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SHEA News

THE SOCIETY FOR HEALTHCARE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AMERICA

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6th Annual Meeting in D.C. a Success; 7th to be in St Louis

A record 724 registrants enjoyed the plenary sessions, symposia, and 223 original scientific papers presented at the sixth SHEA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Next year's Annual Meeting will be held at the Adams Mark Hotel in St Louis, April 27-29, 1997. Dr. Leonard Mermel, scientific program coordinator for the 1997 meeting, said that responses and suggestions of this year's attendees will be reviewed carefully to ensure that the 1997 meeting addresses attendees' needs and interests.

Medicare Outpatient Antibiotics

SHEA President Dr. William Martone has responded vigorously to sponsors of the proposed "Common Sense Medicare Parenteral Antibiotic Coverage Act of 1996," which would add Medicare coverage for outpatient administration of cefazolin, ceftriaxone, ceftazidime, and "any other antibiotic which the Secretary (in consultation with experts in the field of infectious diseases) considers appropriate for purposes of this subsection . . . ," effective January 1, 1997. In addition to the economic arguments favoring this "revenue-neutral" bill, Dr. Martone clarified SHEA's concern about the growing resistance of organisms to vancomycin. You may wish to contact your own representative concerning this bill, HR 3262.

A Few Good (Wo)Men Sought

The International Assistance Committee participates in healthcare epidemiology-related educational and consultative missions overseas, in response to requests or invitations from various groups or agencies. The June *SHEA Newsletter* will feature an update from Dr. Ed O'Rourke, Committee Chair, on recent and pending projects in Russia, China, Latin America, etc. If you would be interested in participating in such missions, which typically last from a few days to a week or two, please inform Dr. O'Rourke of your interests and your language skills at the Division of Infectious Diseases, Children's Hospital, 300 Longwood Ave, Boston, MA 02115, fax 617-735-8387.

SHEA Again Meets With White House Staff

Just before the Annual Meeting, a SHEA delegation met with NIOSH and White House staff concerning whether fit testing (of particulate respirators) needs to be repeated for healthcare workers whose facial characteristics remain constant. SHEA's recommendations were well received, and we are hopeful of continuing progress on these issues.

CDC-NFID Workshop Discussed at Annual Meeting

Dr. Davis Bell reported on the recent CDC-NFID workshop on HIV postexposure management of healthcare workers. At the Late Breaker session, discussion on the issue of postexposure antiretroviral prophylaxis, rather than focusing on whether to offer medication, focused on which medications to give, as well as how to prevent the need for same by reducing needlestick-type injuries and by using double gloves in surgery. There is increasing evidence suggesting a substantial benefit of prompt antiretroviral prophylaxis on exposed healthcare workers. The benefit of double-gloving for surgery, as well as for reducing sharps exposures, also were discussed. A revision of the now antiquated 1993 *MMWR* statement on prophylaxis is expected in 1996.

Brief items of interest for the SHEA News or Newsletter may be sent to Murray D. Batt, MD, SHEA News Editor, Washoe Medical Center, 77 Pringle Way, Reno NV 89520; fax (702) 328-4797; e-mail: mbatt.reno@worldnet.att.net.

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