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President's Message: What is happening in Florida that can affect all Board Certified Emergency Physicians?

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **What is happening in Florida that can affect all Board Certified Emergency Physicians?**

**Inaugural Cal/AAEM President's Message  
Shahram Lotfipour, MD, FAAEM**

My name is Shahram Lotfipour and I am an Assistant Professor at the University of California Irvine. I was raised in Iowa and graduated from the University Of Iowa College Of Medicine in 1995. I decided to pursue my career in Emergency Medicine the hard way, by first choosing general surgery and finally seeing the light and successfully completing my residency in Emergency Medicine at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. I was recruited by Antoine Kazzi and Bob McNamara in 1999 in an effort to start the resident section in AAEM. My initial position in AAEM was as the secretary/treasurer on the founding board of the AAEM Resident section. Since then I have participated in every AAEM scientific Assembly and have been the Vice President of Cal/AAEM the past two years. I am honored to have been chosen to continue the legacy of Antoine Kazzi and Paul Windham as president of Cal/AAEM.

One of the core beliefs of Cal/AAEM and AAEM is that Emergency Medicine should be practiced by ABEM- or AOBEM-Certified Physicians. We also believe in fair compensation, open books and an equitable partnership. I wanted to first update you on some of the Cal/AAEM activities. For the fourth year, Cal/AAEM continues to publish the California Journal of Emergency Medicine (CAL/JEM). Cal/JEM is distributed on a quarterly basis to 2000 AAEM members and California Board Certified Emergency Physicians. Cal/AAEM has also had continued representation in Sacramento through the Cal/ACEP legislative advocate and has updated our membership on key issues through Cal/JEM. We have also supported the Cal/AAEM News Service which continuously updates over 500 subscribers on important state and national political issues. In the past Cal/AAEM has supported Cal/ACEP in such activities as the Legislative Leadership Day and has reciprocated

with CAL/ACEP agreements on discounts at the Cal/ACEP and AAEM Annual Scientific Assemblies for Cal/AAEM, AAEM and CAL/ACEP members. Cal/AAEM has also had an annual Business forum each summer at the Cal/ACEP Scientific Assembly on such issues as "the Medical Malpractice Crisis" and "Fairness and Compensation in EM."

In addition to previous ongoing activities, Cal/AAEM is now considering offering a course on Pain Management & End of Life care issues as partial fulfillment of the CA state licensure renewal requirements at the 2005 AAEM Scientific Assembly in San Diego. We would also like to expand the voice of our membership throughout California by having you represented when addressing key practice issues such as fairness and exploitation in the workplace.

I have recently become aware of an important event that happened two years ago in Florida that has not yet been publicized in the EM Community. This has affected the legitimacy of EM board certification not only in Florida but will without a doubt impact all the other states. The Florida Medical Board recognized what we consider to be an illegitimate exam and process known as BCEM (Board of Certification in Emergency Medicine) as equal in value and "rule" to the only recognized legitimate certification boards: ABEM and AOBEM.

What is wrong with BCEM? Well, it is all wrong! Wrong to patients and endorses training on the job as an ethical path to acquiring EM board certification WITHOUT Emergency Medicine Residency Training! This simply endangers the lives of unsuspecting patients who fall in the hands of physicians who were not adequately (substantially) residency-trained in Emergency Medicine. AAEM was unaware of this event until recently. This affects one of our core beliefs i.e.: Emergency Medicine is best practiced by ABEM or AOBEM board-certified Emergency Physicians According to the ABMS and the AOA (AOBEM), the only ethical way to be board certified in Emergency Medicine is to successfully complete an EM-specific residency program accredited with scrutiny and standards that provide dedicated attention to a career in a distinct field where patients' lives and welfare are at stake. BCEM negates this idea and effectively voids the whole reason for closing the practice tract. I look forward to hearing much more of the debate and updating you on this. I encourage you to stay tuned to

future Common Sense and AAEM notifications for further information.

Last but not least, an important California development in the state is the Emergency Care Initiative. The Emergency Care initiative that was started by Cal/ACEP is supported by the CMA and Cal/AAEM. I encourage you all to learn as much about this upcoming initiative this year and to support it. This initiative will provide substantial needed funds for Emergency and Trauma Care in California.

I want to encourage every AAEM member in California to join Cal/AAEM, contribute to the Political Action Committee in AAEM and to support the upcoming initiative for this November ballot by going online and donating funds to the California State EM PAC. I challenge every member of Cal/AAEM to join me and the other Cal/AAEM board members in supporting and contributing through your Cal/AAEM society to the many challenges our state faces in the future. I look forward to working with you in the upcoming year and welcome your comments and suggestions.

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