

www.medicaldosimetry.org
Fall 2021

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Celebrating Successes and Addressing Challenges in Medical Dosimetry



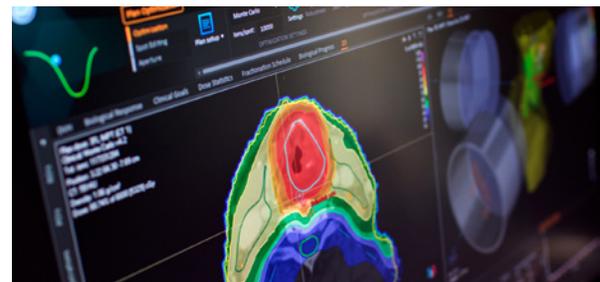
As fall is in full swing, we pause to consider the coming end of another year. The AAMD is grateful for your continued membership, mindful of our responsibility of supporting your professional experience. This year has been eventful for the AAMD, full of rewarding

successes. We endeavored on our first focused symposium on proton radiotherapy, which was a rousing success. We gathered proton treatment planning expertise from around the world to discuss considerations specific to this growing technology. As a dosimetrist who plans proton cases, I particularly appreciated the opportunity to learn from my colleagues' deep knowledge. The virtual forum made gathering as a community easier, so we will venture to provide another virtual educational experience for stereotactic treatment planning in February 2022. We are planning a robust program from a variety of subject-matter experts, so watch for more information on how you can partake in this next virtual symposium.

We also undertook our second pandemic-induced virtual Annual Meeting in 2021. Our 46th professional gathering brought a broad agenda of treatment planning specific presentations, with plenty of opportunities for our talented colleagues to share their insights with over 700 attendees. The effort to provide high quality educational experiences never stops, so we are working hard to shape the agenda for the [47th Annual Meeting](#) to be held in Baltimore in June 2022. We are focused on providing a safe, in-person environment for the medical dosimetry community to come together, with every intention to see old (and new) friends. We see no better place to return to an in-person meeting than "Charm City."

This year has also brought unique challenges for our profession. The [AAMD 2020 Workforce Study](#) outlined several areas where we collectively need to focus our energies. Our primary focus in the coming year will be on growing our educational footprint, with a clear

understanding that our formal educators need our collective support for our profession to continue to thrive. Many programs are seeking to grow, with an urgent need for more clinical sites willing to support student education. Teaching students has been most rewarding in my career, so I highly encourage those who might consider hosting students to do so. The opportunity to shape the next generation of medical dosimetrists is invaluable!



Many of us now work in a hybrid or fully remote environment, which presents new concerns for connecting with our clinics, colleagues, and patients. During our recent virtual Region IV Brown Bag Meet-up, I was struck by the number of fellow dosimetrists challenged with communication and work-life balance in these new settings. While remote work has afforded opportunities to balance work with personal lives, many also appreciate that Teams and Zoom may not adequately replace the teammate dialogue around a computer monitor in pursuit of optimal patient care. Several also remarked that remote work's flexibility presents other tests. While the ability to check on a plan's progress in your pajamas may seem efficient, several noted that they are confronted by new expectations on availability that may not correspond to the usual clinical hours. The AAMD realizes that this evolution in the work environment requires new tools for professionals to succeed, so we will be working to provide new education on these rising concerns.

2021 also saw the continuation of an evolving dialogue on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Dr. Martin Luther

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King spoke of being “confronted with the fierce urgency of now.” The AAMD believes that these issues are imperative for us to consider, study, and act on in respect of that vision. In collaboration with our colleagues at the Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board (MDCB), we are forming a joint task group as a vessel to develop a set of initiatives to guide our path forward. We strive to inspire the dosimetry community to improve the quality of life of our patients and their families, so we look forward to starting this initiative with a dynamic group of medical dosimetry professionals.

The nearing close of 2021 has afforded the AAMD time to reflect on the year that was, but also ponder the year to come. We eagerly anticipate working together to combat the challenges that face our profession as the scope of our role evolves. On behalf of the AAMD Board of Directors, I wish you all a peaceful and safe resolution of this year and look forward to engaging with you more in the coming year.

Respectfully,
Brian Napolitano, MHL, CMD
President, AAMD

Insights from a Clinical Preceptor: Shaping the Future of Medical Dosimetry, a Rewarding Role

By Morgan Griffin, CMD
Career Services Committee Member



Have you ever wondered if you had what it takes to be a Clinical Preceptor? I interviewed Ronald Zammuto, BS, CMD, Lead Medical Dosimetrist and Clinical Preceptor at Dana-Farber/Brigham & Women's Cancer Center-Milford Regional Medical Center. He shared his experiences and what to expect when taking on this important role. As the Clinical Preceptor for the Suffolk University Medical Dosimetry Program at his center, Ronald has played an important part in the education of many dosimetrists.

Q: Explain the role of a Clinical Preceptor.

A: A Preceptor is responsible for training students on contouring and treatment planning. We are here to support the student as they learn the way to be a good dosimetrist. Most importantly, we integrate the student into the work environment, so they feel like part of the team.

Q: Walk me through a “Day in the Life” of a Preceptor.

A: Day to day, the responsibilities vary. Initially, it is important to be able to assess where the student is clinically. You do not want to move too quickly. However, at the same time, you do not want a bored student who is ready to move onto more complicated planning. I ensure they are completing their competencies, give them plans to complete, review all their contouring, and provide feedback. Critically reviewing their plans slice by slice on where they could improve and what they did well is very important. A preceptor must walk a fine line between jumping in and taking over and letting the student learn through their mistakes. We must teach them how to do things, but also encourage them to try new things and share those ideas with team members.

Q: What time commitment is needed?

A: Typically, I only work with one student at a time, averaging 3-5 days per week. I may have a new student and a senior student on different days of the week. The first few weeks with a new student will require more time. As a student gains skills, the time involved decreases, but it is hard to estimate since the duties required are split throughout the day.

Q: What is the impact on the clinic?

A: The other dosimetrists in the clinic have to pick up a heavier load so I can devote my time to the student(s). It is not a major impact, but one that needs to be considered.

Q: Any additional responsibilities required of you as a Preceptor?

A: I am responsible for signing off on the competencies and making sure the student's skills meet the needs of the educational program. I attend required meetings, which can sometimes be challenging, but they usually only last an hour. I also approve their timecards and do evaluations at the middle and end of each semester. The paperwork is not overwhelming since most of it is automated.

Q: What characteristics/skills would make a good preceptor?

A: Patience, a very open mindset, and the ability to review a student's plans like you review your own. It's important to critique another dosimetrist's plan and not get caught up in the “your way is the only way” mentality. Always be honest with the student. And most importantly, if you are too busy to help them at the moment they need it, be sure you always get back to them on their questions and concerns.

Q: How did you get into the Preceptor role?

A: I have always enjoyed explaining and teaching, so it just made sense when I was approached about the role.

Q: What motivates you to be a good Preceptor?

A: I want all students to be good dosimetrists with a good understanding of planning. It is great to watch the students grow through their education and career. This is a role that someone must enjoy and not look at as a burden. It is important to help boost the confidence of the students. It is very rewarding.

For more information about how you can become a Clinical Preceptor, contact AAMD at aamd@medicaldosimetry.org.

Build Your Proton Planning Skills

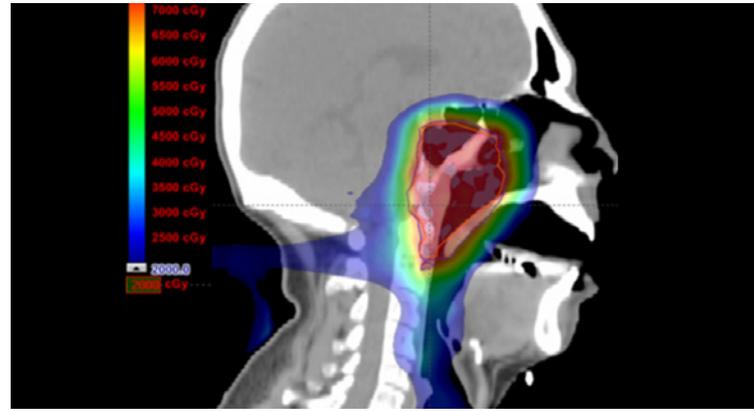


AAMD is collaborating with Legion Healthcare Partners to offer a structured education

program specifically for training in proton dosimetry. The [Proton Beam Medical Dosimetry Certificate Program](#) offers dosimetrists, either currently working in proton therapy or looking to enhance their skills and knowledge of proton therapy, the opportunity to learn from worldwide proton experts. With faculty from over a dozen facilities and strategic vendor partners, the learning experience is comprehensive. This allows participants to share experiences from viewpoints of various facilities, vendors, and treatment planning strategies.

The Proton Dosimetry Program consists of 16 hours of structured education – approved for MDCB CE credit – which was developed in collaboration with the AAMD. Additionally, monthly live webinars covering a multitude of current topics typically provide added CE opportunities. Dosimetrists can earn up to 30 CE credits with successful completion of the program.

Through a partnership with RaySearch, an online learning portal is in place for participants not currently working proton can practice and complete proton treatment plans. Preparations are underway for a hands-on treatment planning workshop to be held at the AAMD Annual Meeting. This workshop will be open to graduates and students of the program, as well as other interested dosimetrists.



Participants will have access to all course material and live learning sessions for 12 months, with learning of the didactic material and clinical competencies being self-paced through the learning management system. The webinar learning sessions are scheduled monthly and are optional, but highly suggested.

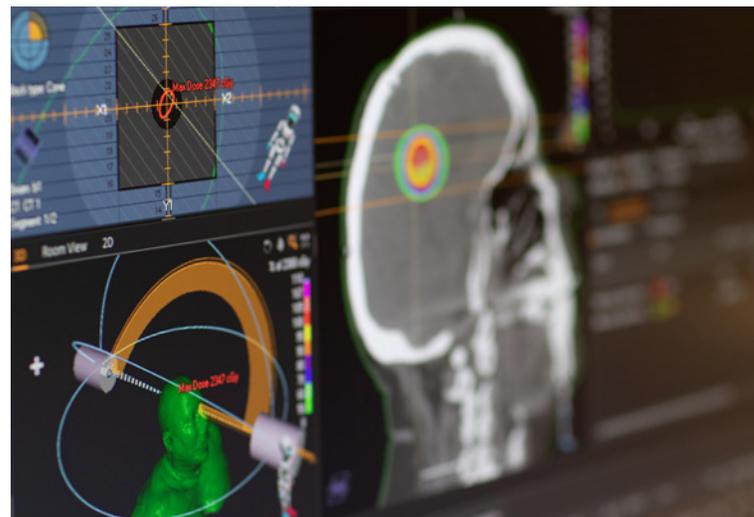
Financial aid is available through the [AAMD Education and Research Foundation](#) and the [ASRT Foundation \(Varian Proton Medical Dosimetry Scholarship\)](#).

AAMD Virtual SBRT/SRS Symposium Friday, February 25, 2022

The AAMD Regional Representatives are finalizing the details for the AAMD Virtual SBRT/SRS Symposium on Friday, February 25, 2022. With the success of the Virtual Proton Planning Symposium offered in April 2021, the AAMD is excited to continue offering virtual symposiums on a variety of topics.

The SBRT/SRS Symposium will offer eight (8) CE credits (MDCB and ARRT pending approval). The symposium format includes live sessions on February 25 and access to additional pre-recorded sessions. If you miss the live sessions, you can view the live and pre-recorded sessions on-demand until March 31.

The agenda and complete details will be released in December. Registration will open in mid-January 2022. Check the [website](#) for details!





**AAMD 47TH
ANNUAL MEETING**
JUNE 19 - 23, 2022
HILTON BALTIMORE
INNER HARBOR
BALTIMORE, MD

We Couldn't B'more Excited for the AAMD 47th Annual Meeting!

By Jeffrey Antone, CMD
Annual Conference Committee Sr. Co-Chair

The Annual Conference Committee (ACC) is excited to welcome back everyone to an incredible in-person meeting nestled in Baltimore's Harbor. The [AAMD 47th Annual Meeting](#) is scheduled for June 19 - 23, 2022, at the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor. We invite all dosimetrists, physicians, therapists, students, and clinicians to take part in exchanging ideas and techniques from your clinic. Our theme this year is Patient Care through the Port of Dosimetry.

The ACC is reviewing abstracts and is in the process of developing the agenda to provide outstanding educational content for the meeting. We are working hard to provide you with the opportunity to gain over 30 Continuing Education credits. Many thanks to those who were able to submit an abstract in spite of your busy schedule. We applaud your efforts to build a comprehensive event as our profession continuously evolves. Our goal is to present a variety of topics that offer information you can utilize in your clinic.

Specific offerings in the schedule will include the return of a live contouring session, a Plan Study, and a panel discussion on tips for a challenging treatment site.

We also offer everyone the opportunity to impart their expertise through a poster presentation. [Poster abstract submissions](#) are open until February 12, 2022. This is ideal for those who want to present their research information and compare their ideas with other institutions.

AAMD corporate partners will be onsite in Baltimore to showcase what's new in treatment planning. The exhibit hall, workshops and lunch symposiums will offer opportunities to see products first-hand.

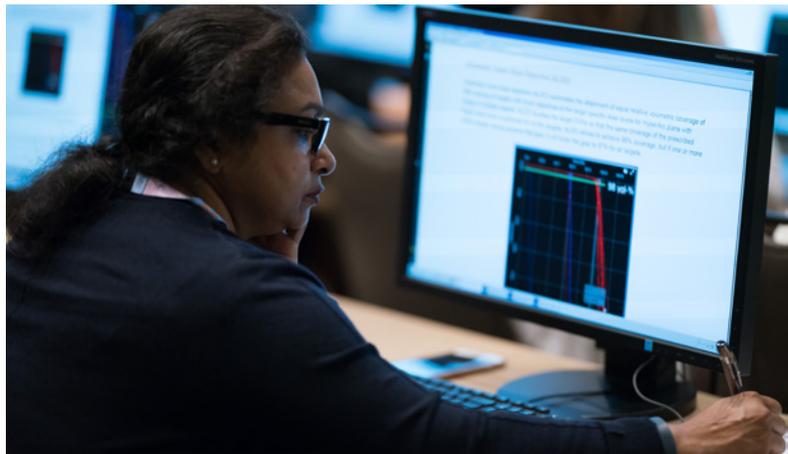
The AAMD is looking forward to meeting fresh new faces and those missed during the pandemic as we return to a live in-person meeting. Through collaboration and networking, we can continue to grow as a community. Enjoy exploring Baltimore restaurants, museums, and scenic waterfront. Please visit the [AAMD Annual Meeting webpage](#) often for updated details about the 2022 annual meeting in Charm City! Look for registration to open in early February 2022!



First-Ever AAMD Virtual Member Meet-up Got Dosimetrists Talking!

By Yasmin Ahmed, CMD
Region IV Representative

The AAMD held a Region IV Virtual Member Meet-up via Zoom on November 11, 2021. The event was hosted by Region IV Representative Yasmin Ahmed and Regional Director Kristi Smith. We had AAMD members from several Region IV states join the event. In addition, participants were able to interact with some of the AAMD Board members, including the AAMD President Brian Napolitano, who joined the event. Members were given the opportunity to exchange information and network. Various topics that were submitted by the participants related to medical dosimetry were discussed, as well as how workplace culture varies among clinics. The shift to remote work was also a hot topic among the participants! The event was a great way to bring dosimetrists together to talk about current workplace issues, so stay tuned for emails regarding [future events](#) like this one for other AAMD regions.



Don't Procrastinate: Get Your CE Credits before the End of the Year!

By Jessica Church, CMD
Continuing Education Committee Member

With the end of the year approaching, it is an excellent time to review your AAMD CE credit allowance and obtain credits for your MDCB certification. There are Recorded Presentations, Virtual Meetings and Directed Journal Readings in the [CE Center](#), with new recordings being added monthly. In December, look out for the newest Recorded Presentation, [Radiation Oncology Alternative Payment Model Overview](#). Two Directed Journal Readings were added in November. As a reminder, sessions do expire, so be sure to check them out before they expire by the end of the year!

Do you have an idea for a presentation or would you like to volunteer as a member of the Continuing Education Committee (CEC)? The CEC Co-Chairs would love to hear your idea or welcome you as a new member. Please contact Jessica Stanulus at jessica_stanulus@hotmail.com or Sandra John-Baptiste at sjohnb@mdanderson.edu if you are interested.

Special Thanks to Our 2021/2022 Sponsors

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VOLUNTEER



Volunteer Opportunities Abound – Leaders Needed for the Board of Directors and Committees

By Catherine Gagne, CMD
Nominations & Volunteer Committee Co-Chair

Consider becoming an integral part of the success of the AAMD by running for an open position in the **2022 AAMD Election** this coming Spring. The open positions are:

- President-Elect
- Regional Director
- Member-at-Large
- Region I and Region II Representatives

Please visit our [Call for Nominations web page](#) for detailed position descriptions and what to expect while serving in the above roles. Once you submit a nomination, you will get a chance to chat with the current leader in the role and be able to get a better understanding of the requirements and duties. Please contact me, the AAMD Nominations and Volunteer Committee Co-Chair, with any questions: clkgagne@gmail.com.

To be eligible for nomination, the nominee must be a current AAMD Full CMD Member in good standing. For the Regional Representative positions, the candidate must reside in one of the states covered in that region. All positions are three-year terms, beginning on August 1, 2022 and ending on July 31, 2025. All nomination applications need to be completed online by December 31, 2021.

Looking for a stepping-stone into an AAMD Board position? Consider a Co-Chair role for an AAMD Committee instead! Serve alongside another Co-Chair and tackle projects, agendas, minutes, and goal setting with another colleague. In addition, you will build your network and your leadership skills in preparation for a future AAMD role. Current Co-Chair openings include: Communications Committee and Nominations & Volunteer Committee. After you renew your AAMD membership this year, visit the [Volunteer Opportunities page](#) to get started.

Engaging Treatment Planners Around the World

By Niki Olanrewaju, CMD, and Cara Sullivan, CMD
International Outreach Committee Co-Chairs

The International Outreach Committee (IOC) is now an official committee of the AAMD! For many years, individuals on the Membership Committee have been working diligently to engage treatment planners from all over the world. The success has been so great that a separate committee has now been formed.

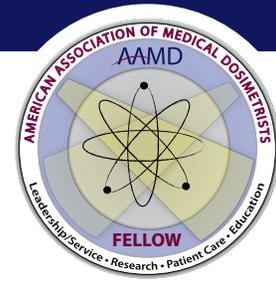
Following on the heels of our amazing and most attended session, "Treatment Planning Around the World in 60 Minutes" at the AAMD Virtual 46th Annual Meeting, we are excited about the great things we will accomplish with our international colleagues.

The committee is already starting to take shape. Niki Olanrewaju and Cara

Sullivan have been appointed co-chairs, and joining them are members from Brazil, South Korea, Kenya, and the United Kingdom. We also have a student member representative on the committee. Together, the IOC is closely working with individuals in Singapore and partnering with Asian treatment planners for an educational conference.

If you have any insight into international treatment planners, are multilingual, or think you can help this committee advance treatment planning globally, fill out a [volunteer application today](#).

Curing cancer is a worldwide goal!



AAMD Fellows Mentoring Program: The Basics of Developing a Case Study

By Paula Berner, BS, CMD, FAAMD
Fellows Advisory Group Chair

In the Summer 2021 *eMonitor*, the AAMD Fellows introduced a Fellows Mentoring Program that is designed to focus on mentoring AAMD members in developing presentations and in writing scientific articles that are suitable to be submitted to peer-reviewed journals.

One of the most basic types of presentations or scientific articles to develop is a case study. In the simplest of terms, a case study is writing or presenting about a problem and how that problem was solved. The focus is on the evidence for the problem, and the approach used to create a solution, as you guide your audience through the problem analysis to the solution.

Every dosimetrist has at least one patient each year that provides an unusual challenge to their clinic and their dosimetry skills. Medical dosimetrists are interested to hear or read about how other medical dosimetrists solve these unusual, challenging cases. The clinic you work in may not have all the latest equipment, but that is ok, because when presenting a case study, you are describing a challenge, the solution, and the thought process to the solution.

The basic steps of a case study are as follows:

- 1) Clearly describe the situation or problem.
- 2) Give background information that describes why there is a problem.
- 3) Guide the audience through the thought process, but do not tell your audience what to think.

- 4) Describe the solution and the thought process that led to the solution. Include the key elements used to derive the solution.
- 5) Be clear on the goal.
- 6) If enough time has passed, evaluate the response to the solution.
- 7) Tell the whole story – a case study is about telling the story of a problem and the solution that fixed the problem.

When deciding to develop a case study the one member of the Radiation Oncology team you will need to have on board is the radiation oncologist, whose patient is the subject of your case study. So, make sure you have obtained their permission once you have decided on the subject of your case study.

If you would like assistance in developing a case study for presentation at an AAMD conference or for submission to a scientific peer-reviewed publication, such as the AAMD journal, *Medical Dosimetry*, consider using the AAMD Fellows Mentoring Program. To participate in the AAMD Fellows Mentoring Program see the [AAMD Fellows page on the AAMD website](#).

Educators Focus on Curriculum Guidelines, Clinical Sites and Student Writing Competition

By Lori Simmons, CMD
Formal Education Committee Co-Chair

The Formal Education Committee is preparing to review the Medical Dosimetry Educational Program Curriculum Guidelines. The current guide was published in 2019 (available on the [AAMD website](#)), and the upcoming revision is expected to be published in 2024. If you would like to participate in the review, please contact Lori Simmons (LSimmons1@mdanderson.org), Jamie Baker (JABaker@mdanderson.org), or Mellonie Brown-Zacarias (Mellonieb9@aol.com).

The American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) is liaising with Co-Chair Mellonie Brown-Zacarias on an effort to gauge the interest of its members in becoming clinical affiliates for medical dosimetry education programs. There is a critical need for additional clinical sites for our students, and we are grateful for the AAPM's assistance in addressing this significant and ongoing challenge.

The AAMD Student Writing Competition is accepting submissions on the [AAMD webpage](#).

Please note the requirements, as well as due dates, for submission. In an effort to streamline the submission process for students, the abstract and manuscript are to be submitted via the AAMD website. If students wish to submit to the *Medical Dosimetry* journal for publication consideration, the manuscript will need to be submitted at www.meddos.org. Please contact Mellonie Brown-Zacarias (mellonieb9@aol.com) or Ann Marie Vann (avann@uwlax.edu) with questions about the AAMD Student Writing Competition.



Student Virtual Forum Wrap-up: Tips & Tricks for Planning Advanced Breast & Chest Wall Cancers

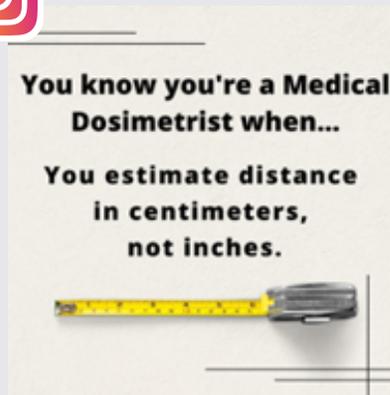
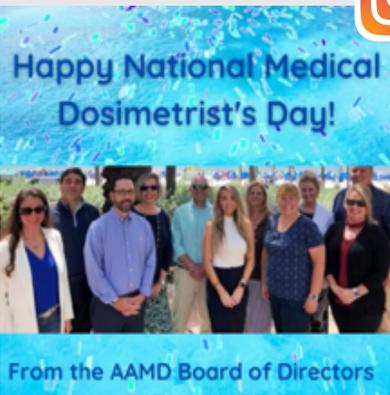
By Ottmar Lezama
Student Member on the AAMD Membership Committee

On Tuesday, October 12, the AAMD Membership Committee hosted its third student virtual forum with much success! Four panelists and one moderator shared their experiences and planning tips for 3D and advanced breast cases. With more than 50 attendees, this very informative forum covered fundamental topics such as contouring uncommon OARs, beam setup, and plan evaluation. Other items discussed were prone breast irradiation and tips for IMRT and VMAT breast plans. I personally benefited from the advice regarding calc point placement and streamlining my planning with a goal to produce plans within an hour. Here's what other student members had to say about the forum:

"This was my first student forum and glimpse of planning outside of my personal clinical environment. It was interesting to see the subtle differences in the considerations and approaches of the panelists compared to each other and to how I'm being trained. It broadened my thinking about breast planning, and I really enjoyed it!"

"It is so valuable to see how other dosimetrists plan."

For any student members unable to attend the live event, I encourage you to grab a notebook and pen and view the [recording online](#). Stay tuned for future announcements regarding these forums and other virtual AAMD events.



AAMD Is on INSTAGRAM

#medicaldosimetry #AAMDdosimetry

By Valerie Hoehner, CMD
Communications Committee Co-Chair

The AAMD Instagram account is up to 743 followers and counting. If you aren't already, I encourage you to follow [@medicaldosimetry](#). With 102 posts thus far, the AAMD shares membership and event news, education opportunities, dosimetry humor, cancer awareness, and other general information. We've been posting all sorts of things like "fun fact" stories about Board Members and Regional Representatives, as well as "You know you're a medical dosimetrist when..." phrases. We continue to create new content monthly and use #medicaldosimetry and #AAMDdosimetry in our posts. For additional medical dosimetry content, you can also join our private [AAMD Facebook group](#) to find a wide range of discussions and radiation oncology news updates. And don't forget about the [AAMD LinkedIn group](#) and [@med_dosimetry](#) Twitter handle!

AAMD Outstanding Achievement Award

Know someone who has made an impact on the Medical Dosimetry profession? Nominate him/her for the 2022 AAMD Outstanding Achievement Award!

The AAMD Outstanding Achievement Award is the highest honor an individual can receive from the AAMD. The individual's contributions may be demonstrated by any or all of the following:

- AAMD committee service
- AAMD Board of Directors' service
- Publication of articles pertaining to Medical Dosimetry
- Presentations at Local/Regional/National meetings
- Research activities within the profession
- Legislative efforts on behalf of the profession
- Tenure as an educator in a recognized Medical Dosimetry program
- Clinical instructor service
- Significant professional accomplishments in the radiation oncology field
- Outstanding years of clinical service – 10 years or more
- Service to the radiation oncology community



Nominations are due by December 31, 2021.

[Download a Nomination Form Here](#)

Email the completed nomination form to aamd@medicaldosimetry.org.

Be sure to include "Outstanding Achievement Award" in the subject line. If you have questions about the award, contact Award Committee Chair Kristi Smith at ksmith@alyzenmed.com.



Stay Connected – Renew Your Membership by December 31

AAMD membership provides access to the continuing education and resources that you need to meet the challenges of an evolving clinical environment – all at a substantial member savings!

Your \$200 [AAMD membership](#) provides you with over \$1,300 in value!

- Annual Allowance of 12 CE Credits Online in the CE Center (\$420 value)
- Access to Current Salary and Workforce Surveys (\$400 value)
- Subscription to *Medical Dosimetry Journal* (\$224 value)
- Discounts on All AAMD Meeting and Virtual Symposium Registrations (Up to \$285 value)
- Plus: Automatic Uploads of AAMD CE Credits to Your MDCB Learning Plan; Monthly Uploads of AAMD CE Credits to ARRT; Access to Job Listings and Resume Posting in the Career Center; Advocacy for the medical dosimetry profession

[Renew Your Membership Today!](#)



Focus on the Future of Medical Dosimetry – Join the AAMD Foundation Board of Trustees

Do you want to make a difference in your profession?

Each year, individuals dedicate their time and expertise to shape the future of the [AAMD Education and Research Foundation](#) through board service. Board members provide the critical intellectual capital and strategic resources to power nonprofit success and strengthen the Foundation.

You could be one of those individuals.

Are you committed to sharing your time and talents to help make the dosimetry community a better place?

Do you have specialized skills and expertise that could benefit the Foundation board's work?

Are you willing to be an enthusiastic advocate for an organization and encourage others to get involved?

Board of Trustee Member Job Description

1. Regularly attends board meetings and important related meetings.
2. Makes serious commitment to participate actively in committee work.
3. Volunteers for and willingly accepts assignments and completes them thoroughly and on time.
4. Stays informed about committee matters, prepares themselves well for meetings, and reviews and comments on minutes and reports.
5. Gets to know other committee members and builds a collegial working relationship that contributes to consensus.
6. Is an active participant in the committee's annual evaluation and planning efforts.
7. Participates in fund raising for the organization.

If you're interested in serving, please submit your resume for consideration to: tmkwiat@aamdfoundation.org

Other Volunteer Opportunities

The AAMD Foundation is also seeking volunteers to assist with:

- Fundraising
- Marketing & Social Media
- Support and mentorship groups
- Organizing strategic initiatives

To volunteer, please send an email to: tmkwiat@aamdfoundation.org



Certification News

By Felicia Lembesis, CAE
Executive Director, MDCB

2022 Credential Renewal is Now Available

Credential renewal is [available here](#). CMDs can log in to submit payments by navigating to ***My Cycle*** and selecting the learning plan that includes 2022 to “Pay Fees.”

Learning Plan Submission

CMDs whose five-year cycle ends on December 31, 2021 are reminded to submit learning plans for completion by November 30, 2021. Once Learning Plans are completed, the annual credential fee can be submitted. Certificates for practitioners who have met the requirements for credential renewal will receive a new certificate in January 2022.

January 2022 Exam Applicants

The deadline for U.S. applicants to submit applications was November 19, 2021. U.S. and international applicants were notified of exam status on November 24.

Approved exam candidates will have access to a practice test on the exam platform and the new performance-based testing (PBT) items to become familiar with the testing environment. Access to the practice environment will become available in mid-December.