



# Orthopaedic Research Society Newsletter

I T A L L B E G I N S W I T H R E S E A R C H

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## From the President

*Chris Evans, PhD*

**By all reasonable criteria, the Orthopaedic Research Society is thriving.** Membership has

never been higher and finances are sound. For the third year

in a row, our annual meeting attracted record attendance, and a record number of abstracts were submitted, accepted and presented. Given that this year's venue, Washington DC, is traditionally unpopular and followed on the heels of San Francisco, one of the most popular locations, this is a remarkable accomplishment. Severe space constraints in the DC convention center tested the ingenuity of the Program Committee, which responded with several innovations. The most noticeable of these was the introduction of "short talk" sessions, in which authors of high-ranking posters were given 5 minutes to present the essence of their work. This enabled more papers to be presented orally, with the welcome side-effect of eliminating long, repetitive introductions. Based upon the post-meeting survey results, the short talks seem to have been well received although there are concerns over

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the lack of adequate discussion time and difficulties in synchronizing travel between concurrent sessions. Overall, more than 80% of respondents rated the meeting as "good" or "excellent", and I

would like both to thank and congratulate the Program Committee Chair, Alan Grodzinsky, and the rest of the committee on their fine accomplishment.

The Education and Special Projects Committee, chaired by Scott Bruder, also had a phenomenally successful year, particularly in the area of sponsorships. Beginning in 2002, the ESP committee has been charged with attracting sponsorship for various components of the annual meeting. This year income from sponsorship exceeded \$130,000, nearly triple the amount of the previous year. Scott, his predecessor, Maurizio Pacifici, and the other members of the ESP worked very hard and effectively to achieve this and they, too, deserve to be congratulated and thanked.

Rocky Tuan has just concluded the tedious and protracted quinquennial process of negotiating a new contract for publication of our official organ, the Journal of Orthopaedic Research. He has secured a

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## Funding is Key for Advancements in Musculoskeletal Research

*Orthopaedic surgeons, patients, researchers meet with legislators to discuss need for increased funding*

**Musculoskeletal conditions have an enormous impact on Americans** and the entire health care system. From sprains and fractures to osteoporosis, arthritis, back pain and bone tumors, orthopaedic conditions are one of the top reasons people seek medical care. Accounting for **136.8 million** ambulatory health care visits, more than three million hospitalizations, approximately **\$245 billion dollars** in medical costs and **488 million days** of restricted work activity each year, musculoskeletal ailments comprise more than **14 percent** of the health care dollar: approximately **1.5 to 2.5 percent** of the United States (U.S.) Gross National Product (GNP).

To increase awareness of the effects that musculoskeletal conditions have on individuals, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) sponsored 2005 Research Capitol Hill Days, an event promoting federal funding for musculoskeletal research. The event gives the orthopaedic community comprised of orthopaedic surgeons, patients and researchers the opportunity to meet with targeted members of Congress and personally advocate for the future of musculoskeletal care.

Despite the chronic nature and increasing prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions, funding for orthopaedic research has grown more slowly than other areas of research. President Bush's fiscal year (FY) 2006 budget has only recommended a **0.5 percent** increase from FY 2005 for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), not even keeping pace with inflation. The orthopaedic community is urging Congress to appropriate \$541.6 million in the FY

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## Musculoskeletal Research *continued*

2006 for the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), a six percent increase from last year. Advocacy efforts will specifically target the subcommittees on labor, health and human services, and education, which are part of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees.

In 2004, for the first time, patients accompanied their physicians. This year, 24 patients along with approximately 35 orthopaedic surgeons and researchers will be speaking with legislators from their congressional districts and/or states about the need for more musculoskeletal funding. The patients ranging from children with spinal cancer and Ewing's Sarcoma to adults with degenerative disc disease and osteoarthritis will tell their personal stories, highlighting how advancements in orthopaedics have impacted their lives.

"Our patients are truly inspiring," said Joshua J. Jacobs, MD, ORS President-Elect. "Having them with us to tell their moving stories and help advocate for additional orthopaedic research funding has allowed us to deliver our message in a more effective fashion. I am honored to be among such articulate and caring individuals."

## RCH 2005

### Richard L. Lieber PhD

*Professor of Orthopaedics and Bioengineering  
University of California, San Diego*

It's hard to imagine a crazier mix of individuals than Orthopaedic Surgery patients, Orthopaedic Researchers, Capitol Hill Legislators and their Assistants! However, that was just the mix that was created on March 16th and 17th as a number of us representing the Orthopaedic Research Society and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons went to Capitol Hill to participate in "Research Capitol Hill Days 2005 (RCH 2005)." The purpose of RCH 2005 was to educate legislators regarding the critical need for orthopaedic research funding, especially with regard to the NIH budget for the NIAMS Institute (National Institute of Arthritis and

Ted Sumner and Richard Lieber, PhD meet with David Carreiro, Senior Policy Analyst for Zoe Lofgren, 16th District, California



Ted Sumner, patient; Brenda Welborn, ORS Executive Director; Richard Lieber, PhD

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*Our words were not falling on deaf ears.*

Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases). We were matched with patients from our areas in order to present an effective case to the legislators that included both the analytical side and the patient experience side.

Prior to the meeting, we were provided with an excellent briefing book, which described the logistics of our meetings, tutorials on communicating with Congress, information about our target legislator(s) and various informational packets. We all met the day before our congressional visits to be briefed by AAOS staff on such topics as "What to expect during your Congressional Office visit." It was encouraging during these meetings to have high-level representation from the AAOS (President, Stuart Weinstein, MD, Chair of the AAOS Council on Research, Josh Jacobs, MD and Chair of the AAOS Committee on Research, Gunnar Andersson, MD, PhD). The next morning, we all met and, after breakfast, we "Hit the Hill." The meetings were much more enjoyable than I thought they would be. The legislators and the legislative assistants were open-minded, highly

educated, informed and "influenceable." Our words were not falling on deaf ears. Since these individuals were used to being "lobbied" on various aspects of health research, many times they would begin the visit by simply stating "What do you want?" This direct, no nonsense approach was a little bit foreign to us in the scientific field, but it was refreshing and exhilarating. While sitting there with my new best friend, patient Ted Sumner from San Jose, California, it was clear that we were making some impact.

Of course, the long term effects of RCH 2005 are not yet known, but I personally felt a sense of national pride, as well as fulfilling a duty to "get the word out" on the incredible cost effectiveness, importance, and appropriateness of increase research for musculoskeletal disease. I would strongly encourage any of our membership to take part in this worthwhile program next year. For more information contact Brenda Welborn, Executive Director, Orthopaedic Research Society.