The Annual Conference Committee (ACC) is in its initial stages of planning for a return to an in-person Annual Meeting to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana. As a committee, we would like to extend an invite to all medical dosimetrists to the AAMD 46th Annual Meeting, June 6 -10, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. Our theme, Jazzed About Dosimetry, will provide an exciting framework for this unique educational event.

The Call for Abstracts is open and accepting abstracts until November 2, 2020. You can access the submission site online.

The ACC, along with the AAMD volunteers and staff, are committed to providing you with an excellent learning environment by hosting a live, in-person, Annual Meeting for 2021. We are in the early stages of development but are hoping to continue 30-minute case study presentations again, provide a live interactive contouring session, and offer panel discussions on hot topics in dosimetry. Not only are the presentation abstract submissions open, but poster abstract submissions are also currently open until March 31, 2021. Poster abstracts can be submitted online.

Thank you to all who presented at our first ever virtual AAMD Annual Meeting in July. And thank you to all the members who attended. We had a record attendance of 823. We recognize and appreciate your willingness to adapt to the uncertain times we faced and for your patience during these challenging times. It is because of members like you that our field continues to improve and evolve and provide the best to our AAMD community. Please visit the AAMD website often for updates on the AAMD 46th Annual Meeting.
How in the world did I get here? If you told me 10 years ago that I would one day be the President of the AAMD I would have laughed. Literally. I started volunteering with the AAMD on the Annual Conference Committee at the end of 2009. My goal was to step out of my comfort zone and boy did I do that! During the AAMD 36th Annual Meeting in 2011, I ran into Melanie Dempsey, AAMD President for 2010-2011. She said, “Maybe one day you will be President” and in my head I laughed and thought “Yeah right!!” Well, here I am: A small town girl from the middle of nowhere, a solo dosimetrist in rural South Dakota, President of AAMD. So if you think you cannot do it, believe me when I say you CAN! Honestly, being a volunteer with the AAMD has helped me grow so much not only professionally, but personally. The relationships I have developed over the years have been extraordinary. I encourage you to get involved and see where it leads you. You can find out more about volunteer opportunities and fill out an application on the AAMD website.

I would like to say thank you to Cara Sullivan, our outgoing President, for her leadership and mentorship over the last year. Thank you just doesn’t seem to be enough for everything she had to deal with this past year! Also, a farewell and thank you to Past President Lee Hales as he moves on to other adventures. Finally, thank you to our whole Board of Directors and Headquarters Staff for their support and dedication to our organization and our profession as a whole. I am looking forward to this year and thank the AAMD membership for giving me the opportunity to serve you as AAMD President.

We had our first ever Virtual Annual Meeting in July. It was a huge success! Talk about making lemonade out of lemons! The Annual Conference Committee (ACC) and AAMD Headquarters Staff did an amazing job making this a huge success. We had record attendance with over 800 registrants and a lot of positive feedback! We are hoping we will be able to have the AAMD 46th Annual Meeting live in New Orleans in June of 2021.

National Medical Dosimetrist’s Day was celebrated August 19th with a full week of free webinars for all dosimetrists and treatment planners worldwide. What a great week to celebrate YOU and everything you do for your patients, their families, and your co-workers. Even though there are not many patients and their families that know we exist and there are not many people that really know what we do, I think we have the coolest job in the medical field. Thank you to our corporate partners for sponsoring the free webinars: RaySearch, Elekta, Varian, .decimal, and MIM Software.

We have a lot of exciting things in the works right now. The Workforce Study results are in and being analyzed, we just wrapped up the Salary Survey, and there’s an Educators’ Survey underway. I want to thank all of you that took the time to fill out these surveys as they will give us some very important information about the medical dosimetry profession.

It has now been more than six months since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. There were many changes for all of us in a short amount of time. As we have all adjusted to this “New Normal,” I hope you have been able to find some peace and positivity through all of it. I believe some things will remain changed, but others things will go back to pre-COVID ways. I look forward to that day and hope it comes soon.

I hope you are all staying safe and healthy!

All the Best,
Lori Kasuske, CMD, RT(R)(T)
AAMD President

2020 Workforce and 2019 Salary Survey Updates

Under the direction of the MedDos Infinity Task Group, the AAMD recently completed a comprehensive study of the medical dosimetry workforce in order to gain insights on current issues and trends in medical dosimetry as well as to examine the growth and sustainability of the profession. The 2019 Salary Survey was also distributed to members over the summer. The data from both surveys is now being analyzed. Reports will be available for members later this year. Thank you to the AAMD members who participated in these important surveys. We greatly appreciate it.
AAMD Responds to RO Model Final Rule

One of the ways the AAMD advocates for the profession is to follow pending changes in healthcare reimbursement. In July of 2019, the Centers for Medicare Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a proposed Radiation Oncology Alternative Payment Model (RO Model) that will likely have an impact on a large number of clinics and radiation oncology professionals around the country. The AAMD has continued to monitor the RO APM over the past year.

On September 18, 2020, CMS issued the final rule for the RO Model for CY21. Following that announcement, the AAMD signed onto a letter with nine other medical societies to request urgent changes to the final rule, including a delay in the start date, which CMS stated will be January 1, 2021.

Read the October 2, 2020 letter from the AAMD and other medical societies to CMS.

Learn How to Become an AAMD Fellow

By Paula Berner, CMD, FAAMD, and Nishele Lenards, CMD, FAAMD

AAMD Fellow (FAAMD)
The honorary category of Fellow is bestowed upon AAMD members who have made outstanding contributions to the medical dosimetry profession and to the AAMD. The category was developed within the AAMD to honor its members who have not only been dedicated to the organization, but whose contributions to the profession of medical dosimetry are truly outstanding. The eligibility requirements are length of membership with the AAMD, outstanding service to the AAMD and to the profession. AAMD members do not have to wait to be nominated to this honorary category, but are able to apply for this honorary designation on their own. Being designated as a Fellow is one of the greatest recognitions that can be bestowed upon a member of a profession.

Fellows Elevation Ceremony
The AAMD has decided that the Fellows elevation ceremony will take place during the general session of the Annual Meeting. The AAMD Fellows are excited to bring this ceremony to the general session and thus the general membership. It is important that the general membership be in attendance when one of its members is elevated to this honorary category.

Fellows Application
The AAMD Fellows would like to charge the membership with the following task:

1) Go to the AAMD Fellows page on the AAMD website (Membership tab).
2) Open the link to the Fellows application.
3) Review the application.
4) Begin building your application portfolio.
5) Reach out to one of the AAMD Fellows listed on the website if you have questions or would like input on building your application portfolio.

Being elevated to an AAMD Fellow is an achievable goal. However, it takes time to collect the required documentation necessary to submit a successful application. Review the application and highlight the sections you need to develop. Reach out to a current AAMD Fellow. The AAMD Fellows would be delighted to assist in building your application portfolio while suggesting courses of action to help strengthen your application.
On behalf of the AAMD, the Membership Committee would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your continued membership and support. Over the past year, your commitment to AAMD enabled us to:

• Raise national and international awareness about the Medical Dosimetry profession

• Offer premier continuing education activities for our members in a virtual format—with a first-ever Virtual Annual Meeting this year and ongoing online learning in the CE Center

• Provide new resources and opportunities through shared partnerships for continued professional development (RAD-AID)

• Continue advocating for medical dosimetry and radiation oncology by monitoring evolving issues like the RO Model and charting the future of medical dosimetry through the MedDos Infinity Task Group

• Guide in-depth research surveys (Workforce and Salary) to gain insights into the current and future medical dosimetry landscape

Don’t forget to utilize the FREE 12 CE credits that come with your AAMD membership! This year, 10 new webinars were added to the CE Center. If you want more CE opportunities, look no further than the Medical Dosimetry journal. There are two articles per issue. Another recorded presentation will be coming soon to the CE Center, Leading the Way in Global Radiotherapy. Be sure to check out the leadership sessions in the CE Center Course Catalog.

These are just a few of the significant accomplishments AAMD has made this year even while weathering what has become known as “unprecedented times.” We have even bolder goals for the upcoming year and will require a global community of support. As we continue focusing on our mission to promote and support the medical dosimetry and treatment planning profession, we are reminded how much your membership renewal actually makes the work we do successful, today and tomorrow.

Renew Your Membership Early—it’s easy and you can be entered to win a Free Member Plus Upgrade (a $75 value).

The drawing will take place on November 1, but you must renew on or before October 31 to be entered into the contest.

Please do your part by renewing today. Your membership helps to ensure that medical dosimetry has a vibrant future.

Can’t find what you’re looking for in the CE Center? Contact the CE Committee (CEC) Co-Chairs: Jessica Stanulus at Jessica_Stanulus@hotmail.com or Sandra John-Baptiste at sjjohnbi@mdanderson.edu to pass along ideas or feedback. Lastly, you can volunteer to be part of the CEC to help promote education for dosimetrists within the organization. We’d be happy to have you on our committee!
Meet Journal Associate Editor
Allan Day

The Medical Dosimetry journal is very fortunate to have an engaged group of Associate Editors that have various backgrounds and experience. Associate Editors are responsible for assessing a manuscript's relevance and make publication recommendations based off independent reviews. I would like the AAMD membership to be introduced to each of these editors. I asked Allan Day some questions to help us get to know him. – Cory Neill, Editor-in-Chief, Medical Dosimetry

Allan grew up in a small fishing community in Harbor Breton in Newfoundland, Canada. After graduating High School in 1985, he obtained his Bachelor of Science at Memorial University in St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada. In 1991, Allan enrolled in the Nova Scotia School of Radiation Therapy in Halifax, Nova Scotia. After graduating in 1994, he began working as a radiation therapist at the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre in St. John’s Newfoundland.

In 2000, Allan started to work in treatment planning and in 2002, successfully obtained his Certified Medical Dosimetrist (CMD) designation. In 2002, Allan accepted a position as a staff medical dosimetrist at the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and continues to work in the same capacity.

Allan has been an active member of the dosimetry community during his professional career. He has collaborated on several published articles throughout his career. Allan worked in the development of the CAMRT’s advanced medical dosimetry certification program as both a committee member and chairperson. He has served as peer reviewer for both the CAMRT and Medical Dosimetry journal and currently serves as an associate editor for the Medical Dosimetry journal.

Outside of work, Allan enjoys hiking, kayaking and “way too many sports,” says his wife and children. He is actively involved in the basketball community as a coach and serves on several executive committees. He loves watching baseball, hockey and spending time playing fantasy football, a new-found love.
Educator and Student Updates: Annual Meeting, Writing Competition and More
By Jacky Nyamwanda, MS, CMD, and Lori Simmons, MS, CMD
Formal Education Committee Co-Chairs

Student Event
80 students and recent graduates participated in the Student Gathering held via Zoom on June 30, 2020, which represents the largest gathering we have had since its inception. Students heard from various speakers including John Kowal, President of the Americas for Varian Medical Systems, who sponsored registration fees for all student members this year. Cara Sullivan, AAMD President, reviewed the role of the AAMD and highlighted volunteer opportunities that students can get involved in. Michael Manteuffel, MDCB President-Elect, gave an excellent presentation on the MDCB exam which elicited numerous questions on logistics during COVID. Michelle Mundis and Daniel Redell, both recent graduates from the University of Maryland program, provided tips on exam study strategies and job searching, respectively.

We hosted a quiz bowl, which is something that students always enjoy, and this year was no different. Courtney Hadsell from the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse emerged as top winner and was awarded a one-year full AAMD membership with other winners receiving Amazon gift cards.

Educators’ Event
The second event was an educators’ workshop on July 13 with 22 educators in attendance. This workshop began with a JRCERT update by Mahsa Dehghanpour, EdD, CMD with input from Leslie Winter, MS, R.T.(R). The discussion focused on contingency planning and accommodations that JRCERT has made to programs in response to the COVID pandemic. Programs can continue with online didactic and clinical education without filing a substantive change with JRCERT. This arrangement will continue until such a time that the Department of Education changes the policy on online learning. Kristen Vu, MS, R.T.(T), CMD, provided MDCB updates including plans for a September 2020 exam administration since Prometric has reopened. Cara Sullivan, BS, RT(R)(T), CMD provided AAMD Board of Directors’ updates with a focus on the education-related issues that the MedDos Infinity Task Group is examining such as lack of clinical sites and observation sites which impact recruitment of students. This event concluded with an open forum where educators discussed topics such as the effect of COVID on formal education and implications of an immigration ruling regarding F-1 visa students.

Both events received positive feedback. The FEC continues to use this feedback to make improvements to future events and to better serve the community of medical dosimetrists and students.

Student Writing Competition
The AAMD once again sponsored a Student Writing Competition in 2020. Winners received cash prizes of $500 (1st place), $250 (2nd place), and $125 (3rd place). The manuscript of this year’s 1st place winner has been published in the AAMD journal, Medical Dosimetry. The abstracts of the second and third place winners have also been published in the journal and will undergo the peer review process for potential publication in a future edition of the journal.

Congratulations to the 2020 Winners
1st Place: “A Service Line Approach: Whiteboard Analytics to Improve Time Efficiency in Radiation Oncology” – Shailja Patel, Steven Sutlief, Keith Dennis, Simul Parikh, Lethendrick Turner – The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions
2nd Place: “Approach to Account for the Impact of Dental Artifacts on VMAT Dose Distributions When Using Automated Treatment Planning” – Carla Merveille, Ashley Susan, Tatiana Galindo, Somil Sunny, Mahsa Dehghanpour, Soleil Hernandez, Christine Chung, Adenike Olanrewaju, Lawrence Court – The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions

Students in medical dosimetry education programs are encouraged to submit an abstract for the 2021 AAMD Student Writing Competition by the deadline of April 15, 2021. Final manuscript submissions are due by May 1, 2021. Additional details can be found at the AAMD website. The AAMD Formal Education Committee looks forward to receiving your submissions.

Student Facebook Page
This year, students were very active on the AAMD Student Facebook page by volunteering their time to post daily summaries of presentations given at the annual meeting. These posts led to engaging discussions on various topics and served as a way for students to connect with those from different programs while learning new concepts and techniques. This effort was led by Ottmar Lezama from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Lauren Wilson from the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse.

Student Mentoring Program
A sincere thank you to medical dosimetrists who volunteered to serve as student mentors remotely. 16 medical dosimetrists served as mentors to the 17 students who participated in the mentoring program where they received resume review and insight into the job search process.

Co-Chair Update
Lori Simmons, MS, CMD, is the new FEC co-chair as of August 1, 2020 replacing Dr. Jamie Baker. Congratulations and welcome on board!
Many of us were thrust into being remote dosimetrists during the pandemic, and most of us were probably scrambling on how to get our office in the clinic to mimic our office at home. Not such an easy or inexpensive task! This article will provide you with some tips and tricks on how to set up your office, what equipment you may need and how to do it all on a budget.

Remote Boundaries:
When working remotely, it is important to have a separate work and home life so place your office space strategically. Start and end your day on a normal schedule. Keep in constant communication with fellow employees via video chat, email, or phone calls. Once you log off for the day, stay logged out and do not be tempted to log back in and complete a plan or check email.

Ergonomics:
Proper ergonomics of your setup will ensure that you do not end the day with pain. The cost of comfort can be high, but it is important to create a healthy work environment. Keeping elbows at the same height as your keyboard/mouse with straight wrists alleviates pressure on the median nerve associated with carpal tunnel syndrome. Monitors should be placed with the top of the screen at eye level and at arm’s length distance away. A popular rule known as “20/20/20” where for every 20 minutes of screen time spent, 20 seconds should be spent looking at an object 20 feet away should be followed.

Office on a Budget:
The minimum equipment you will need are a computer, desk, chair, and monitor. Thrifting and repurposing items you already own can help you spend much less money and still set up a comfortable and efficient home office. Look for deals at secondhand stores, such as Craigslist, Facebook Market place, etc. Many office supply companies are offering specials due to the pandemic, search the internet for the best deals.

Computer specifications:

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<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
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<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>Laptops: 8 GB of RAM</td>
<td>Laptops: 16+ GB of RAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desktop: 16 GB of RAM</td>
<td>Desktop: 32+ GB of RAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPU</td>
<td>i3-i5 / Ryzen 3</td>
<td>i7+/Ryzen 7+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPU</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Gaming / machine learning: 6GB+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors</td>
<td>Any</td>
<td>24-27in, 1440p+, 75Hz+ refresh rate, 1-5ms response time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Any</td>
<td>300+ Mbps, direct connection or Mesh WiFi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Password Protected Network, VPN for Public Networks</td>
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Please visit the AAMD Career Resources webpage for more detailed information on each of these topics. We hope these tips and tricks will provide you with ideas for your optimal home office setup and is a springboard for continued discussions among your peers. We invite you to share any other tips or tricks on the AAMD Facebook page.

If you would like to nominate someone for one of the open positions, please contact the AAMD Nominations and Volunteer Committee Co-Chairs: Dotti Matthews (dotmat325@gmail.com) or Catherine Gagne (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, 2021 and ending on July 31, 2024. Position descriptions have been recently updated and can be found on the AAMD website along with complete nomination details.

All nomination applications need to be completed online by December 31, 2020. Elections will take place in the spring of 2021.
Member Spotlight: Haden Dexter
Medical Dosimetrist/ Junior Physicist
Beth Israel Lahey Health, Boston, MA
Interview by Tracey Sorrentino, CMD, Communications Committee Member

What made you want to be a dosimetrist and how did you go about doing it?
Well, like many people, I had never heard of dosimetry before. I was originally going into ultrasound, but the bus that was supposed to take me to my ultrasound program interview never showed up. Because of it, and not having 4G/directions to where the interview location was, I ended up having to run to a place with WiFi and run again to the place where the interview was, so I was late. I did not get accepted into the program and instead was put on a waiting list. While on the waiting list, I had received an email from my school mentioning that since I was on a waiting list they wanted to mention this dosimetry program that they were going to start and invite me to apply instead of waiting for an opening. I had never heard of dosimetry, so I Googled it and then did a job shadow of a dosimetrist after that. I loved it and applied to the program and haven’t looked back since.

How would you describe your current work setting?
My current work setting is in a nice hospital that has a great value of “patient first.” In the treatment planning center area, it is a community area where we have access to all of the other dosimetrists, but also our own little offices and work areas. So it has a good mix of individuality and community.

What do you find most enjoyable about your current job and what are you most passionate about in the field?
I honestly love my job in all aspects of it. It is a challenge every day, but also a fun challenge in a way and it encourages me to always push myself to do the best that I can. Every day is different because each tumor and each patient is different. I love seeing progress in the plans and the way that I do plans. Really this job is perfect for me because it enables my competitive nature to always strive for the best plan I can get and to continuously improve. I guess that goes for the passion as well. I am passionate about getting the best plan possible. I really enjoy that even when a physician says a plan is good, if I don’t feel like it is the BEST I can do, I do it again and don’t put anything through until I am satisfied it couldn’t be worked anymore.

Outside of the dosimetry world, what is your life like? What do you enjoy doing for fun?
Outside of the dosimetry world I tend to play a lot of video games, watch hockey, or recently, bake desserts. There is an aspect of dosimetry in all of those things, so it makes sense that the things I like to do also translate into the job I do. In video games, you tend to want to do the best that you can do to essentially get the high score or win whatever you are trying to do. Same can be said with dosimetry by putting out the best plan that you can. Hockey is all about strategy and figuring out the best ways to go about something and is also competitive. Baking takes the ability to follow instructions and stress management and put that all together to have a beginning and end result that you are proud of. It also is a good way to help you learn from the process and help improve your skills for the next time.

What do you find as one of the more challenging tasks of being a dosimetrist?
I feel like the biggest thing would be the flexibility and prioritization of schedules and deadlines. It tends to be the case that the more difficult plans are the ones that need to start sooner than normal, so it becomes a balance of trying to get those difficult plans worked on and finished without losing any time on other plans that you also have to get done in a deadline. Good time management and being able to prioritize well really helps with this.

Do you have any advice or thoughts you would like to share with your fellow dosimetrists?
Always strive to improve and never be satisfied with “good enough.” You have to be your own motivator to always want to succeed and get the best plan that you can.
AAMD Outstanding Achievement Award

Know someone who has made an impact on the Medical Dosimetry profession? Nominate him/her for the 2021 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 Board of Directors’ service
• AAMD committee service
• Publications in the radiation oncology field
• Professional presentations
• Education of medical dosimetry professionals
• Legislative efforts
• Service to the radiation oncology community.

The Outstanding Achievement Award replaces the AAMD Award of Excellence, which was established in 2007. Prior to that, the award was named the Varian Award of Excellence.

Nominations are due by December 31, 2020.

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.

Special Thanks to Our 2020/2021 Sponsors

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JRCERT Seeks Clinical Site Visitors

The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) is seeking medical dosimetrists to serve as clinical site visitors. They are looking for both individuals from accredited programs and practitioners from the clinical settings.

Volunteers gain valuable professional experience, have an opportunity to give back to the profession and assist in maintaining the quality of the educational process.

To qualify as an apprentice site visitor, an individual must have attended a JRCERT accreditation seminar and be able to demonstrate the ability to make a positive contribution to the accreditation process by documenting the following criteria:

- Knowledge and understanding of professional medical dosimetry education
- Knowledge and understanding of JRCERT accreditation standards
- Appropriate professional experience (3 years full-time equivalent)
- Appropriate professional certification (MDCB)
- Involvement with a JRCERT accredited program or recognized clinical setting.

To apply, visit the JRCERT website and click on the Site Visitors tab: Site Visitors/Becoming a Site Visitor/Application.

The AAMD Education and Research Foundation is looking for volunteers to assist with:

- Fundraising
- Marketing and social media
- Support and mentorship groups
- Organizing strategic initiatives

To volunteer, please send an email to tmkwiat@aamdfoundation.org
The Board and Staff of the MDCB hope that you, your colleagues and families are doing well in the current environment.

January 2021 Exam

• The MDCB Exam Application is now available.

• The early application deadline is November 6, 2020. All International Applications must be submitted by this deadline.

• The late application deadline is November 16, 2020 (U.S. Candidates Only).

Exam applicants are encouraged to carefully review the applicant handbook for complete details on application submission and testing details. A copy of the handbook is available at https://mdcb.org/exam-information/exam-dates-and-fees/applicant-handbook

Credential Renewal for 2021

• Credential renewal for 2021 opened on October 1, 2020.

• CMDs whose five-year cycle ends on December 31, 2020 are reminded to submit learning plans for completion by November 30, 2020. 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 certificate in the New Year.