



A Conversation With AAOS President, Joshua J. Jacobs, MD

Peter D. McCann, MD

For the past 7 years I have dedicated an annual editorial to a conversation with the current President of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS). True to our collective orthopedic collegiality, these requests have never been declined, and I hope our AJO readers have benefited by gaining a better understanding of just how much the AAOS does for the practicing orthopedic surgeon and, in particular, a greater appreciation of the contributions of the AAOS President.

At the March 2013 meeting in Chicago, Joshua J. Jacobs, MD, assumed the Presidency of the AAOS. For many reasons, this was perfect timing. Josh has played an important role in many Academy committees and professional organizations over the past 20 years including President of the Orthopaedic Research Society as well as President of the US Bone and Joint Initiative. Chicago is Josh's hometown where he is the William A. Hark, MD, Susanne G. Swift Professor and Chairman, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Rush Medical College. How appropriate to recognize a local star at our annual meeting!

This year, the Board of Directors of the AAOS are in the process of updating the Academy's Strategic Plan, last updated in 2010, with specific goals designed to enhance its mission in education, advocacy, research, quality, communication, membership, diversity, unity, fiscal affairs, and structure and governance. A carefully crafted governance structure, with a clear line of presidential succession, provides a platform for continuity and a mechanism to achieve these goals. For example, Dr. Jacobs was positioned in line to the Presidency of the AAOS 3 years ago, giving him sufficient time to formulate his specific goals for his presidential year while at the same time maintaining continuity of current Academy goals (see the AAOS strategic plan, www.aaos.org/about/strategicplan.asp).

Josh outlined 3 important challenges for his Presidency. The first is that the Academy must be closely engaged in the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordability

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Care Act, commonly referred to as Obamacare. He believes that our professional society must be a part of the solution to the nation's healthcare crisis and a leader of the current reforms intended to address this crisis.

His second focus will be to implement programs that demonstrate our profession's commitment to access of high quality orthopedic care. Integral to this effort is the emphasis on thorough, large-scale research projects demonstrating that orthopedic care improves quality of life and restores functional capacity to our patients. We know individually this to be the case based on our own clinical experience, but we need reliable independent data to prove this to third

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party payers and government agencies.

Finally, Josh's third priority will be to actually communicate to patients, policy makers, and politicians the value and effectiveness of the services orthopedic surgeons provide. In the new healthcare arena, it will not be sufficient to simply demonstrate high quality in terms of clinical outcomes and patient's satisfaction. We must prove that our care provides economic value to society as well. In a way, this approach can be viewed as a return on investment of the money spent on healthcare—a more complicated calculus the mere reports of clinical outcomes.

As an experienced clinician, educator, administrator, and researcher, Josh Jacobs is the ideal leader for our organization. In these uncertain and turbulent times in healthcare, we orthopedic surgeons will benefit from a leader who can clearly define our goals and guide our ship of state through treacherous seas of change. Healthcare delivery and financing will change dramatically in the years to come, and we are all so fortunate to have someone of Josh's very extensive talents to navigate our course. ■