

Message from Thomas A. Golper, MD, FACP, FASN President North American Chapter

What a year we just experienced!

As elsewhere, the pandemic has altered our plans. We have been distracted from them to alter our care structures across the globe. The NAC members had been meeting in-person formally at the Annual Dialysis Conference (ADC) held in late winter, but held virtually in 2021. At the February Kansas City 2020 ADC held before the lockdown NAC had an entire day of up to date presentations, committee meetings and just general organization, which could not happen at the 2021 ADC. Through the remainder of 2020 Matt Oliver maintained Council meetings remotely about quarterly. There were no general membership meetings as previously held at the ADCs, nor did we award the prestigious Zellerman Prize in 2021. Also at the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) meetings held in the autumn, the Council had been meeting. This did not occur in 2019 for logistical reasons and did not occur in 2020 due to the virtual nature of the 2020 ASN meeting.



I became the NAC President March 8, 2021. I thank Matt Oliver, the officers, and the Council for keeping NAC intact during the disruptions of the pandemic. Our mission as stated above has not changed.

My first action was to fortify the NAC infrastructure and to do so I asked every officer and Councilor to stay in position until this autumn when we will reconstitute the leadership according to our bylaws. The exception was that Matt Oliver moved to immediate past President and I became President. I asked Anjali Saxena, as previous past President, to stay on as an advisor. She and Matt Oliver will lead the nominating committee for leadership reconstitution. To do this, I asked and received Council's approval to suspend the bylaws for the half year that this may take to accomplish.

Matt Oliver and Rob Quinn have continued their catheter outcome and quality improvement studies that have involved several dozen centers in Canada and the US, discussed further below. One goal of all this was to prove that the NAC could organize collaborative studies across PD centers throughout Canada and the US. Additionally, Dr. Rachel Fissell at Vanderbilt acquired an ISPD grant to study patient perspectives of their PD catheters. Thus, the offshoots of the original collaboration have taken root. Thus, the North American Research Consortium in PD (NARC-PD) is starting to roll as it was envisioned at its 2013 inception. Its continued goal is to bring the research centers together for studies in many other topics. The PD catheter was just the first area of interest. If there is an opportunity for this research consortium to participate in projects outside of North America, we will have an infrastructure in place.

In July of 2019 US President Trump created the Advancing American Kidney Health Initiative (AAKHI) with several very ambitious goals: to reduce kidney disease prevalence, and to massively increase the utilization of transplantation and home dialysis. Over 90% of all home dialysis in the US is PD. AAKHI implementation strategies include incentives and disincentives to achieve the stated goals. Consequently, in the US dialysis organizations and professional societies are very actively promoting home dialysis. There is a shortage of nurses trained in dialysis in general, and especially in home dialysis. Fellowship training in home dialysis is less effective than we would prefer. NAC views this as an opportunity, especially in the arena of teaching. Canadian PD nephrologists are involved in multiple aspects of teaching US physicians, whether as independent educators lecturing at general nephrology meetings or dialysis organization seminars or through ISPD's Home Dialysis University. Matt Oliver was asked to serve on a Home Dialysis Technical Expert Panel. Therefore, NAC members are involved in the AAKHI in several aspects. Initiatives have been made to American Nephrology Nursing Association and large dialysis organizations for further education and training by NAC members. Thus, NAC continues its long-standing efforts to facilitate outstanding outcomes by playing a leadership role in education, quality improvement, and research.

Specifically, some of our recent current initiatives include:

Research

The NAC-ISPD was the original funder of the **North American PD Catheter registry**. This registry has received peer reviewed funding from Canadian Institutes for Health Research and the Ontario Renal Network. It has also received corporate support from Baxter Health Care and Medtronic. The main research project was Improving the outcomes of peritoneal dialysis (PD) catheter insertion. The results have been published and presented worldwide including at the 2021 ISPD Congress and 2021 ADC by the collaborators and the Principal Investigators, Drs. Robert Quinn and Matthew Oliver.

The **Peritoneal Dialysis Outcomes and Practice Patterns Study (PDOPPS)** is designed to advance the understanding of optimal practices for PD patients worldwide. The Principal Investigator is Dr. Jeff Perl.

The Patient Perspective of Their PD Catheter is a single center pilot study at Vanderbilt under the PI, Dr. Rachel Fissell which is just beginning.

The ISPD Educational Lecture Series is now available on the main ISPD web site. These practical and comprehensive lectures are provided by PD experts including many members of the NAC-ISPD. Please visit <https://ispd.org/ispd-lecture-series/>. This is expanding as through the pandemic the NAC is preparing professionally edited lectures that are part of the Home Dialysis University Course.

Administration

Lastly, as mentioned above the Executive Council has agreed to temporarily suspend the bylaws through the autumn of 2021 to reconstitute and form new committees as we come out of the pandemic lockdowns. In the US, the AAKHI will result in an expanded role for the NAC, including our Canadian colleagues.

At every opportunity, and especially at the Home Dialysis University courses, we promote membership in ISPD, and by virtue of that into the North American Chapter. We look forward to another very interesting year.

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