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## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

# The Next Year

It is almost unbelievable that the year 2000 is drawing to a close and the year 2001 is approaching. As is customary at the end of our Annual Meeting, the new president takes over. It is truly an honor and privilege to be that new President of the North American Spine Society (NASS). As we enter 2001, NASS will continue to be the one multidisciplinary organization that advances quality spine care through education, research and advocacy. In the past year—under the able leadership of Neil Kahanovitz, MD—NASS has flourished on all fronts. Its membership increased by 325 members to over 2,800. I anticipate that before this year closes, membership will exceed 3,000. NASS' strength is its members. Through those members, leadership is established.

Under the fine leadership of Jean-Jacques Abitbol, MD, the Council of Continuing Medical Education has continued to host a superb Annual Meeting by providing instructional courses for its members, residents and fellows, and to recognize the outstanding work of members through various awards.

Under the leadership of Richard Fessler, MD, the Council on Clinical Care is our conduit to the political arena. It has provided us with excellent guidelines by offering courses on coding. It has also developed Phase III clinical guidelines for herniated discs, spondylolisthesis and unremitting low back pain. They are also currently developing one on spinal stenosis.

Harry Herkowitz, MD, Chairman of the Council on Research, has done a superb job of stimulating both clinical and laboratory research through grants and other methods.

The dedication and hard work of the Council on Member Services and its Director, Joel Saal, MD, has made NASS the excellent organization that it is through its multiple committees that serve the membership. Recent services include improvements in our Web site,


the development of public education pieces on herniated discs and isthmic spondylolisthesis, and the assurance of a smooth transition from *NASSNews* to *SpineLine*, as this second issue attests.

The Research Fund Management Committee, under the capable leadership of Casey Lee, MD, continues to raise funds for NASS-sponsored spine research. The Committee will continue to work with spine-related companies to support these research endeavors. However, these endeavors can be successful only if the members of NASS themselves support this research by applying for the research, doing the research and supporting the funds by contributions.

As has been mentioned many times before, the strength of NASS lies in the diversity of its membership, which represents not only surgeons of various specialties but also nonsurgeons with multiple interests. In the next year, NASS will continue its charge to be one of the leading, if not the leading, advocate for quality spine care. A 501(c)6 advocacy organization called the National Association of Spine Specialists has been developed to help our efforts at the level of legislature. We have a contract with the Center for Patient Advocacy to help these efforts. Multiple public education materials are available and will continue to be developed for members to educate both patients and the general public about spine care. NASS continues to strive to make the Annual Meeting the best possible forum for the discussion and exchange of ideas on spine care, including new instructional courses. NASS will continue to be a leading force in prompting and supporting spine research.

The new year will also be the inauguration of NASS' own peer-reviewed spine journal (*The Spine Journal*); the first volume will be published in early 2001. Internationally, NASS continues to form a liaison with the Japanese

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Spine Research Society and a meeting with that society is again being planned (Spine Across the Sea for 2003). Another joint meeting with the Spine Society of South America will most likely be held in 2002. NASS has also been approached to be the sponsor or co-sponsor to host World Spine II, most likely in Chicago in August 2003.

In 2001, the Annual Meeting will be in Seattle and for the first time in NASS' history, the meeting will be held in the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. This site reflects the tremendous

growth that NASS has experienced since its infancy. Not only will it be an excellent forum for the educational aspects of the meeting, but—because of the convention center's extensive space—no exhibitors will be turned away. We will also continue with "*Back to Health Week*" to educate the public and the government about spine care. NASS will continue to hold multiple CPT courses as well as other instructional courses.

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NASS is growing. NASS is strong. Hopefully, with its capable membership, capable leaders and capable home office, this growth will continue through the year 2001.

With your help, I am looking forward to being your president in the coming year and again want to thank you for this great privilege.