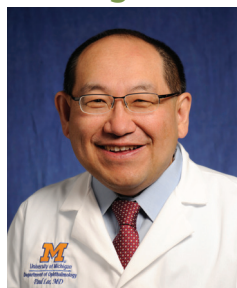


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Building on a Strong Foundation



Paul Lee, MD, JD

Vision research has been a leader in many of the advances that have revolutionized science's understanding of basic mechanisms of function and disease, resulting in new diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. These advances are based on the transformative work that our research community does every day. Our successes are driven by constant change, **built on the strong foundations** of those who have come before us. A critical element has been the funding and work of the National Eye Institute (NEI) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other federal agencies to support vision research. It is in this spirit of an appreciation of the contributions of what has been achieved and the promise of an even better tomorrow that we hope you will enjoy this Report—and become more engaged in the work of the NAEVR/AEVR Alliances.

Inherent in its mission, NAEVR's advocacy is focusing on Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 NIH and NEI appropriations—predicated on a bipartisan budget deal to raise *Budget Control Act* caps—as well as funding for military eye trauma through the Vision Research Program in Department of Defense (DOD) appropriations. NAEVR is also collaborating with its member professional societies, patient groups, and private funding foundations in urging the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to implement the federally focused recommendations from the September 2016 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) report entitled *Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow*, for which NAEVR served as a study sponsor. Throughout the report-development process, NAEVR has emphasized that vision public health and prevention research funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is critical to informing vision biomedical research funded by the NEI.

You will also see two stories about AEVR's Capitol Hill education, demonstrating our commitment to featuring for Congress the latest NIH/NEI funded

research across the breadth of vision, ranging from back-of-the-eye retinal issues to front-of-the-eye ocular surface disease.

Change has also come to the leadership of our most important vision research partner. Our community has been fortunate to be well-served by NEI Director Paul Sieving, MD, PhD. By the time you read this, Santa Tumminia, PhD, who has served as the Deputy NEI Director, will be Acting NEI Director with Dr. Sieving's departure to create a new Center for Ocular Regenerative Therapy at the University of California at Davis. As noted herein, NAEVR issued a statement commending Dr. Sieving for his 18 years of leadership and will present him a plaque at a September 5 event on the NIH campus. NAEVR Executive Director Jim

“Within this already strong foundation of NAEVR/AEVR deliverables, I want to use my leadership to expand member representation and to grow the Alliances.”

Jorkasky, along with ARVO Executive Director Iris Rush (who also serves on the Alliances' Boards), have already met with Dr. Tumminia to investigate how the vision community can unite in year 2020 to recognize the importance of vision—and vision research. Please join us in thanking Dr. Sieving for his unflagging efforts on behalf of vision research and its integration into our larger scientific community.

For the Alliances, we also elected new leadership at our April 28 meeting at ARVO, including Vice President Karla Zadnik OD, PhD (Ohio State University College of Optometry), Treasurer Gregory Skuta, MD (Dean McGee Eye Institute at the University of Oklahoma), and Secretary Linda Hazlett, PhD (Wayne State University School of Medicine). Together with the strength of our Boards and particularly our uniting thread James Jorkasky, who will shortly celebrate his 16th anniversary as the Alliances Executive Director, we are well poised to build on past successes.

What we hope to do together would not be possible without the efforts of you, our community, and our outgoing Directors. I would like to recognize and

thank Peter McDonnell, MD (Wilmer Eye Institute/ Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine) for his dynamic and effective leadership as President after succeeding Stephen J. Ryan, MD. We have benefited as well from the important contributions of outgoing Vice President Bartly Mondino, MD (Stein Eye Institute/UCLA) and Treasurer Thomas Yorio, PhD (University of North Texas Health Science Center), who has received ARVO's 2019 Joanne G. Angle award. We are fortunate that Dr. McDonnell, Dr. Mondino, and Dr. Yorio will continue to serve our community on the Alliances' Boards.

Within the already strong foundation of NAEVR/AEVR deliverables noted in this and prior Reports, we want to expand member representation and to grow the Alliances. The Boards and I want to encourage all member organizations and their respective members from all disciplines within vision to become involved in Alliances activities—whether it be as simple as emailing a Contact Congress letter to your elected officials or committing time to serve on a Committee or interest group or as part of leadership. With respect to growth, in informing all members about the upcoming 2020 renewal, Jim has detailed the Boards' plans to grow the Alliances and to develop a dues/contribution framework that will broaden active involvement as well as to enhance the message about the value of vision and vision research.

As with Peter, I have an “open door” policy with respect to hearing from you, so please feel free to email me with your comments and suggestions about representation in Alliances activities, as well as potential candidate organizations for membership. My email address appears below.

If you are going to be in Washington, DC, on September 18, please join us as we host the *Fifth Annual Emerging Vision Scientists Day on Capitol Hill*. I look forward to meeting those of you who plan to attend.

Paul Lee, MD, JD
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NAEVR/AEVR Boards President
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Karla Zadnik OD, PhD, Dean, Ohio State University College of Optometry

Gregory Skuta, MD, President and CEO, Dean McGee Eye Institute, University of Oklahoma

Linda Hazlett, PhD, Distinguished Professor and Chair, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Wayne State University School of Medicine



Fall 2019 Events:

September 18
AEVR Congressional Briefing:
International AMD Awareness Week 2019
12 Noon-1:15 pm, House Rayburn 2043

AEVR Congressional Reception:
Fifth Annual Emerging Vision Scientists Day on Capitol Hill
5:30 – 7:30 pm, House Rayburn Foyer

(Hosted by AEVR President Dr. Paul Lee, supported by a grant from Research to Prevent Blindness)

September 19
NAEVR Advocacy:
Emerging Vision Scientists Advocacy Day
(also *Rally for Medical Research Advocacy Day* with NAEVR as sponsor)