



Grand Bohemian Art Gallery

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN THE PRACTICE OF NEUROLOGY

AAN

NEWS & NOTES

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Join us at the Grand Bohemian for AAN's 2021 Annual Conference



Grand Bohemian Hotel Mountain Brook, Autograph Collection
2655 Lane Park Dr
Birmingham, AL 35233

AAN is excited to be meeting at the picturesque Grand Bohemian Hotel in Mountain Brook. The hotel is located near parks, museums, great dining, bars and shopping – both popular retail and little local boutiques. Amenities include:

- Grand Bohemian Art Gallery
- Poseidon Spa
- Rooftop restaurant and bar offering city views and handcrafted cocktails
- Fountain pool

Nearby Attractions:

- Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- Birmingham Zoo
- McWane Science Center

Make hotel reservations [online](#) or by calling 205-414-0505 and asking for the Alabama Academy of Neurology room block. The room block rate is \$249 per night and will expire on July 21.

See meeting details on page 3, and registration form on page 5.

Accreditation Statement

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama through the joint providership of the Medical Foundation of Alabama and the Alabama Academy of Neurology. The Medical Foundation of Alabama is accredited by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Designation Statement

The Medical Foundation of Alabama designates this live activity for a maximum of 4.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize neurologic complications of acute COVID-19.
- Discuss the changing landscape of MS disease modifying therapies.
- Recognize and describe phenomenology in common and uncommon movement disorders.
- Demonstrate how to assess quality in telemedicine in acute stroke.
- Describe the value of diagnostic and prognostic tools for status epilepticus.
- Discuss the basic concepts of electrodiagnostic studies for the evaluation of peripheral neuropathies. 

The Alabama Academy of Neurology is seeking nominations of neurologists to fill positions on the AAN Board, including a Scientific Chair to help plan our annual conference.

Contact Meghan Martin at mmartin@alamedical.org if you are interested in serving or nominating a colleague.

Alabama Academy of Neurology

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Amit Arora, MD, Huntsville

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ABOUT AAN

The Alabama Academy of Neurology is the professional association representing neurologists in Alabama.

AAN is dedicated to:

- Supporting the highest standards of excellence in the practice of neurology
- Improving patient access to quality neurological care;
- Advancing the profession of neurology by supporting principals, policies and practices that seek to improve patient care, and
- Supporting education and advocacy for our profession, our patients and their families.



COVID-19 Resource Center

Continue to keep up-to-date with the latest information and resources on the AAN's COVID-19 Neurology Resource Center. <https://www.aan.com/tools-and-resources/covid-19-neurology-resource-center/>.

2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

AlabamaMedicine.org

The following is a summary of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama's 2021 Legislative Recap.

Moving Medicine Forward in 2021

While preventing dangerous and problematic proposals from becoming law consumes much of the Association's advocacy efforts, at the same time the Association is trying to move medicine forward each session. The 2021 Session saw continued success for the Association in two top-priority funding requests (MMRC and BMSA) as well as the enactment of legislation to further access to physician-led, team-based care for patients in Alabama.

• **Protection from COVID-19 frivolous lawsuits.** The Medical Association worked with both Sen. Arthur Orr (R-Decatur) and a coalition of other organizations on legislation providing liability protection to businesses but also to physicians for care whose provision to patients was affected or impacted by COVID-19 and/or the state's response to the pandemic. This bill was one of the first to become law in 2021.

• **Board of Medical Scholarship Awards.** As she did in 2020, Gov. Ivey recommended maintaining the additional \$500,000 increase for the Board of Medical Scholarship Awards. The legislature agreed, and the total amount for physician student loans for 2022 remains at \$1.9 million, allowing roughly 10 medical school tuition loans to be granted annually to physicians willing to set up practice in medically underserved areas of Alabama. This program remains one of the best mechanisms for expanding access to quality care.

• **Expanding Broadband in Alabama.** The legislation that passed creates a digital expansion authority to expand access to the internet in all 67 counties and will undoubtedly help patients connect with their physicians via telehealth.

• **Medicaid Expansion.** The Association, as part of Cover Alabama -

a coalition of more than 100 organizations supporting Medicaid expansion - continues to advocate for those caught in the coverage gap.

Fighting "Scope Creep"

Many people would like to be a physician, but few are willing to endure medical school, residency, and all the other various education and training requirements to become an M.D. or D.O. Instead of pursuing higher education, some non-physician organizations pursue legislative changes as an end-around-means to practice medicine, endangering quality care for patients.

• **Imaging Technology.** A newly-created state board could have unilaterally set the scope of practice for imaging technologists and significantly increased costs to medical practices utilizing medical imaging. Working with the Alabama Academy of Radiology, the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians and other medical specialty societies, the Association was able to reach a consensus with the technologists on their legislation.

• **State Board of Nursing.** The State Board of Nursing could have gained jurisdiction over, along with the ability to charge licensure fees to, medical assistants working in physician offices. Working with a coalition of partners, the problems with the legislation were resolved.

• **Interstate Compacts.** Various "interstate compacts" for non-physicians could have enabled "scope creep" far beyond what Alabama law allows.

Beating Back the Lawsuit Industry

Plaintiff lawyers are constantly seeking new opportunities to sue physicians. Alabama's medical liability laws have long been recognized for ensuring a stable legal climate and fostering fairness in the courtroom. But those laws come in jeopardy every session and the Association must defend against allowing more frivolous lawsuits to be filed against physicians.



Alabama Academy of Neurology Annual Conference

August 21, 2021
Grand Bohemian Hotel, Mountain Brook



**Register for the
2021 Conference
online or by using
the form on page 5.**

FACULTY

Shruti Agnihotri, MD, is an associate professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her research interests include JC Virus and PML, HIV, aging neurosarcoidosis, and autoimmune encephalitis.

Khurram Bashir, MD, MPH, is a professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the co-director of the Multiple Sclerosis Center. In addition, he serves as the Neurology Residency Program director and vice chair for education in the Department of Neurology.

Marissa N. Dean, MD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She also serves as the Director of Education for the Movement Disorders Division at UAB, and as the associate program director for the Movement Disorders Fellowship.

Michael Lyerly, MD, is an associate professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where he serves as the program director for the Vascular Neurology Fellowship. He is director of the Birmingham VAMC Primary Stroke Center.

Wolfgang Muhlhofer, MD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Victor Sung, MD, is an associate professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama, director of the UAB Huntington's Disease Clinic, and co-director of the UAB School of Medicine Medical Student Neuroscience Course. He also is the director of the Birmingham VA Medical Center Deep Brain Stimulation Program.

Rocio Vazquez Do Campo, MD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine where she specializes in clinical neurophysiology-EMG, peripheral nerve disorders and autonomic disorders.



Agnihotri



Bashir



Dean



Lyerly



Muhlhofer



Sung



**Vasquez
Do Campo**

AGENDA

SATURDAY, AUG. 21

7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Breakfast with Exhibitors

8:00 a.m.

Welcome

Amit Arora, MD, President, AAN

8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Neurologic Complications of COVID-19

Shruti Agnihotri, MD

9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Diagnosis of Peripheral Neuropathies

Rocio Vasquez Do Campo, MD

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Morning Break with Exhibitors/Poster Viewing

10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Status Update - What's New in the Management of Status Epilepticus
Wolfgang Muhlhofer, MD

1:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Legislative Update
Niko Corley

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Lunch/Poster Viewing

12:45 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Telemedicine in Acute Stroke Care

Michael J. Lyerly, MD

1:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Case Studies in Movement Disorders

Victor Sung, MD

Marissa Dean, MD

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Complexity of Multiple Sclerosis Disease Modifying Therapy in the Current Era

Khurram Bashir, MD, MPH

2:45 p.m.

Evaluation and Adjourn

Legislative Update, continued

• **Vaccine-related Lawsuits.** New vaccine-related lawsuits against physician-employers and medical practices were prevented from becoming law.

• **Medicaid Fraud.** Physicians accepting Medicaid could have been subject to whistleblower lawsuits for honest billing mistakes, costing \$5,500-\$11,000 per billing mistake plus triple damages under a Medicaid fraud bill. The Medical Association, along with a coalition of health care associations, offered a substitute bill but it was rejected by the sponsor.

• **Seizure Action Plan.** Physicians could have been held liable for the actions of school system employees if the physician helped create a “seizure action plan” for his or her minor child patient with a seizure disorder. The Association worked with the bill sponsor to remove the problematic language.

Other Health-Related Legislation of Interest

• **Board of Medical Examiners/ Medical Licensure Commission.** Legislation would have abolished the Board of Medical Examiners (BME) and Medical Licensure Commission, and banned physicians who were members of county, state or national medical and specialty societies from participating in regulating their profession.

The proposed structure in the legislation would also have ensured little diversity among physicians serving on the reconstituted BME and would likely have prevented rural physicians from being represented.

• **State Health Officer/State Committee of Public Health.** Legislation would have allowed for a non-physician to head the Alabama Department of Health (ADPH) and would have replaced most of the physicians on the committee with non-physicians. Instead of making drastic changes to ADPH midstream, the legislature and the governor agreed to a full-spectrum study of the state’s COVID-19 response efforts between now and the beginning of the 2022 Session to identify areas for improvement moving forward.

• **Medical Cannabis.** Legislation was enacted to enable cannabis for medicinal use if approved by a physician certified by the state to recommend it to patients. The bill provides for the regulation by the state, from “seed to sale,” of cannabis for medicinal use and creates a new commission to oversee all aspects (other than physician regulation) of cannabis.

The new law allows physicians to become “certifying physicians” and allows patients who are approved by a certifying physician to access medical cannabis at a state approved dispensary.

In 2019, the Medical Association did an in-depth survey of its members to gauge Alabama physicians’ opinions on the topic. While opinions amongst individual physicians on cannabis for medicinal use differed then and still do, there was broad support amongst physicians for – IF cannabis for medicinal use were legalized in Alabama – that the state would regulate and inspect the products. As well, there was also broad support for keeping all regulation of physicians who choose to recommend cannabis to patients under the Board of Medical Examiners and not moved under the purview of the new Cannabis Commission or the Agriculture Department. Those areas and others of strong support identified via the 2019 survey, as well as several others, became the basis for the Association’s advocacy efforts on the legislation. As a result, those areas of broad agreement were included in the final bill that passed.

• **Pharmacy Benefit Managers.** Legislation was enacted that prevents pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) from steering patients to use mail-order pharmacies and prevent price discrimination. It also requires the PBM to act as a fiduciary to clients and prevents them from stopping pharmacists from disclosing prices.

• **Countywide Public Health Orders.** Legislation was filed to change the way county health officers issued countywide public health orders. Various bills were filed related to county health orders. Some would have established an advisory panel to weigh in on countywide health orders before implementation while others

would have prohibited a county health officer from issuing an order that relates to pandemic or outbreak unless it was approved by the State Health Officer. These bills did not pass.

• **Statewide Public Health Orders.** Legislation was filed to change how statewide public health orders are issued and also to curtail the emergency declaration powers of the governor. These bills did not pass.

• **Vaccine Passports.** Multiple pieces of legislation were filed related to banning vaccine passports. The bill that passed on the final legislative day leaves in place existing immunization requirements for students (and also allows exceptions for religious or medical reasons) but bans the issuance of vaccine passports in Alabama by the state or any other governmental body. It also prevents businesses from being able to require proof of vaccination for entry into a business or as a condition for provision of a good or service to a customer. 

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of the Alabama Academy of
Neurology. Comments and letters
to the editor are welcome.



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August 21, 2021
Grand Bohemian Hotel, Mountain Brook

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____ Designation ☐ MD ☐ DO ☐ Other _____

Practice/Facility Name _____

Business Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Practice Manager _____ Practice Manager E-mail _____

Dietary Needs _____ ☐ First time attendee? (check if yes)

☐ I agree to my name, practice name and business address being shared with conference exhibitors.

FEES

☐ Member \$150 ☐ Non-Member \$280 ☐ Retired \$50 ☐ Nonphysician Clinician \$100
☐ Scientific Liaison \$300 ☐ Resident/Fellow - Free ☐ Student - Free

REGISTRATION

Register online at www.tinyurl.com/AAN2021Conference or send completed form to:
AAN 2021 Conference | Attn. Meghan Martin | PO Box 1900 | Montgomery, AL 36102-1900

ACCOMMODATIONS

Make hotel reservations at the Grand Bohemian online at www.tinyurl.com/AAN2021RoomBlock. The room block rate is \$249 per night and will expire on July 21.

DETAILS

More conference information is online at www.alneurology.com. If you have special needs and/or need assistance, please contact Meghan Martin, at (334) 954-2500 or MMartin@alamedical.org.

PAYMENT

☐ Check payable to AAN Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

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