did not seem to have issues in LA doing it – will talk more – per Dr. Aranow – index plan is based on what has highest prevalence in the community – plan most commonly used across the state –

7. **Call for new business:** Discussion of expanding the number of members, continue to have folks participate – we will continue to encourage new members to join and be active with the chapter and events
8. **Election Results:** Dr. Saber Ghiassi - Induction of the 2024 CT Chapter ASMBS Board – Congratulations & Welcome to our new officers!
 - a. **President:** Dr. Saber Ghiassi
 - b. **Vice President:** Dr. James Healy
 - c. **Secretary/Treasurer:** Dr. Jennifer Schwartz **** Newly Elected**
 - d. **Integrated Health Chair:** Dana Cantiello, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, CBN **** Newly Elected**
 - e. **STAR Access to Care Rep:** Dr. Danielle Friedman
 - f. **STAR Access to Care IH Rep (non-voting appointed):** Gabrielle Berthiaume, DNP-C
 - g. **Member at Large:** Dr. Juan Holguin
 - h. **Member at Large:** Dr. Randal Zhou **** Newly Elected**
 - i. **Member at Large:** Dr. Neil Floch
 - j. **Obesity Medicine Liaison (non-voting):** Dr. Devika Umashanker
 - k. **Past President:** Dr. Darren Tishler
9. **Thanks & Conclusion:** Dr. Ghiassi thanks those who have served in the past and welcomes our new members to the board. Thanks to Dr. Malit who is not in attendance, congratulations to Dr. Schwartz, congrats to Dana who is on Zoom, Dr. Friedman is our STAR access to care representative. A correction is raised that the Member at Large positions are 3 year staggered terms (to be validated with review of chapter creation documents). Congratulations to Dr. Randal Zhou, welcome to Dr. Umashanker is serving in the Obesity Medicine Liaison role. Thanks to Dr. Tishler, Dr. Papasavas, and Dr. Floch for their continued participation and advocacy.
10. Meeting adjourned.