

# The MedPeds News

The Official Newsletter of the National MedPeds Residents' Association

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*By David C Kaelber, MD, PhD, NMPRA President*

As we begin a new academic year, I am very excited about the upcoming year for NMPRA. As a mostly new Executive Team we are full of energy and excitement. We have already set goals for the coming year and approved our budget (see included budget report in this newsletter).

One of our initial successes has been entering into a partnership with AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals to fund our two awards, the Gary Onady Award (<http://www.medpeds.org/gary.htm>) and the Howard Schubiner Award (<http://www.medpeds.org/howard.htm>). In addition, we have updated and expanded the MedPeds Jobs database (<http://www.medpeds.org/jobs.htm>). We are currently preparing for the 6th annual NMPRA National Meeting to be held Sunday, October 20, 2002 in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics meeting in Boston MA [http://www.medpeds.org/national\\_meeting.htm](http://www.medpeds.org/national_meeting.htm). I hope to meet many of you at the meeting.

Other initiatives that we hope to work on as the year progresses are a MedPeds Mentoring program in conjunction with the Med-Peds Section of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a MedPeds Fellowship Guide in conjunction with the MedPeds Program Directors Association (MPPDA).

As we move forward this year, we are always looking for more ideas and people to help out. If you have any comments or suggestions for NMPRA or would like to help out on one of our existing projects, please email me at [president@medpeds.org](mailto:president@medpeds.org).

## Deadline approaching for NMPRA Awards!!!

*By John Scheitler, MD*

Again this year, NMPRA will be presenting two awards to MedPeds residents.

- *The Howard Schubiner Award (\$1000)* is presented to the resident that exemplifies the highest standards for excellence in MedPeds.

- *The Gary Onady Award (\$1000)* goes to the resident who demonstrates a lasting contribution to the success of NMPRA and MedPeds.

This year the awards are made possible through a generous grant from AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals. The awards are available to NMPRA members and provide funding for educational purposes (\$500) and towards the attendance of the national NMPRA meeting (\$500). Check out the NMPRA website (<http://www.medpeds.org>) for additional information and application materials. If you are not a NMPRA member, JOIN TODAY!!! Award applications must be received by **Friday, September 6, 2002.**

## NMPRA holds 6<sup>th</sup> Annual National Meeting

*By David Kaelber, MD/PhD*

For the second year in a row, NMPRA will be holding its annual National Meeting in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Convention and Exhibition (NCE). The AAP NCE will be in Boston from Saturday, October 19, 2002 through Wednesday, October 23, 2002. The

annual NMPRA National meeting will be on Saturday, October 20 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

At the National Meeting you will have a chance to meet NMPRA officers, hear about where NMPRA is and what we hope to do in the future, see the presentation of the 2002 NMPRA Awards, and provide input about what you want NMPRA to do for you. The NMPRA National Meeting, as well as the AAP NCE, is also great place to meet people, network, and have fun.

AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals will sponsor a MedPeds dinner coordinated by NMPRA, as well as the AAP Med-Peds Section. The dinner will be on Saturday, October 20 at 7:30pm. We also plan to have this dinner be a kick-off event for our new mentoring program in conjunction with the AAP Med-Peds Section.

See the NMPRA website (<http://www.medpeds.org>) for more information about this year's National Meeting and to see the PowerPoint Presentation from last year's National Meeting. Hope to see you in Boston.

## **NMPRA Budget: Show Me the Money!**

*By Emery H. Chang, MD, NMRPA Treasurer*

Welcome to all new and returning members of NMPRA from the Treasurer! It's exciting to be taking on my role for the year and seeing all the new members in our organization.

As with all organizations, it is impossible to carry out daily functions without funding. The majority of our funding comes from three sources: membership dues, lapel pin sales and website job listings. We attempt to keep membership dues low so that dues are not a barrier to membership.

Our major expenses include our awards, providing a nominal stipend for our administrative coordinator, Board of Directors conference calls, and expenses for the NMPRA Annual Meeting that coincides with the AAP National Conference and Exhibition. We hope to continue to expand the services that we provide, without increasing our costs, through the hard work of our membership and Board of Directors. These services already include the NMPRA website (<http://www.medpeds.org>), awards for residents, job guides, and advocating for MedPeds residents.

## **Boards Preparation 101 (Part 1)**

*By J. Thomas Cross, Jr., M.D., M.P.H.*

*(This is the first in a two-part series on Board preparation. Dr. Cross is the newly elected NMPRA Non-Resident Advisor. He is a former MedPeds Program Director and currently the Vice-President for Education at MedStudy Corporation)*

### **1. Why take the Boards in the first place?**

In today's market place, hospitals and practice groups will allow you to remain on staff as Board-Eligible (meaning you've finished your residency and you are waiting to take or pass your Boards) for 3-5 years. After 3-5 years most will require you to be Board-Certified or they may not allow you to remain on staff. Also most insurance companies now require you to be Board-Certified to be on their insurance plans. Here's the rub: For MedPeds folk, we have two Boards to take.

### **2. When are the Boards and how do I apply?**

Let's start with the Internal Medicine examination. The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) orchestrates it. I use the term orchestrated on purpose; it is a well-run machine and the examination process is very streamlined. It is a two-day exam and will be given in 2003 on August 19 and 20. You register for it during your 4<sup>th</sup> year. The dates for future years through the year 2005 have been set and the exams are scheduled also in August.

The registration period begins September 1 through December 1 of 2002 for the 2003 exam! Don't be LATE!! There is a late fee of \$300 and you only have until February 1st for this late registration date. You ABSOLUTELY cannot register after February 1<sup>st</sup>! More information about dates can be found at [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org). This website has a lot of very helpful and useful information about the ABIM exam! Applications can be done on-line at [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org) or by calling 1-800-441-2246 or by requesting an application by mail, e-mail, or fax. They require information such as your Social Security Number and other items when you make your request. It really is easiest to just fill out the online application or to call. After this they will then send you an application packet for you to fill out.

You should fill out the application and send it in as quickly as possible; this will ensure that you get

your 1<sup>st</sup> choice for the examination site! Once the ABIM has received your application you will receive an acknowledgment card and then they will send you a letter in early April telling you where you will take your exam and that all of your credentials have cleared to date. You will not receive your official entrance card until about 3-4 weeks before the examination. So, be sure that you keep them apprised of any address changes between the time you apply and the time you take your examination!

NOTE: YOU NEED 2 FORMS OF PHOTO ID on the day of the examination!! One must be from a government agency like driver's license or passport. The other can be another form; most people bring along their Hospital ID with their picture on it or their credit card if it has a picture of them on it. YOU HAVE to have TWO forms of PHOTO ID!!

For the Pediatrics Examination, the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) orchestrates it. You can get information about it at [www.abp.org](http://www.abp.org). To apply, you can fill out an on-line application or call 1-919-929-0461. Notice that the ABIM is toll-free and ABP is not; you will note a lot of other subtle (and not so subtle) differences between the two and the exams they give! Also, notice the websites; the ABIM is much more helpful in providing important information.

### *Looking for a Job?*

Visit our website at <http://www.medpeds.org> to look at available job opportunities for board certified/board eligible MedPeds physicians all across the nation, as well as the *MedPeds Job Search Guide*.

### *3. How much do Boards cost?*

Unfortunately Boards cost a heck of a lot. The ABIM exam costs \$860 (2002) while the ABP cost \$1200 (2002). Currently MedPeds residents do not get a discount on these UNTIL you re-certify. The MedPeds section of the AAP and the MMPDA (MedPeds Program Directors' Association) are trying to work with the Boards to get this discount passed on to the first time takers.

Your examination fees can be paid by VISA, Mastercard, or pay by check/money order. Additionally, you have to factor in the costs of hotel rooms for 2 nights, meals and transportation to the Boards. I recommend that you stay at the hotel that the Boards are being given at so you don't have to

worry about traffic, parking or finding the room quickly enough. You have enough stress on your brain. If you live in the city that the exam is being given, I still recommend you pay to stay at the hotel—just to give you piece of mind and to make sure you are focused and so that you don't have to worry about chores around the house like bathing kids, taking out the trash or other things that may add to your stress for those 2 days. (see my guide for the spouse/significant other/child below).

### *4. When to take the Boards?*

This is one of the most often asked and debated questions in the MedPeds World! This is what I recommend:

A. Are you someone who blows away the inservices every year in Med and Peds?

If so, just get them over with in the first year. You are a great test taker and can handle both tests.

B. Are you someone who has difficulty with the inservices and have a history of difficulty with standardized tests? Like Step 2 or Step 3?

If so, then I recommend you take them in separate years. Which to start with? It depends? How much time are you going to have to study from July to October of your 1<sup>st</sup> year out? If you say none then I would take the ABIM in August. You will have to get most of your studying done before July, which is easily doable, and use July to go over questions and get yourself psyched. If you are incredibly busy from July to October and you are unlikely able to put in the time needed for Pediatrics Boards during those months, you would be better off waiting a year and studying over the next year gradually!

C. Or are you a person who "falls in-between"—do you do OK on the inservices and do OK on the Steps?

You are the difficult person to figure out! The MMPDA surveyed the program directors and discovered it was really very split depending on the program; either all of the residents did it the same year or people did them over 2 years. It really seems to be rather residency specific.

Also remember this: You are the most "honed" with knowledge right out of residency. There is a TON of overlap between the two tests also! So, use your best judgment and try to make the best decision for yourself—talk to your program director and talk to graduates of the program and see what they think based on their performance and the residency program you trained at.

I can really only give my own perspective also. I think the ABP has changed in the last few years. In talking to residents and other program directors, the ABP seems to have become more difficult to pass—while the ABIM seems to have gotten easier for MedPeds residents to pass. It used to be that MedPeds people would take the ABIM in September (it was in Sept. then) and then we would have about 6 weeks to study for the ABP and that was enough—the ABP was a "joke" then. You'll still notice a difference between the exams—the ABIM is much more into "clinical scenarios" while the ABP still spends quite a bit of time on rote memorization or knowledge of insignificant facts; this is what seems to have gotten the MedPeds people in trouble in my mind. We do pretty well with real patient situations but our rote memorization stuff is lacking or we just don't have enough time to put it all in as our categorical Peds colleagues do.

### Newsletter editorial board

Publisher Annie Chang, DO

Consultant David Kaelber, MD, PhD

(The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of NMPRA)

### 5. What about spouses and significant others/children?

I write this to these folk: if you are married this is the part that comes under "in good times and bad". Your spouse (or parent) is entering the most stressful part of their career--well not as stressful as the first day of internship but pretty close! Be prepared for severe mood swings, anger outbursts, feeling of complete despair, unable to perform usual household duties—(emptying trash, lowering the toilet seat, cooking, etc.—because "you know, I really

need to study") in the weeks prior to the examination. You will lose your loved one to the Boards. Be as supportive as you can and realize it will be over in two short days—then, as soon as the exam is over, hit them up for a well-deserved vacation—or better yet—plan for one as soon as the Boards are over!

(You may direct any questions that you may have on board preparation to Dr. Tommy Cross at [tcross@medstudy.com](mailto:tcross@medstudy.com))



### NMPRA Awards

Winners receive \$500 to be used for education purposes and a \$500 travel grant to attend the NMPRA National Meeting and AAP Conference and Exhibition in Boston, MA from October 19-22. Please apply online at <http://www.medpeds.org> by Friday, September 6, 2002. To join NMPRA, see the NMPRA website.

## NMPRA Board of Directors 2002-2003

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