

American Society of Plastic Surgeons Recognizes Association of Plastic Surgery Physician Assistants!

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The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) is the premier organization for Board Certified Plastic Surgeons and it has long been a goal of the Association of Plastic Surgery PAs to build a strong working relationship with this group. In October, while attending their annual scientific meeting, PAs enjoyed their first year with an official presence at this internationally attended meeting. As Liaison from the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) to the ASPS, I was invited to audit their official board meeting prior to this year's scientific session. The ASPS Board of Directors and the ASPS executive staff were wonderfully receptive to our presence, with both of the outgoing presidents, Dr. Roxanne Guy (ASPS) and Dr. Carolyn Kerrigan (Plastic Surgery Educational Foundation), sharing an extensive understanding of our profession. Dr. Guy even mentioned physician assistants specifically and our integral role to the plastic surgery team, during her opening remarks to the 6,200 attendees and guests at the opening ceremonies.

Our work did not stop there as we went onto have a very successful few days in the ASPS exhibit hall. The APSPA's BOD and other PA attendees worked tirelessly to share current information with plastic surgeon attendees and their staff. The enthusiasm in the hall was contagious and by the end of the session we had offers to present at next year's meeting, countless requests for PAs to fill open plastic surgery positions, and many, many plastic surgeons with experience working with PAs dragging their colleagues to our booth to learn more about us!

Also during the meeting PAs, Bob Blumm, Barbara Kalinowski and I attended the ASPS Council of Related Organizations and requested official recognition for the APSPA. We explained the history of the APSPA, a bit about what we do with plastic surgeons, and expressed our needs to be recognized as PAs and not simply as associate staff. I specifically expressed a desire to streamline registration at scientific meetings for PAs. I outlined the requirements for our continuing medical education and stressed the need for PAs to attend the same scientific forums as their physician members. A number of PAs at the meeting were registered for the nursing meeting or the Plastic Surgery Assistants' meeting which resulted in the inability to claim category one CME. Dr. Roberta Gartside, the chair of the council, acknowledged these concerns and agreed to bring them to the ASPS board. The board later voted to include the APSPA in the Council of Related Organizations and also to create a membership category for members of the Plastic Surgery Team, including physician assistants!

It was a very successful few days in Baltimore and we are continuing the work with the ASPS home office and their new leaders, Dr. Richard D'Amico, 2008 President of the ASPS and Dr. Linda Phillips, 2008 President of Plastic Surgery Educational Foundation. The APSPA will meet next in San Antonio during the AAPA Annual Conference and then again at the ASPS Annual meeting, Plastic Surgery 2008, in Chicago 10/31-11/5. Please join us for some excellent specialty specific CME!

