

January 2023



### **President's Insights**

*by Ramon Terrazas, MD, MPH, FACOEM*



Esteemed colleagues and friends, I humbly deliver this message to introduce myself as your 2023 President. I joined ACOEM and WOEMA in the mid-late 1990's when I decided to pursue the American Board of Preventive Medicine's Alternative Pathway for late-career physicians for board certification in occupational medicine. I completed a Master of Public Health degree in 2005 while working full-time in clinic-based occupational medicine, and in 2008 I obtained board certification in occupational medicine.

Along the way I was introduced to the WOEMA Board by past WOEMA President Dr. Roman Kownacki who encouraged me to pursue the Chair of WOEMA's Young Physician's Section. So began my engagement with the WOEMA Board followed by tenures as Treasurer, Director, and Officer. Past WOEMA President Dr. Walt Newman reminded us on the WOEMA Board that we stood on the shoulders of those who came before us, and I echo Dr. Newman's sentiments as I owe every past WOEMA President for serving as my guides and mentors for board leadership.

I would like to personally thank and acknowledge past WOEMA President Dr. Erik Won for his leadership in guiding us through the a search for an association management group. I thank past WOEMA President Dr. Scott Krasner who twice spearheaded revision of the WOEMA by laws and for his leadership in guiding WOEMA through a change in corporate status. Our past WOEMA President Dr. Scott Krasner helped us update our bylaws twice and now have a set of bylaws that allow our organization to withstand legal scrutiny and provides a framework for our organization for the future.

WOEMA is stronger thanks to past WOEMA President Dr. Rupali Das' leadership in guiding the WOEMA Board through a series of strategic planning sessions culminating in our five-year document that charts the course for the future WOEMA. Dr. Won and Das also need to be acknowledged for their leadership in advocating for a more just and diverse WOEMA culminating in the establishment of the Justice, Equity,

Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, and for Dr. Das for helping WOEMA in weaving JEDI principles into fabric of WOEMA. I was asked by a member at the time we were formulating the JEDI Committee whether WOEMA had a race problem. We did not but the social environment at the time mandated that we address JEDI issues head first and establish the infrastructure that would enable WOEMA to be just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive not only as a response to the social climate at the time, but for the benefit of the members of WOEMA, and for the benefit of the patients for whom we advocate. Thanks to our past WOEMA Presidents we have a stronger WOEMA.

WOEMA has delivered every year since the the pandemic a series of successful WOHCs. WOHC is now profitable again, again thanks to the efforts of the WOHC Chairs, past WOEMA Presidents, and Lutine or association management group. WOHC's success has been the culmination of dedicated effort in the part our board of directors, officers, and committee chairs.

We have come a long way but along the way we have uncovered gaps in our institutional knowledge and need to rebuild the institutional knowledge we lost, and fortify the organizational foundation upon which WOEMA rests. I am committed to strengthening the foundations upon which WOEMA rests to allow WOEMA to continue to grow and prosper.

I humbly and with distinctive honor accept the duties of WOEMA President and the responsibilities that come with the position. I am fortunate that I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, and hope that I may do the same for the next crop of WOEMA leaders. Thank you.



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## WOHC 2023

*Submitted on behalf of the 2023 WOHC Conference Chair, David Caretto MD MPH*

“Experience the Magic of Occupational and Environmental Medicine” at WOHC 2023 – Anaheim, to be held August 30th through September 2nd, 2023 at the Disneyland Hotel. The WOHC 2023 planning committee is “whistling while we work”, to create an interactive conference and the curriculum is taking shape.

At WOHC 2023, you’ll explore “a whole new world” through our Pre-Conference sessions and Site Visits. In pre-conference sessions: learn the latest about pulmonary function testing in Spirometry with Mary Townsend, develop your knowledge in caring for law enforcement and firefighters in Public Safety Fitness for Duty, hone your skills in management and treatment of hand wrist and elbow injuries in Power Ortho, assist your employers in preparedness by attending Stop the Bleed Training and Disaster Management, and improve your communication for better patient outcomes through Improvisational Skills for OEM providers.

Equally exciting are WOHC 2023’s site visits. Experience Disneyland, before the park opens, with a Horticulture Tour of the Disneyland Grounds. Learn about best practices for preventing repetitive stress injuries in hotel workers through interactive learning on a site visit at the Disneyland Hotel. Tour a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Generating Station and appreciate the hazards unique to this workplace. Site visits are a memorable highlight of any WOHC and a chance to meet other attendees ahead of the main conference sessions.

With the conference schedule nearing completion, registration opens in early March 2023 along with the ability to secure your room at the Disneyland hotel! Enjoy an evening walk to Downtown Disney and a quick jaunt into Disneyland via the monorail at the hotel’s doorstep. With conference registration, attendees can secure rooms before and after the conference, allowing you to “be our guest” at WOHC23 followed by a trip to “Pirates of the Caribbean” or “Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge”. For conference registrants, park ticket reservations will open approximately 4 months in advance.

Attend WOHC 2023 and see “how far you’ll go” through education, friendship, and fun. Registration opens soon!

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## California Worker's Compensation Survey

The California Division of Workers' Compensation still needs your assistance to help them determine the potential impact on physicians of a new draft form, the PR-1 form.

The content of the PR-1 form is to improve on the existing process of medical records and reporting by consolidating the existing PR-2 and PR-3 forms as well as a few other reporting aspects required of a Primary Treating Physician.

### [CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE SURVEY](#)

Let your voice be heard by responding to a very short survey (only 2 questions) at the link below.

More information about the proposed PR-1 form is available in the official Notice of Rulemaking Document:  
<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/DWCWCABForum/UR-Regulations.htm>.

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## Task Force on Silicosis

In response to WOEMA members' concerns about the recent explosion of advanced silicosis cases in California and elsewhere due to workplace silica dust exposure from the fabrication of engineered stone, a silicosis Task Force was formed under the auspices of the Legislative Committee. A WOEMA position paper on this topic developed by the Task Force is available [HERE](#). Key points include: (1) a petition for OSHA to enact an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) covering workplaces that fabricate engineered stone, (2) a proposal for WOEMA to partner with other medical societies and organizations to increase silicosis awareness among clinicians, and (3) a set of legislative objectives to expand public health activities targeting occupational silicosis. WOEMA acknowledges the Task Force members and other contributors: Berenji, Robert Blink, Rajiv Das, Rupali Das, Sheiphali Gandhi, Robert Harrison, Alya Khan, Steven Levitt, and Paul Papanek.

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## California Accepting Applications for Qualified Medical Evaluator

## Examination April 15, 2023

State of California, Division of Workers' Compensation

Are you a physician who is interested in earning additional income while helping California's injured workers by performing disability evaluations on a part-time basis?

If so, you should consider becoming certified by the State of California to write medical-legal reports as a Qualified Medical Evaluator (QME™).

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) is currently accepting applications for its April 2023 examination with a deadline to apply by March 1, 2023. The examination will be held at a Person VUE testing center from April 15, 2023 through April 22, 2023. A study guide and examination book to help physicians prepare for the examination is available for free on the DWC's website, along with the DWC's Physician's Guide, which is intended as an educational and reference tool to supplement the physician's professional experience. A summary of requirements to become a QME, the study materials for the examination, and the Physician's Guide can be found at:

[https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/MedicalUnit/QME\\_page.html](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/MedicalUnit/QME_page.html).

QME reports are reimbursed in accordance with title 8 California Code of Regulations section 9795. Billing for the medical-legal reports is at \$2015.00. To become a QME please visit our website for additional information.

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/medicalunit/faqphys.html#Fees>

The application and registration packet for the QME exam can be downloaded from the DWC website.

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/MedicalUnit/ExamPacket.pdf>. To stay informed about this opportunity and other DWC news, please sign up for the

DWC Newslines at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/email/listsab.asp?choice=1>. For more information about this specific job opportunity or

the examination, please email inquiries to [qmetest@dir.ca.gov](mailto:qmetest@dir.ca.gov).

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## Committee

Amya Khan, MD, MPH, FACOEM, Co-Chair, JEDI Committee

Dear all WOEMA readers! We are thrilled to launch the JEDI Book Club this year! Get together with your WOEMA friends to discuss a book centered around the theme of JEDI. We'd like to invite



to join us virtually as we step out of our daily routines and engage in thoughtful discussion  
e we sip on a cup of coffee or enjoy a treat. Meeting and book details will be sent out soon.



In addition, this month, the JEDI Committee invites you to join WOEMA as we celebrate Black History Month, an annual  
memoration of achievements by African Americans and a time to recognize their central role in US history.

*“History, despite it’s wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but faced with courage, need not be lived again”- Maya Angelou*

2023 theme for Black History month “Inspiring Change,” celebrates the contributions of African Americans to overcoming racial  
injustices and promoting opportunities for equal advancement within the Black community.

One of many such individuals to highlight is [Vivien Thomas](#). “Have you heard of a Blalock-Thomas-Taussig shunt for rerouting  
pulmonary arterial blood to the lungs as palliation for cyanotic congenital heart disease (CHD)? Most clinicians know this technique as  
the Blalock-Taussig (BT) shunt, named for two of its inventors: Alfred Blalock, a surgeon who began performing the procedure in the  
1930s, and Helen Brooke Taussig, who came up with the general idea for the shunt and is remembered as the founder of pediatric  
cardiology.

The BT shunt would never have seen the inside of an operating room as early as it did if not for [Vivien Theodore Thomas](#).... Thomas  
developed detailed surgical procedures and helped train generations of surgical residents. Yet his name was not attached to the BT  
shunt, because he lacked formal medical training and for another reason: He was African American.”

