

Season's Greetings to all AMDA members.

It's a little over half way through my term as president of AMDA and I wanted to update you on several initiatives that your organisation, under the guidance of an energetic executive council, have undertaken. Those of you at the meeting last year will recall that Bob Orford, as the previous president threw down the gauntlet saying that we needed to take a careful look at our organisation and ways we needed to reform to bring us up with the times.

Later there was an AsMA panel session on "Airline Medical Departments - Adapt or Perish?" - after this session there was a long discussion with members and outsiders about how AMDA was working, and how it was perceived - the consensus was that we indeed DO need to adapt or perish, and several possible areas to address were identified. These areas included our name - which suggests to many that they are not eligible to join - and our membership criteria which exclude some full time airline medical advisors from full membership because they are nurses or physician assistants. There was a clear need seen to attract and retain younger members, and there were also questions about the pathway to membership, the way we run the annual meeting and the possibility of a second meeting. After the discussion an ad hoc committee was created to review several aspects of our organisation's rules.

It was agreed we need a name that is more inclusive and more reflective of the current reality - which is that there are very few airline medical directors; it was agreed we need to encourage wider membership from those who are working with airlines providing medical advice to them; and it was agreed we need to facilitate and attract new members joining us. You will hear more about the proposed rule changes soon. Some aspects of how the executive council works have also been discussed: currently, the hardest working members are those whose positions are non-rotating - our current secretary Petra Illig and treasurer Matt Dumstorf are bearing too much of the workload of the organisation - we are immensely grateful to them but we need ways to share this load around. There has been some question about whether in future we might consider two-year terms for some council roles such as president (but not during my term!). Again, more about that later.

Another great initiative which has kicked off this year was that an award has been created in honour of our long-time secretary Ralph Fennell. This has been made possible through the generosity of United Airlines, and provides costs for a young potential airline doctor to attend and speak at our conference. We made a call for abstracts and a subcommittee reviewed about 15 of these, and have made a selection; their decision will be announced to you once we have contacted all the applicants. We

think this is an exciting way to bring AMDA in to the visual fields of young aerospace medicine practitioners. Thanks to United and to Pat Baylis for facilitating this.

And the other big change to announce to you is regarding the annual Aviation Health Conference in London UK. This was launched originally by IATA, but subsequently was taken up by a professional conference organiser Quaynote, in partnership with our colleague Claude Thibeault. Claude is retiring from his role at IATA, and also from running the meeting - and the AMDA Executive Council has accepted a proposal to run the next Aviation Health Conference under the auspices of AMDA, in a profit-share partnership with Quaynote. This conference has been highly successful for over 15 years, aligns with our organisation's objects, attracts well over 100 delegates, and runs at a profit. Assuming this trial year is again a success, we expect to continue to annually offer this conference which will raise the profile of AMDA internationally as well as greatly improving our income stream. The funds may assist with much needed administrative and IT assistance. Unlike the existing AMDA meeting, the logistical aspects of the meeting organisation are done by Quaynote and our role is simply to organise the programme and chair the meeting. As the outgoing president I have volunteered to chair the 2018 meeting, and beyond that if this is desired.

Finally for our meeting in Dallas, things are progressing well and Rui Pombal's program committee have a great day lined up. We have agreed on a small change for the coming year which is to charge a small fee for the meeting itself, namely \$25 for members, and \$100 for non-members, along with a slight increase in the dinner price for guests and for non-members. This is because: currently the meeting struggles to be financially viable - even more so since AsMA have been most insistent that we hold our dinner on-site at the conference hotel; we believe that the meeting is of high quality and merits an attendance fee; we have a suspicion that some non-members by attending the breaks and lunch are literally eating into our funds, we would like to welcome them to do so if they have paid a registration; and lastly we would like to provide an incentive for the non-members to consider joining AMDA. Once again some details will follow in the New Year but thanks to Rui's team for their work.

We realise that these are a lot of initiatives all at once. But we are firmly of the view that they are realistic, and will enable us to be a more effective and vibrant organisation. On behalf of the executive council I wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

David Powell
AMDA President 2017-2018