

CHP Corner



American Academy of Health Physics
American Board of Health Physics
Website: www.aahp-abhp.org

Special Session: “Medical Physics and Health Physics at Medical Facilities”

John Frazier, CHP, Past President

The American Academy of Health Physics (AAHP) sponsored a special session on the topic “Medical Physics and Health Physics at Medical Facilities” at the 58th Annual Meeting of the Health Physics Society (HPS) in Madison, Wisconsin. The special session was held on Tuesday, 9 July 2013, with technical presentations in two morning sessions and one afternoon session.

The purpose of the special session was to compare and contrast the type of work, education requirements, and certification programs for medical physicists and health physicists who work in medical facilities.



Left to right: Ken Miller, Jean St. Germain, and Steve King

The first morning session addressed work responsibilities and examples of technical issues in nuclear medicine (presented by Ken Miller, retired from Milton S. Hershey Medical Center), radiation therapy (presented by Jean St. Germain of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center), and diagnostic radiology (presented by Steve King of Milton S. Hershey Medical Center). These speakers described the myriad tasks and responsibilities of medical physics and health physics personnel at medical facilities.



Richard Vetter (left) and Justin Cantley

The second morning session addressed academic programs in medical health physics (presented by Dr. Richard Vetter, retired from Mayo Clinic) and academic programs in medical physics (presented by Dr. Justin Cantley of the University of Florida). These speakers described the differences in academic programs in the two fields and emphasized the recent changes instituted by the American Board of Radiology for academic programs in medical physics and the recently implemented two-year residency requirement that may greatly reduce the future numbers of qualified medical physicists in the United States.



Left to right: Ed Bailey, Andy Miller, and Gus Potter

The afternoon session addressed professional certification programs in medical physics (presented by Andy Miller of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee) and health physics (presented by Dr. Gus Potter of Sandia National Laboratories). The speakers summarized the requirements for candidates for certification, presented examples of examination questions, and reviewed statistics of candidate performance on recent examinations. They also described organizations that define “qualified physicists” and “qualified medical physicists” and the associated requirements for these and related professions.

The last speaker of the special session was President-elect Ed Bailey (PE and CHP, retired from the California Department of Health Services), who addressed ethical responsibilities of professionals in various disciplines, emphasizing specific ethical commitments by certified health physicists. The session concluded with a panel discussion by presenters who responded to numerous questions raised throughout the day regarding the future of the two professions and changes that will affect future opportunities for persons desiring to enter these fields.

The slides from the special sessions have been posted to the “Public Library” section of the AAHP website at www.hps1.org/aahp/public/AAHP_Special_Sessions/2013_Madison/index.pdf.

The State of AAHP Finances

Alex J. Boerner, CHP, Treasurer

Academy members and interested individuals—I have excellent news to share with you! In contrast to last year, AAHP investments this year experienced a significant increase in the total portfolio value. For the year ending May 2013 as compared to the same period in 2012, the total value of long-, intermediate-, and short-term securities is \$811,169—a \$96,315 increase from the prior year.

At the July 2013 annual meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, the Executive Committee adopted the FY2013/2014 operating budget, as proposed by the Finance Committee. This budget estimates \$222,483 of expenses for the Academy and the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) and \$179,800 of income, reflecting only a modest increase from last year’s budget. As you can see, our budget is lopsided on the expense side. However, the expenditures of the officers and committees of the AAHP and ABHP have historically been significantly less than projected. And second, we retain the enviable position of being able to utilize the AAHP investments to cover any differences. For example, the 2011/2012 expenses exceeded revenue by only \$3,400. A similar shortfall is expected for the 2012/2013 year when the final accounting is completed. Utilizing our investments for operational costs allows us to maintain our current budget without raising dues.

I sincerely want to thank my predecessor and current Finance Committee chair, Drew Thatcher, for his support to me in my first year as treasurer. If you have a question related to the investments or the budget, please do not hesitate to email me at alex.boerner@orau.org or call me at 865-574-0951. Here’s hoping for similar investment results next year!

Continuing Education Committee Update

Jim Willison, CHP, Chair

2013 was another successful annual meeting for AAHP courses. As reported earlier, Course 1 was “Introduction to Medical Health Physics,” taught by Richard Vetter and Ken Miller. Course 2 was “How We Make Decisions for Radiation Safety, and Are Prone to Error,” taught by Ray Johnson. Course 3 was “Overview of Internal Dosimetry,” taught by Dick Toohey. As in the past, these courses were eight hours in length and held on Saturday before the start of the 2013 HPS Annual Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin. We had over 60 attendees for the three classes and all of them received 16 continuing education credits for their participation.

The upcoming midyear meeting of HPS will be held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The AAHP will offer two eight-hour classes on the Saturday before the meeting. The first course has been finalized and will be “Radiation Protection Considerations for Alpha Emitters at Nuclear Power Plants,” taught by John Frazier and Mike Littleton. As of this writing, the committee is still searching for a second course.

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