

VEIN SPECIALIST

VENOUS 202

AMERICAN VENOUS FORUM

February 23-26, 2022 • Omni Orlando Resort at Championsgate, Orlando Florida



Which Do You Treat First? Steve Elias, MD

Tooknical Tips and Trials for Suggessful Voin Ablation

Technical Tips and Tricks for Successful Vein Ablation Procedures *Jose Almeida, MD*



CONTENTS



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*Disclaimer: The information featured in this newsletter selected by AVF, which offers educational materials, is not intended to be representative of patients with venous disease generally and should not be considered medical advice. Patients should consult their doctor to determine the best treatment decision for their individual disease.

Message from the Editor: "Don't Come to the Annual Meeting if..." Steve Elias, MD

Annual Meeting Coverage

VENOUS2022: Behind the Scenes Efthymios Avgerinos, MD

Annual Meeting Agenda

Top Abstracts Faisal Aziz, MD

Our Industry Partners Have Stepped Up to the Plate... Harold Welch, MD and Jeff Mendola, CFRE

VENOUS2022 Offers Many Special Activities

Veins...Aesthetically Speaking! Julianne Stoughton, MD

Variety is the Spice of Venous Disease Angela Kokkosis, MD

Advocacy Update Mark Iafrati, MD

Holiday Greetings

New Members

Late-breaking News: AVF-AVFF Merger John Forbes, MBA

Member Matters

Elna Masuda, MD

Yang Yang, MD



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MESSAGE FROM THE THE EDITOR

"Don't Come to the Annual Meeting if..."



Steve Elias, MD

The Turner Prize is the annual British arts award named for JMW Turner, the great 19th century British artist. Started by the Tate Gallery in 1984. Awarded to a British visual artist. Past winners have been: Damien Hirst, Anish Kapoor, Malcolm Morely, Steve McQueen (not that cool Steve McQueen), and others. But since 2019, the Turner Prize has morphed into a recognition that while British individual artists may be great, the concept of the "artistic cooperative" evolved and that "we" may be better than "me." In 2019. the group of individual artists told the Tate that no one of them wanted the prize, but rather they would share the money and the accolades. The Tate got the message. This year's winner is Array, a Northern Ireland art group. Not an individual. B.O.S.S., Cooking Sections, Gentle/Radical, and Project Art Works were the other nominees. Not an individual. Groups. Isn't that what AVF or any society is? A group working together for common goals. What goal does every annual meeting try to accomplish? Education. Tony Gasparis, our president this past year, sent me the paragraph in the box below to be included in this introductory letter:

AVF ANNUAL MEETING: FOCUS ON SCIENCE

In 2022, the venous space remains mostly uncharted territory. There are many opportunities for research and many questions to be answered. When we sat down to start planning the Annual Meeting the question came up of what theme we should have. What is the most critical message the AVF has had over the years and should continue to focus on in the future? Science. Education.

You will notice that the above does not have the words "I" or "me" in it. A lot of "we." Because AVF is not a "me" centric organization. Our meeting this year is for us. Our meeting chairman, Makis Avgerinos, has held true to AVF's and our meetings theme: Science. Education. The title of this edition of *Vein Specialist* is: "Don't Come To The Annual Meeting If...".

If you want to keep doing the same things you have been doing for vein care.

If you think that science is not relevant.

If you don't like controversy and challenges.

If you just want a free lunch.

If you use the word "me" a lot and rarely use the word "we" in conversation.

If you answered "yes" to some of the above "ifs," you may be a Stuckist. The Turner Prize was aimed at Young British Artists (YBAs) in the 1990's. A pedantic, predictable reactionary group emerged: the Stuckists. They were a group of traditionalist, figurative painters who thought the YBAs weren't artists at all. Stuck in the past. Our annual meeting is not for Stuckists. Our society is not for Stuckists. If you are a Stuckist, we are sorry. We are moving forward with science and education. Read the articles in this *Vein Specialist*. The collective we of us has put together an excellent meeting. Internalize what Clint Eastwood answered at the age of 91 when asked the question, "How do you still stay relevant?" His answer, "Don't let the old man in." Come to the meeting; stay young and enjoy.

VENOUS2022: Behind the Scenes

Efthymios Avgerinos, MD, Chair, Program Committee

VENOUS 2022 is fast approaching and we're getting ready to celebrate venous science and education at its best.

While the pandemic is still ongoing, we've adapted, and we're armored to support a safe in-person meeting. Acknowledging, though, national and international changing regulations-- while also looking to expand our reach-- a hybrid format will be available for those who cannot travel or wish to enjoy our meeting in the comfort of their office. The program committee has been working hard to build an outstanding program covering all aspects of venous disease addressed to all those disciplines involved in venous care.

Original science, clinical trials, and research have always been the steam engine of the AVF meeting. This year we have been honored to receive a tremendous response from the AVF community of 120 abstracts submitted from 20 countries from around the world. That's the largest number of submissions for an AVF Annual Meeting ever! More than 60 of these abstracts will be delivered from the podium and another 60 will be poster presentations.

You will also be pleasantly surprised to recognize that this year we are introducing multiple novel programming events reflecting an overall rejuvenation of the American Venous Forum:

- The main theme of VENOUS2022 is "Science." We broke down the usual "day of science" into five smaller sessions spread throughout the entire meeting (at no additional cost).
- 2. We have made sure we clearly represent diversity in venous disease patients and health care professionals through dedicated sessions and social events.
- We are introducing special sessions that will be of interest for our Allied Health Professionals. And this year we're planning an aesthetic vein session where we'll be discussing everything about spider veins.
- 4. The Fellows' course will be fully incorporated in the meeting.



Efthymios Avgerinos, MD Chair, Program Committee

VENOUS2022: Behind the Scenes



Strandness Lecture Honoree Joseph Raffetto, MD

We of course kept our traditions and we're looking forward to the Sumner Session ("Creation of Subspecialty Board Certification"), the Villavicencio- International Session (International Top Abstracts & Focus on Lymphedema) (learn more about international activities from Jorge Ulloa, MD, here) and our sister societies' (SVS, SVM, AVLS and EVF) joint sessions with a pot-pourri of information on superficial and deep venous innovation. For the Strandness lecture this year AVF is honoring Joe Raffetto, MD who will share his perspective on contemporary breakthroughs in venous and lymphatic diseases. Finally, you don't want to miss our President's session: Tony Gasparis' leadership has been instrumental in representing AVF internationally and setting the stage for a successful VENOUS2022.

For those who attend in person, recreational and social events including a gala are planned. A few Greeks you may know are planning a party...with safety against COVID-19 being a top priority.

Nothing would of course be possible without our Executive Committee and specifically John Forbes' relentless managing skills and our industry sponsors who generously support our efforts.

View the preliminary agenda online now. I look forward to seeing you all in Orlando!





FEBRUARY 23 - 26, 2022 OMNI ORLANDO RESORT AT CHAMPIONSGATE

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Science Sessions - Scientific presentations and discussions

Physician-in-training Sessions

Featured Sessions

Social Events, Breaks, Non-CME Sessions

Abstract Sessions - Original research abstract presentations with Q&A

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022				
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Recreation: Golf			
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Recreation: Tennis			
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Venous 5K Run			
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	AVF Science Session I: Abstracts			
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM	AVF Science Session II: Lessons of COVID-19 Epidemic and the Future of Clinical Research			
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022				
7:00 AM - 7:45 AM	Thrombolex Sponsored Breakfast Symposium			
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	AVF Science Session III: Basic Science and Venous Ulcer			
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	AVF Core Values: Diversity in Venous Disease: Exploring and Addressing Diversity and Disparities in Venous Disease			
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Superficial Venous Disease and Imaging			
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Boston Scientific Sponsored Lunch Symposium			
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Chronic Venous Disease			
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Physician-in-Training Session A: Superficial, Deep Obstructive, Compression, Post-thrombotic, Deep Reflux			
2:00 PM - 2:45 PM	Featured Session: Optimizing Venous Stenting Outcomes			
2:45 PM - 3:45 PM	EVF/AVF Session: Joint Presentations with the European Venous Forum			
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Villavicencio International Symposium hosted by Glenn Jacobowitz, MD and Jorge Ulloa, MD			
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM	Poster Session and Welcome Reception			
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY	25, 2022			
7:00 AM - 7:45 AM	Medtronic Sponsored Breakfast Symposium			
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	AVF Science IV: Basic Science and Varicose Veins			
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Sumner Session hosted by William Marston, MD			
10:30 AM - 11:30 PM	Lymphedema and Wound Care			
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	President's Session hosted by Antonios Gasparis			
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Inari Medical Sponsored Lunch Symposium			
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Venous Thromboembolism			
2:30 PM - 3:45 PM	Physician-in-Training Session B: DVT, PE, SVT			
3:00 PM - 3:45 PM	AVLS/AVF Session - Joint presentations with the American Vein & Lymphatic Society			
4:15 PM - 5:45 PM	Venous Thromboembolism and Imaging			
5:45 PM - 6:30 PM	SVS/AVF Session Venous Potpourri of Clinical Impact Osceola Ballroom			
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Gala Additional Ticket Required			



FEBRUARY 23 - 26, 2022 OMNI ORLANDO RESORT AT CHAMPIONSGATE

Science Sessions - Scientific presentations and discussions

Physician-in-training Sessions

Featured Sessions

Social Events, Breaks, Non-CME Sessions

Abstract Sessions - Original research abstract presentations with Q&A

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2022			
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	AVF Annual Business Meeting for AVF Members		
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	AVF Science Session V: You say "VEIN" I say "PAIN" - A Different View on Venous Pelvis Disorders		
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Physician-in-Training Session C: Sclerotherapy, Lymphedema, Starting a Vein Practice		
10:30 AM - 11:30 PM	Chronic Venous Disease		
11:30 AM - 12:35 PM	Strandness Lecture with Keynote Speaker Joseph Raffetto, MD		
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	BD Sponsored Lunch Symposium		
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM	SVM/AVF Session on Post-thrombotic Syndrome		
1:45 PM - 2:45 PM	Superficial Venous Disease and Imaging		
2:45 PM - 4:00 PM	Aesthetic Vein Session: Spider Veins with Allied Health Professionals		





Top Abstracts among Record Number of Submissions

Faisal Aziz, MD, AVF Research Councilor

On behalf of the annual program committee, it is my honor and privilege to present the top abstracts for the upcoming annual AVF meeting, VENOUS2022. First, we are obliged to all the authors who submitted their scientific work for consideration to be presented at the meeting. The overall quality of submissions this year was excellent and speaks volumes about the high-quality patient care provided by the AVF members and their commitment to further advancement of scientific research in the venous world. While choosing the abstracts for the annual meeting, the program committee considered several key factors, including quality of the scientific work, relevance to AVF audience, and importance in contributing to overall care of our patients. Among the abstracts that were chosen for the annual meeting, following are those identified as the top abstracts.

Under the category of superficial venous disease, a prospective randomized controlled trial by Berlamman et al, showing that wearing compression stockings for 7 days following foam sclerotherapy leads to improved postoperative pain was chosen as the top abstract. This abstract provides strong clinical evidence supporting the routine use of compression therapy after superficial venous procedures.

In the category of deep venous obstructive study, a prospective, single-arm, investigational study by Dr. Comerota et al was chosen as the top abstract. This study of more than 240 patients with deep venous obstructive disease showed promising long-term patency rates.

In the lymphedema category, a study by Aldrich et al examining breast cancer related lymphedema related to breast cancer identified longitudinal near-infrared fluorescence lymphatic imaging (NIRF-LI) of lymphatic dysfunction to be an early marker for subsequent arm lymphedema.

For venous thromboembolism (VTE), three abstracts were chosen as finalists. Jayraj et al showed that among patients undergoing pharmacomechanical/mechanical thrombectomy for acute symptomatic iliofemoral deep venous thrombosis, restoration of inline flow was adequate to provide symptom improvement and reduce the incidence of PTS. Andraska et al performed secondary analysis on the SUNSET randomized controlled trial and showed that in patients with submassive PE, biomarkers of CTEPH normalize earlier with catheter thrombolysis as compared to anticoagulation alone. An analysis of prospective, multi-center, real world CLOUT registry by Dexter et al showed that the ClotTriever® system can effectively remove acute, subacute, and chronic thrombi.

Finally, in the basic science category, Chaer et al's abstract describes



Faisal Aziz, MD Program Committee Member

Top Abstracts among Record Number of Submissions

enrolling 377 patients with venous ulcers in their study and established relationship of genes to subsequent development of venous ulcers and implying that genetic testing may play a role in guiding intensity of interventions and preventive strategies.

Overall, the program committee is really pleased with the quality of abstracts submitted this year and with the choice of our top abstracts. We look forward to seeing the best quality venous work being presented at the annual AVF meeting in February 2022!

TOP ABSTRACTS

SUPERFICIAL VENOUS DISEASE

Amjad Belramman, Roshan Bootun, Tristan R A Lane, Alun H Davies: **Compression Following Endovenous Treatment of Incompetent Varicose Veins by Sclerotherapy (CONFETTI)**

DEEP VENOUS OBSTRUCTIVE DISEASE

Anthony Comerota, Lawrence Hofmann, Jennifer McCann-Brown: The VIVO Clinical Study Evaluating the Zilver Vena Venous Stent in the Treatment of Symptomatic Iliofemoral Venous Outflow Obstruction: 3-Year Subgroup Outcomes

LYMPHEDEMA

Melissa Aldrich, Megan McWain, Wenyaw Chan, John Rasmussen, Sarah DeSnyder, Eva Sevick-Muraca, Simona Shaitelman: **Dermal Backflow, Detected by Near-infrared Fluorsescence Lymphatic Imaging, Is an Early Prognostic Marker of Breast Cancer-related Lymphedema**

VENOUS THROMBOEMBOLISM

Arjun Jayaraj, Michael Lucas, Robert Fuller, Riley Kuykendall, Thomas Powell, Seshadri Raju: Improvement Following Restoration of Inline Flow Argues Against Comprehensive Thrombus Removal Strategies and For Selective Stenting in Acute Symptomatic Iliofemoral Venous Thrombosis

Elizabeth Andraska, Jillian Bonaroti, Zhang Yingze, Belinda Rivera-Lebron, Rabih Chaer, Efthimios Avgerinos: Markers of Pulmonary Hypertension in Patients with Submassive Pulmonary Embolism Undergoing Catheter Thrombolysis Compared to Anticoagulation Alone: A Secondary Analysis of the SUNSET sPE Trial

David Dexter: Thrombus Chronicity Sub-Analysis Of Mechanical Thrombectomy For Deep Vein Thrombosis In Real- World Patients: Six-Month Outcomes From The CLOUT Registry

BASIC SCIENCE

Rabih Chaer, Patrick Cherfan, Adham Abou Ali, Ashraf Taha, Efthymios Avgerinos, Yingze Zhang: Clinical Implications of Genetic Variations of Venous Stasis Ulceration



Our Industry Partners Have Stepped Up to the Plate – Now It's Your Turn

Harold Welch, MD, AVF Past President and AVFF President Jeff Mendola, Director of Mission Advancement

As we look forward to the American Venous Forum's 34th Annual Meeting, VENOUS2022, it is important to remember that without our industry partners and support from our exhibitors, there would not be an American Venous Forum.

Every year, these dedicated venous and lymphatic companies provide more than half- a- million dollars in grants to support the programs and initiatives of the AVF. These include:

- o AVF Annual Meeting
- o Physician-in-training and early career educational programs
- o West Coast Vein Forum and topic-specific webinars
- o Research initiatives including the AVF-JOBST Clinical Research Grant, AVF-Boston Scientific Translational Research Grant, JURY Study, and AVF-Janssen Fellowship
- o AVF-Juzo Traveling Fellowship
- o Patient-focused initiatives including the Vein Patient Outreach Survey, treatment brochures, and consent forms
- o Physician tools including pocket guide versions of venous guidelines

We have also been the beneficiary of enthusiastic personal support and advice from the many industry partners who have served voluntarily on the American Venous Forum Foundation Board of Directors. Currently, the following industry representatives serve on our Foundation Board: Scott Centea (AngioDynamics), Catherine Jennings (Boston Scientific), Tara Dunn (Inari Medical), Dan Reuvers (Tactile Medical), Eric Cohen (JOBST), Denysse Castaneda (Philips), and Annerose Zorn-West (Juzo).

We would also like to recognize our 2021 Healthy Veins for Healthy Life corporate supporters: Boston Scientific, Inari Medical, JOBST, BD, Medtronic, Tactile Medical, Juzo, AngioDynamics, and Philips.

As our industry partners have generously supported us since our founding, we would like to encourage our Annual Meeting attendees to visit our exhibitors and learn how they can help you treat your patients with the latest technology. VENOUS2022 will feature two breakfast symposia hosted by Thrombolex and Medtronic, as well as three lunch symposia hosted by Boston Scientific, BD, and Inari Medical.



Harold Welch, MD AVFF President



Jeff Mendola Director of Mission Advancement

Our Industry Partners Have Stepped Up to the Plate – Now It's Your Turn

In addition to experiencing new devices and products, you will have an opportunity to develop relationships with our industry partners that can benefit you and your practice for years to come. Also, you can get hands-on time with their new devices, learn new techniques, and enhance your overall meeting experience. Please visit the booths, say hello to the reps, and enjoy the meeting!





















VENOUS2022 Offers Many Special Activities

Come for the education and science and find many other fun and valuable activities during VENOUS2022 in Orlando February 23 through 26. Not only has the program committee assembled an amazing line-up of sessions with expert speakers on topics vital to your practice, they have put together an array of recreational and social activities that will enhance your networking opportunities and add to the camaraderie AVF is known for. Be sure to arrive in time to participate in the sessions beyond the conference rooms!

Whether on the golf course, tennis courts, or 5k course Wednesday morning, you will have an opportunity to demonstrate your skills while participating in your activity of choice with other venous practitioners who share your interests beyond the clinic. Meet at the Poster Session on Thursday to tour the exhibits with colleagues while enjoying the Welcome Reception And be sure to enjoy the Gala with fine food and award presentations as you socialize with your colleagues new and old on Friday evening.

Make lasting connections that enhance your professional and social network by signing up for these fun and rewarding offerings:

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

8:00 am - 1:00 pm	Golf
9:00 am - 11:00 am	Tennis
9:00 am - 11:00 am	Venous 5k Run

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm Poster Session and Welcome Reception

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2022

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Gala



Veins... Aesthetically Speaking!

Julianne Stoughton, MD, FACS, Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

The Venous2022 program committee members have decided to add more cosmetic content to our meeting. Join us to hear an amazing line up with a panel of physicians and allied health professionals who will bring you up to speed on the most current aesthetic vein treatments, including how to incorporate this into your current practice. This session is designed for doctors, nurses, and all other health professionals who may be interested in expanding their horizons to deal with cosmetic veins of the legs, feet, face and hands. Join us for a one-and-one-half hour afternoon session on February 26 in Orlando that will be packed with valuable information.



Julianne Stoughton, MD, FACS

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR VEINS...AESTHETICALLY SPEAKING

- 1. Why (and how) You Should Incorporate Aesthetic Vein Treatment into Your Practice. *Laura Ellis, MD* (invited)
 - to include administrative protocols, staffing, marketing, equipment, and more
- 2. Approaching Sclerotherapy Based on Histological Findings and Types of Sclerosants *Ronald Bush, MD*
- 3. Cosmetic Sclerotherapy Tips and Tricks Terri Harper, RN
 - techniques for injection of spider and reticular veins
 - pre- and pots- procedure management, venotonic drugs, arnica, dermaka, and more
- 4. Sclerotherapy Complications and Their Management *Julianne Stoughton, MD*
 - pre- and post-procedure management, compression, instructions, arnica, dermaka, and more
 - staining post sclero
 - venous matting
 - more serious complications (thrombosis, ulceration, allergy, etc)
- 5. Treatment of Hands, Feet, and Facial Veins Jessica Ochs, PA
- 6. Treating Spider Veins Using Multiple Modalities (Percutaneous Laser and Others) *Peggy Bush, APRN*
- 7. Q and A and Cases



Variety is the Spice of Venous Disease

Angela Kokkosis, MD, Stony Brook University Hospital, New York

In the spirit of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" one of the American Venous Forum's Core Values, VENOUS2022 is proud to showcase a session on Thursday morning entitled "Diversity in Venous Disease: Exploring and Addressing Diversity and Disparities in Venous Disease." Misaki Kiguchi, MD, and I will moderate a fantastic lineup of venous specialists who have unique expertise in various areas of venous disease where disparities and diversity arise.

Jesse Garcia, MD, will kick off the session with a discussion of how hemodialysis access outcomes vary among different populations. Next will be a talk on insurance coverage gaps in venous disease by Kathleen Ozsvath, MD, followed by two presentations on disparities in superficial and deep venous disease by Peter Pappas, MD, and Rajesh Malik, MD. The session will conclude with a talk by Faisal Aziz, MD, who will offer some "Socioeconomic Considerations in Trial Design/Research." We look forward to our first-ever AVF Core Values session and hope you will attend!



Angela Kokkosis, MD Stony Brook University Hospital, New York

PLEASE SUPPORT THE AMERICAN VENOUS FORUM

The American Venous Forum believes that every patient deserves the best vein and lymphatic care.

Every day, we educate physicians & patients, we advocate for appropriate patient care and we support research to improve this care.

Because, when physicians are empowered to provide the best care possible, patient lives improve!

YOUR DONATION WILL SUPPORT:

- ✓ New patient education materials in English and Spanish
- ✓ Specialized vein and lymphatic disease training for new physicians
- ✓ Advocacy initiatives to ensure that all patients, especially the underserved, have access to the appropriate care they deserve
- ✓ New research in vein and lymphatic disease to improve patient outcomes







Dear AVF Members:

Action in Washington, DC related to proposed new CMS rulings has been accelerating as we approach the end of 2021. Since the proposed rule was published, AVF has been warning of the crippling effects that these changes would have on Medicare beneficiaries with venous disease, the majority of who receive care in office-based practices.

During the past week Congress passed legislation that goes a long way to addressing Medicare cuts that will benefit all Medicare providers and patients. Here are the highlights:

	CMS FINAL RULE	RESULT OF NEW LEGISLATION
	Sequester Cut 2%, 1/1/22	1% cut starting 4/1/22; Increase to 2% on 7/1/22
	MPFS CONVERSION FACTOR Cut 3.75% PayGo	0.75% cut 1/1/22
	Cut 4%	0 for 2022
TOTAL	9.75%	< 2.75%



Mark Iafrati, MD Chair, Health Policy Committee

This"fix," together with the E+M coding changes enacted in 2021, go a long way to keeping most Medicare providers whole. Although we might suggest that Medicare providers deserve pay raises rather than any pay cuts, this legislative effort is truly great news.

However, the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule changes associated with the Clinical Labor Update were not addressed and are currently scheduled to begin January 1, 2022. Through vigorous and ongoing efforts by AVF in collaboration with like-minded colleagues in SVS and AVLS, we have raised awareness at CMS and Congress of the very uneven impact of these clinical labor updates. The attached letter from the Congressional Tri-Caucus to Speaker Pelosi lead by Representatives Davis and Rush clearly demonstrates understanding of the untenable scheduled cuts with up to 23% for venous practices over the next 4 years.

Unfortunately, the fix for this is complicated and could not be worked out in time to be included in the current bill. AVF thanks Representatives Danny Davis (D-Illinois), Bobby Rush (D-Illinois), and the entire Tri-Caucus for their efforts on this issue. We will continue to work with Congress and CMS on fixing this.

At this point it is nearly certain that these cuts will take effect on January 1, 2022; but they could be rolled back if Congress acts. Several legislative methods could address this problem: the most obvious would be including the fix in the Omnibus Spending Bill, which will be voted on in February 2022.

Your voice counts. Please let your Congressional leaders know that this issue matters to you. You may sign our petition to stop these cuts by clicking **here**. Also, if your practice experiences any hardships based on these cuts-- especially if you need to lay off staff, limit hours, or otherwise reduce access to care for Medicare beneficiaries--please let us know (HealthPolicy@VeinForum.org). The Tri-Caucus letter makes clear that Congress cares. Together we can make a difference.

Mark lafrati, MD Chair, Health Policy Committee



Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Speaker United States House of Representatives H-232, The Capitol Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As members of the Congressional Tri-Caucus, we write to express our strong concern regarding the Medicare reimbursement reductions contained in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) 2022 Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) Final Rule, released on November 2, 2021 and published by CMS on November 19, 2021. These reductions cut reimbursement for office-based services — which treat diseases disproportionately impacting minority populations — by 20 percent or more. While President Biden's FY 2022 Budget contained many worthy provisions aimed at addressing health inequity through the elimination of disparities in health care, the 2022 PFS Final Rule threatens to undermine those initiatives in areas throughout the PFS, as exemplified with several examples in the table below.

Disease/Service	Health Inequity	Fully-Implemented Cuts*
Venous Ulcer / Endovenous radiofrequency ablation	Black patients present with more advanced venous insufficiency than white patients	Key Code (36475) cut by 23%
ERSD / Dialysis Vascular Access	Black and Latino patients start dialysis with a fistula less frequently despite being younger	Key Code (36902) cut by 18%
Cancer / Radiation oncology	Black men are 111 percent more likely to die of prostate cancer; Black women are 39 percent more likely to die of breast cancer	Key Code (G6015) cut by 15%
Peripheral Artery Disease / Revascularization	Black Medicare beneficiaries are three times more likely to receive an amputation; Latinos are twice as likely	Key Codes (37225-37221) cut by 22%
Fibroid / Uterine Fibroid Embolization	Uterine fibroids are diagnosed roughly three times more frequently in Black women	Key Code (37243) cut by 21%

^{*} Note: In the 2022 PFS Final Rule, CMS phases-in these cuts over 4 years. Cuts in this table are estimates based on the 2022 PFS Proposed Rule as CMS did not publish the effects of the cuts over the 4-year period.

In September, 75 Members of Congress sent a letter to CMS asking the Agency not to proceed with the clinical labor cuts and, just last month, 247 Members of Congress signed a letter asking that Congress begin "long-term reform" of the Physician Fee Schedule "as soon as possible."

It is clear that any benefits of proceeding with the clinical labor policy at this time are far outweighed by the significantly negative impacts on PFS specialists, which will exacerbate health inequity, drive further health system consolidation, and undermine specialty care. In short, these cuts will harm our nation's most vulnerable patients and should not be allowed to be implemented. While we believe it is past-time time to work on fundamental reform of the Physician Fee Schedule, in the meantime, we strongly urge you to include language in the end-of-the-year legislative package which directs CMS not to proceed with the implementation of the clinical labor update.



Thank you for the consideration of this request. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact

Sincerely,

Bobby L. Rush Member of Congress Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Cardenas

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

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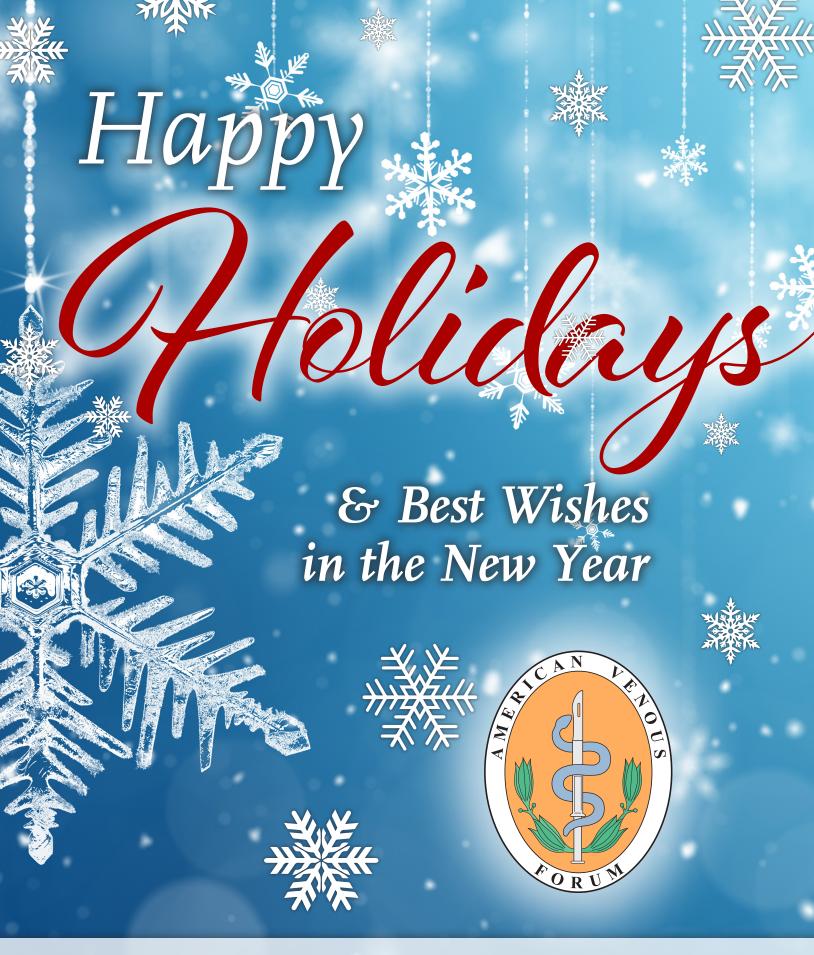
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Tony Gasparis, Harold Welch & the entire AVF family





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The Career Center offers a non-dues revenue stream that supports the important work of the AVF, and we believe this provides a one stop shop for both job seekers and employers!

ROBUST, ENGAGING.



AVF's Online Store Offers New Practice Resources

ShopAVF

LATE-BREAKING NEWS AVF-AVFF MERGER APPROVED





John Forbes, MBA Executive Director

A vote via secure ballot in December by members of the American Venous Forum approved the merger of the American Venous Forum (AVF) and American Venous Forum Foundation (AVFF). In approving the merger, members have paved the way to streamline the administrative functions of the organization, directing more resources to AVF's core mission. As described in the November issue of *Vein Specialist*, this will increase operational efficiency and enable more resources to be available to support the engagement of our members, the work of AVF committees, and the evolving research opportunities and advocacy challenges. Watch for updates on the implementation of the logistical aspects of the merger over the next few months.

MEMBER MATTERS

ELNA MASUDA, MD Hawai'i Pacific Health Straub Medical Center Department of Vascular Surgery Honolulu, Hawaii

UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN SECRETS OF A SOCIETY

When I joined the AVF and then served as chair of the Membership Committee a few years later, I thought it was a good way of giving back to a society and those members who had taught me so much over the years. Was I wrong! The big secret is that as a member you gain so much more than is apparent on the website or even in a letter of thanks for your participation. You meet others who share their rich experiences and help build you as a physician and person.

There is another secret. The AVF has some of the top leaders in the field of venous disease, many of whom are women. Widespread acceptance is embedded in the culture and active recruitment continues to build a diverse organization. More than 30% of all leadership positions are held by women today, compared to the rather few involved a decade ago. The many women leaders in the society continue to inspire me to work toward better practice including Kathleen Ozsvath, MD, prior chair of the Health Policy Committee; Ruth Bush, MD, a member of the AVF Board of Directors; Ellen Dillavou, MD, past Program Committee chair; and many more.

For myself, the AVF provided countless opportunities to grow and provide fulfillment that expanded beyond direct patient care. One of those resources is the AVF Exchange, an online secure chat room, which is an excellent way to share questions or cases with others. I've learned a great deal about nuances that are not in text books but provide important tips and tricks to treating venous patients. AVF has helped teach me how to be a better professional, which benefitted my patients, colleagues, and others.

My father was a milkman and my mother was a school cafeteria worker. And I had two sisters. The 5 of us lived in a plantation-type home with two bedrooms and one bathroom. That became a challenge when all 3 girls (including myself) had to

get ready for school each morning as teenagers! Looking back, my parents and family taught me how hard work is something we should

embrace, and make the best of what you are given.

During my tenure as President of the American Venous Forum and its Foundation, we experienced an important organizational turnaround that enabled growth even through the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with the AVF Executive Committee, AVF and AVFF Board of Directors and Balanced Growth Consulting, a new operating model was created and led by our Executive Director, John Forbes. The unique hybrid administrative model consisted of an AVF-employed Executive Director, Director of Development (Jeffrey Mendola), and an outsourced association management company, Veritas, led by Sue O'Sullivan. Since establishing the change, the new administration had worked with past presidents BK Lal, MD, Harold "Hal" Welch, MD, and currently Antonios Gasparis, MD in providing the support needed to complete AVF initiatives and grow the society.

All of us have the onus to develop personal excellence regardless of ethnicity, gender, or backgrounds. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." We should never stop dreaming and never stop striving for better. Who knows? You may find more priceless secrets along the way.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."



MEMBER MATTERS

YANG YANG, MD PGY-3, Integrated Vascular Surgery MedStar Washington Hospital Center Medstar Georgetown University Medical Center Washington, DC

I am currently a PGY-3 in the Integrated Vascular Surgery program at MedStar Health. As a Member-In-Training and Member of AVF's Digital Media Committee, I am very fortunate to be learning from the best. My participation in AVF has truly broadened my experience and depth of knowledge of venous and lymphatic disease. It is a wonderful organization to build upon my foundation. I have my mentor, Misaki Kiguchi, MD, to thank for getting me involved.



American Venous Forum