

AsMA's New Executive Director and Preparations for our 2025 AsMA/UHMS Atlanta Meeting

Robert Orford, M.D., CM, MS, MPH, FACP, FRCPC, FRSM, FAsMA



As I write this Letter, I have just returned from the annual November AsMA Council and Scientific Program Committee (SPC) meetings. Both events were very positive. A committee to review the Emergency Medical Kit (EMK) at the request of Dr. Susan Northrup, Federal Air Surgeon, and chaired by Drs. Jim DeVoll and Paulo Alves also met in person the day before Council.

At the Council meeting, an Employment Agreement was approved and later signed by John Peters to become the AsMA Executive Director on July 1, 2025, following the retirement of our current Executive Director, Jeff Sventek. An Employment Agreement was also signed with AsMA's Deputy Executive Director Gisselle Vargas to acknowledge her increased responsibilities.

The Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) started as a Constituent Organization of AsMA in 1967, became the Undersea Medical Society, operating as a distinct entity from AsMA, in 1974, and was renamed the Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society in 1986. A joint AsMA/UHMS annual scientific meeting was held in Seattle in 1998. Jeff Sventek became AsMA Executive Director in 2010, and John Peters became UHMS

Executive Director in 2014. Over time, the associations have begun working more closely together.

In 2017, UHMS started providing CME management as a shared service for AsMA. UHMS added ePosters as another shared service for AsMA in 2020. AsMA and UHMS held a joint annual scientific meeting in 2022 in Reno and, afterwards, both associations discussed working more closely together, including holding a joint annual scientific meeting every year for their respective members. In 2023, when Jeff Sventek announced his intention to retire, an initial search for his replacement was conducted, but proved unsuccessful. Jeff then recommended that AsMA consider hiring John Peters, Executive Director of UHMS, as his replacement, with the intent that John would lead both UHMS and AsMA.

Over the last year and a half, AsMA Past President Joe Dervay, President Bob Orford, President-elect Warren Silberman, Jeff Sventek, the AsMA Executive Committee, the UHMS Board of Directors, and the AsMA Council have carefully considered John as the next Executive Director of AsMA. John is an articulate, personable, innovative, and seasoned association executive



Left: Drs. Robert Orford and Joe Dervay, AsMA Past President, with John Peters, incoming AsMA Executive Director and current UHMS Executive Director, and Dr. Owen O'Neill, UHMS President. Middle: Dr. Orford sits with Gisselle Vargas as she signs her new contract. Behind her are Jeff Sventek, outgoing AsMA Executive Director, and Dr. Warren Silberman, incoming AsMA President. Right: The 2025 AsMA-UHMS annual scientific meeting challenge coin.

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CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: President@asma.org • **Website:** www.asma.org • **Facebook:** Aerospace Medical Association • **X:** @Aero_Med



Some of the core Scientific Program Committee team at the Scientific Program Committee meeting.

with a track record of significant improvements in operational and financial performance at UHMS over the last 10 years. John will become the Executive Director of both AsMA and UHMS, which will continue to operate independently, in July 2025.

The AsMA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) will be held at the Hyatt Regency in the vibrant and historic city of Atlanta, GA, with the theme "Innovation: Journey to the Future." 2025 will be the first of six AsMA joint ASMs with UHMS between 2025 and 2030. To commemorate the 2025 Atlanta ASM, a special challenge coin has been designed.

Planning for the Atlanta joint ASM is well underway. AsMA has had a long history of in-person abstract review, with the SPC core members and reviewers meeting in Alexandria on Thursday and Friday the week before Thanksgiving (U.S. holiday) each year to rate abstracts for panels, slide presentations, and posters submitted before the October 31 deadline. The meeting atmosphere changed after the Open Water virtual review process was introduced 3 years ago, and in-person attendance dropped. The spirited discussion of our former meetings had been lost and the reviewers asked for the system to be changed to increase our interaction and conviviality. It was. This year was different!

Over 600 abstracts for the 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta were submitted for review by our Scientific Program Committee chaired by Amanda Lippert. The core on-site team (Eilis Boudreau, Adam Sirek, Ken Egerstrom, Jaime Harvey, Douglas Boyd, Katie Samoil, and John Barson, who is also the Arrangements Chair for AsMA's 2025 meeting in Atlanta) had designed a new hybrid abstract review system. This was successful in bringing back the traditional interactive, spirited, and enjoyable experience of the Scientific Program Committee reviewers who attended in person at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria.

Panel, Slide presentation, and Poster Chairs and Co-Chairs at the Atlanta ASM on June 1, 2025, should attend the meeting of the SPC there to learn about their roles and responsibilities. Others are welcome to attend on a space-available basis if they would like to learn more about the abstract review and about the presentation of panels, slide presentations, and posters at the upcoming meeting. Amanda Lippert will cover the new hybrid review process and the science behind it.



Reviewers discuss abstracts during the annual Scientific Program Committee meeting.

Keynote speakers will be announced in January 2025. As in past years, there will be several concurrent sessions, with plenty of CME/CPD credits available for attendees. If the room block is filled, we also plan to offer live video coverage of the meeting for the first time. Also, as in years past, videos of slide presentations from the conference will be available later.

There are many opportunities for professional growth at AsMA meetings, particularly for early or mid-career attendees. These include the successful AsMA speed mentoring program, attendance at aerospace medicine board certification preparation sessions, the RAM Bowl, and attendance at any of numerous workshops and constituent organization meetings, with the meeting of the International Airline Medical Association on Saturday and Civil Aviation Medical Association on Sunday as examples. These meetings are open to all AsMA attendees at low cost. You will find that participation in these events will enhance the overall value of your conference.

The Wing of AsMA has also been busy planning for our week in Atlanta with a reception, luncheon, and tours. All accompanying persons of AsMA and UHMS attendees are invited to attend Wing events and may register in advance online or on site in the Wing hospitality room. Check out the Wing website for further details at: <https://www.thewingofasma.com/>. Further information on other local events and tours is available from the city of Atlanta and the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau: <https://www.atlantaga.gov/visitors>.

Early Bird registration for attendance at the annual scientific meeting opens every year on January 1, so many of you will have already registered when you see this. If you have not registered, please do so today, before the Early Bird rate disappears on February 15. You should also register early for the best hotel rate at the Hyatt Regency. If you miss out on the room block, there are several other hotels in easy walking distance of the Hyatt. This meeting will be like no other in our recent history, so I urge you to register now and participate actively during the meeting.

Looking ahead, please add the dates to your calendar or diary for our 2026 AsMA/UHMS Annual Scientific Meeting in Denver, CO, from May 17–21, 2026.

Looking forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

AsMA is a family. No one belongs there more than you!