Join AAMD “Deep in the Heart of Planning” at the 43rd Annual Meeting!

By Rick Scherer, CMD, and Patty Sponseller, CMD
2018 Annual Conference Committee Co-chairs

On behalf of the 2018 Annual Conference Committee (ACC) and the AAMD Board of Directors, we are excited to invite you to attend the AAMD 43rd Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, June 17-21, 2018 with pre-conference workshops on June 16 at the JW Marriott Austin. Visit the [meeting website](#) for complete details.

The 2018 ACC has been working hard to put together an educational program to help dosimetrists advance to the top of their profession and earn over 35 continuing education credits while also having the opportunity to network with over 500 fellow dosimetrists and see the latest radiation oncology products in our exhibit hall. The MDCB credits are not only applicable to CMDs but also to radiation therapists and radiologic technologists through ARRT. In addition, we are offering CAMPEP credits this year for medical physicists.

We invite you to participate in our pre-conference workshops on Saturday, which include a Radiation Oncology Documentation and Coding Workshop and a Giving Scientific Presentations Workshop. The documentation and coding workshop, which is led by experts from Revenue Cycle, is an in-depth, four-hour workshop that will provide you with tools to help you and your facility better understand the complexity of our billing and coding system. The FREE presentation workshop will be an interactive workshop that will include presentation/public speaking tips and techniques with small group breakout sessions for discussion and brainstorming exercises which will help you become a presenter in future meetings. Varian will also offer advanced Eclipse training on Saturday.

After a full day of education on Sunday, join us for the Welcome Reception to network and relax with good food and company. This will take place in the exhibit hall, where you will have time to visit with our corporate partners and possibly win some prizes!

Back again this year will be one full day of concurrent sessions (Wednesday) and also Image Registration (Tuesday) and Treatment Planning System (TPS) Workshops (Sunday-Wednesday). TPS workshops provide a great opportunity to learn a different planning system. These are FREE workshops (with full meeting registration), but space is limited, so you will want to register early to guarantee your spot for the TPS of your choice. See the Agenda page on the [AAMD meeting website](#) for more details.

Come stay with us at our meeting hotel, the JW Marriott in Austin. A luxurious award-winning hotel in the heart of downtown Austin. Experience all Austin has to offer, including live music in the “Live Music Capital of The World,” The Congress Avenue Bats at Sunset, amazing food (including many food trucks) and much more all within walking distance or the hotel.

We look forward to seeing you “Deep in the Heart of Planning!”
As spring finally arrives, I can’t help but get excited about what the year 2018 will bring for the AAMD! I have to say thank you to all of those who represent you on the AAMD Board of Directors. Recently the Board of Directors met for our Mid-Year Board meeting. We took a different approach this year and decided to focus exclusively on Strategic Planning for the organization. The Board spent two solid, long days, working well into the evening, going through the member surveys that were filled out and deciding on the direction that the organization will take over the next couple of years. We want you to know that we heard your concerns, ideas and thoughts and took all that into consideration. We, as well as our Headquarters staff, will be working closely with our committee co-chairs and committees to implement strategies to make the AAMD an organization that meets the needs and desires of its membership. Theses changes are not changes that will be made overnight but are changes that will take time to implement correctly and effectively. We will be informing the membership as we roll out these new strategies, so keep an eye out – it’s going to be an exciting year!

At the end of April, we will be holding our first joint regional meeting. Regions II & III will be holding a meeting in Denver, April 20-21. The Regional Representatives for these two regions are working hard to put together a meeting full of interesting topics. This meeting will take place at the Hyatt Place in downtown Denver.

Start making plans to attend the 43rd Annual Meeting in Austin, TX. The theme for this year’s meeting is “Deep in the Heart of Planning.” This year will feature a presentation by Dr. Robert Timmerman, a pioneer in SBRT, along with the first interactive contouring workshop as part of a general session. Other sessions include: a dosimetrist’s first-hand experience with sarcoma, patient safety, the benefits of working as a locum dosimetrist, scripting, new technologies in radiation oncology and many others. There will also be pre-conference workshops on presentation skills and documentation and billing. The annual meeting is a great place to see old friends and make new ones, as well as pick up information on what is being done at other clinics around the country and world.

As the best football coach ever, Vince Lombardi, once said: “Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.” This is something we, as medical dosimetrists and a professional organization, should always strive for.

Keitt Mobile, MS, CMD, RT(R)(T)
AAMD President
keitt.mobile@gmail.com

Medical Dosimetrist Now Recognized as an Occupation by the Bureau of Labor Statistics

A few years ago, the AAMD initiated the process to have “medical dosimetrist” recognized as a distinct occupation by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Good news: The 2018 SOC has been published and medical dosimetrists are listed as a separate, distinct occupation!

2018 SOC Code: 29-2036
2018 SOC Title: Medical Dosimetrists
More information about the SOC can be found at: https://www.bls.gov/soc/

AAMD 2017 Salary Survey is Coming Soon

The AAMD will be launching the 2017 Salary Survey this year. The purpose of the survey is to gather the most accurate salary information and trends by regions throughout the medical dosimetry community. The study will once again be conducted by Michael Mills, PhD, in collaboration with the AAMD Career Services Committee. The plan is to follow the 2015 Salary Survey questionnaire with a few minor modifications. The proposed timeline is as follows:

May 1, 2018 – Survey sent to all AAMD members
July 1, 2018 – Survey closes and analysis begins
Fall 2018 – Final Report
Watch your email for the survey notification and a link to the questionnaire.
Your participation is very important to the AAMD and will allow us to provide you with the most accurate salary data.
AAMD 2018 Election - Vote for Our Leadership

By Adam Brown, CMD, and Catherine Gagne, CMD
Nominations and Volunteer Committee Co-Chairs

Election 2018 is right around the corner, and the AAMD has great enthusiasm for the upcoming year. We are thrilled to have some great nominees willing to serve to help lead our society. The positions up for election in 2018 are:

• President- Elect
• Secretary*
• Regional Representative VI
• Regional Representative V

* Note that no nominations were received for the position of Secretary. Following the AAMD By-laws, the Board of Directors voted to appoint the current Secretary, Rachel Hackett, to a second term.

All Full CMD Members will be asked to vote on the position of President-Elect. The regional representatives will only be voted on by the members in their respective regions.

This year’s election will use a third-party company, Survey and Ballot Systems, to handle the election process. The election will start in April, so watch for an e-mail inviting you to vote.

To help with your ballot decisions, get to know the candidates by reading their personal statements.

President-Elect

Cara Sullivan, CMD

Position Statement: Over the years I have served many roles within the AAMD, Secretary-AAMD Board of Directors, Co-Chair for the Membership, Nominations, and Annual Meeting Committees. In addition to that I served as Co-Chair for three Region V Meetings.

Each position prepared me to be able to represent such a great group of health care professionals. If elected to serve the position of President Elect, I will bring with me the same enthusiasm and pride I did in my previous roles. I look forward to working with the Board on strategic initiatives that both elevate the Medical Dosimetry profession and build our role as leaders within the Radiation Oncology Department. It will be my honor to serve the AAMD members in the position of President-elect, and I will continue to strengthen and build upon the relationships and accomplishments that those who served before me have achieved.

Region VI Representative

Rick Scherer, CMD

Position Statement: The field of radiation therapy is expected to grow much faster than average over the next few years, and it is imperative to provide quality educational opportunities to medical dosimetrists everywhere. I have been an active member of the AAMD for many years serving on various committees and task groups. I am currently serving as the Senior Co-Chair for the Annual Conference Committee. My experience with the AAMD has given me a better understanding and respect for the challenges involved in providing a quality continued education. I am truly impressed with the AAMD’s dedication, attention to detail and hard work when it comes to providing for their members. As Region VI Representative I will do whatever I can to promote and support the Medical Dosimetry profession and to never forget it’s all about the patient.

Lee Culp, CMD

Position Statement: I believe that my own personal core values align well with the mission of AAMD - I am always looking for ways to promote and support the field of Dosimetry and also feel that we should be lifetime learners always trying to better knowledge and understanding not only for our own personal growth, but for our patients as well. If elected, I can personally see fit the growth and intellectual knowledge spread amongst our Region by dealing first-hand with organization of conferences and communication between committees on which I also serve.

Region V Representative

Madison Fletcher-Mason, CMD

Position Statement: I am honored to accept the nomination for Region V Representative. As a clinical dosimetrist, preceptor, and former AAMD Annual Conference Committee Co-Chair, I have witnessed the hard work and dedication it takes to promote and support the Medical Dosimetry Community. Our profession is constantly evolving; and the healthcare field itself is becoming more challenging. As members and leaders, we must share our knowledge and experiences through the continuing education AAMD provides to help adapt and remain an invaluable part of the team providing care to our patients. I am passionate, willing, and ready to serve you, Region V, and together we will make an impact on the future fight against cancer.
Special Events for Educators and Students
By Mahsa Dehghanpour, EdD, CMD, and Mellonie Brown-Zacarias, MET, CMD
Formal Education Committee Co-chairs

Don't Miss the Educators’ Workshop and Student Gathering During the AAMD 43rd Annual Meeting

The Educators’ Workshop will be held in the afternoon of June 19. Educators are invited to attend this event to meet colleagues from other programs as well as obtain MDCB credits through education-related presentations. Representatives from JRCERT, MDCB and AAMD will be present in this meeting to provide updates and answer questions.

The Student Gathering will be held in the afternoon on Monday, June 18. At this event, students will have an opportunity to network, participate in a Student Bowl, and learn about job hunting, as well as preparation for the MDCB exam. On the agenda is a presentation from an MDCB representative with an opportunity for students to ask questions. There will also be a recent medical dosimetry graduate discussing job searching (including the application process and interviewing), board preparation, and expectations during the first year as a working dosimetrist. In addition, there will be an opportunity for students to sign up for a one-on-one mock interview and resume review.

AAMD Supports Students’ Research Activity
All medical dosimetry students are encouraged to participate in the AAMD student writing competition 2018. The submission deadlines for the research abstract and manuscript are April 15 and May 1, 2018, respectively. The AAMD Formal Education Committee will form a group to judge the quality of students’ work and the winners will be announced during the Annual Meeting in Austin, TX.

Need Help with Travel Expenses for the AAMD 43rd Annual Meeting? Apply for a Travel Grant by May 3!

The AAMD Education and Research Foundation has extended the deadline to apply for Annual Meeting travel grants. Visit the Foundation website for more information.
Need CE Credits? Join AAMD In Denver!

Here’s your chance to participate in medical dosimetry continuing education while “talking shop” with your peers! This 2-day meeting features educational sessions, networking and exhibits in downtown Denver, CO. Earn CE credits and share best practices with your medical dosimetry colleagues. Develop your skills and your contacts - and have some fun exploring all that Denver has to offer!

Program highlights include:

- Sessions focusing on the very latest developments in radiation oncology
- 14 MDCB CE credits anticipated (also valid for ARRT credits)
- Networking with colleagues
- Exhibits

Full meeting registration is just $275 for AAMD Members and $325 for Non-Members before April 9.

Get All the Details and Register Now!

Hotel Reservations: The AAMD room rate at the Hyatt Place Denver/Downtown, Denver is $159 per night plus taxes and fees. Hotel reservations can be made online by clicking here.
It was an honor for me to conduct this interview with an individual who was first a mentor, then a peer and someone I now consider a friend. Paula Berner, BS, CMD, FAAMD, has contributed a great deal to the medical dosimetry community during her 30 years in practice. She has now opened the door for others to follow her footsteps upon her retirement. Many of you may already know Paula and recognize all she has done for the AAMD, but for those who don’t know Paula, prepare to be impressed! Paula has served in many roles – some large, some small, but each of them allowed her to make a difference. Paula served in the AAMD Presidential roles from 2006-2009 serving as President from 2007-2008. She was elevated to AAMD Fellow in 2014. She also served as Co-Chair for the Education Committee, as committee member for the Formal Education and Fellows committees, as AAMD Liaison to ASTRO/ACMP/ASRT 2008-2009, and as a member of the AAMD Fellows task group. She led a review of the AAMD Scope of Practice/Practice Standards, contributed to the AAMD Medical Dosimetry Curriculum Guide 2012 and the current revision, and a presented at five AAMD Annual Meetings! If that was not enough, Paula was also a founding member and Secretary for the AAMD Education and Research Foundation from 2007-2011. There are many items not mentioned as those are just the highlights.

The AAMD and the medical dosimetry world are so fortunate to have such an incredible individual who gave so much of herself to our great profession. As you read through her interview, I hope it inspires many of you to reach beyond your comfort zone and follow in her big footsteps. Reach high and start another trail for other dosimetrists to follow!

What made you choose medical dosimetry as a profession?

I would have to say that medical dosimetry chose me. I started in medical dosimetry over 30 years ago. It was a profession I had never heard of and knew nothing about. I had just left my position at Baylor College of Medicine, where I was working in a protein synthesis lab. I wanted to do something in the medical field, but more “people” oriented.

You are now retired. Can you tell us what was the most rewarding part of your career and what you will miss the most?

There were actually two “most rewarding” parts of my time as a medical dosimetrist. First was being part of a highly trained and specialized team that provided outstanding care to patients. Second was teaching individuals from all professions who came to MDACC to learn what we were doing. We included direct patient care, spending a lot of time in the OR, being creative and preparing radioactive sources for implantation. It was fantastic!

When I reflect on my career as a medical dosimetrist I cannot imagine a more rewarding and fulfilling profession.

You served several roles for the AAMD. Can you share with us how your service with the AAMD accented your career?

AAMD participation added a dimension to my career in medical dosimetry that I would not have missed. I have made life-long friends with individuals that I never would have known if I had not volunteered with the AAMD. Also, volunteering with the AAMD gave me the opportunity to learn and grow outside of my own position. I learned about and enjoyed being part of association management, strategic planning and the foundation development, just to name a few.

What are some of the changes you have seen in the medical dosimetry field during your career?

I have spent the past 24 years as a brachytherapy dosimetrist. This position allowed me to do so many tasks that I loved. They included direct patient care, spending a lot of time in the OR, being creative and preparing radioactive sources for implantation. It was fantastic!

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What made you choose medical dosimetry as a profession?

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Also, I was able to learn about radiation oncology in developing countries as I worked with my group at MDACC. Many developing countries have just a linac, a CT simulator and a HDR unit. They do not do IMRT, IGRT or any of the treatment techniques that we consider routine. They are learning to use the equipment they have to deliver the best treatments possible. I believe there is a place for the medical dosimetrist in these clinics once the groundwork has been laid for quality care. I think there is a place for the medical dosimetrist globally.

Do you plan on still staying involved in the medical dosimetry field?

I do. I will continue to lecture on a volunteer basis in the MDACC medical dosimetry program. I will be working with other medical dosimetry educators with their brachytherapy resources. I will still be involved with the AAMD.

Any parting advice or thoughts that you would like to share with your fellow dosimetrists?

At the end of the day, it is all about the patients and the role we play in delivering quality care.

What advice would you give to new dosimetry graduates and those who have been practicing for many years?

To the new dosimetry graduates: The real world is not exactly like the classroom and textbook.

You will make mistakes even though you do not want to. Use them as learning tools.

Let your colleagues know about your mistakes. Never be afraid to say: “I am not comfortable doing this by myself yet. Can you sit with me while I do this?” Or: “I would really like to help you with this, but the task you have just asked me to do is outside my range of expertise.”

To the seasoned dosimetrists: Do not be afraid to continue to learn and grow.

The medical dosimetry field is an ever-evolving practice. Can you share your thoughts on what you think the future of dosimetry will look like?

I think that in the United States there will always be a place for medical dosimetrists. The skills of medical dosimetrists will be required as Radiation Oncology evolves. The medical dosimetrist will continue to be a key member of the Radiation Oncology team.

As far as medical dosimetry globally: As an MDACC dosimetrist, I had the opportunity to interact and teach individuals from many countries. Volunteering with the AAMD Formal Education Committee allowed me to have conversations with some of these individuals about starting medical dosimetry educational programs in their countries. This can involve getting government approval to start educational programs and convincing the medical physicists that the medical dosimetrists are there to help them.
AAMD Career Center will allow you to:
• Search and apply to more medical dosimetrists jobs than in any other job bank.
• Upload your anonymous resume and allow employers to contact you through AAMD’s messaging system.
• Set up Job Alerts specifying your skills, interests, and preferred location(s) to receive email notifications when a job is posted that matches your criteria.
• Access career resources and job searching tips and tools.
• Have your resume critiqued by a resume-writing expert.

jobs.medicaldosimetry.org

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REMINDERS AND UPDATES

By Felicia Lembesis, CAE
Executive Director, MDCB

MDCB Exam
The next MDCB exam administration is scheduled for August 9-11, 2018. The exam handbook is posted here.

Each applicant must be aware of the information outlined in the handbook and the most current information in regard to exam administration, eligibility, application requirements, deadlines, and adherence to the Ethical Standards of the MDCB.

The application will be available from March 1 through the May 15 late deadline. International candidates must submit the application no later than May 1.

The examination is an English only exam and is comprised of 155 questions. The time allowed for completion is 3 hours and 50 minutes. The MDCB exam is a pass/fail exam. Scores are not based on a curve as is typical for non-certification testing and represent only individual overall performance. Each candidate’s ability is measured against a determined cut score identified by the cut score study, a recognized industry practice. Candidates are not required to have a passing score in each of the seven domains of the exam in order to achieve a passing score.

The MDCB congratulates the January 2018 successful candidates. 77% of exam candidates passed the exam.