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Welcome to the WOEMA WINDOW. This e-newsletter is sent to members by email on a monthly basis. The e-newsletter provides links to this page. Below are the items that appeared in the June 2022 issue. Community Forum

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President's Insights

by Rupali Das, MD, MPH, FACOEM

"I always get to where I'm going by walking away from where I have been."

--Winnie-the-Pooh

Hello WOEMA Family and Friends! In his characteristic unassuming style, my favorite A.A. Milne character so aptly describes how to advance to an imagined future. To achieve a goal, from summiting a mountain, to leading an organization, or practicing high quality occupational and environmental medicine (OEM), we must leave something behind, put one literal or figurative foot in front of another, and move forward.

One of WOEMA's core principles is to advocate for improved public health by focusing on workers and the environment and to take on difficult topics. One June 1, at the half point of this year, a patient took the lives of four people, including his surgeon, at a Tulsa, Oklahoma, hospital. Following on the heels of other recent tragic mass shootings, this episode of workplace violence in a healthcare setting brings the issue of gun violence closer to our OEM home.

Dating from 2018, the Twitter hashtag #ThisIsOurLane emphasizes that physicians have critical roles in responding to and reducing firearms violence. The American Medical Association (AMA) has declared gun violence to be a public health crisis. Multiple medical specialty organizations and the California Medical Society (CMA) have called on the medical community to propose solutions.

The US Senate recently announced a bipartisan agreement on gun reforms. Physicians were among those who provided congressional testimony and called for evidence-based interventions to mitigate this public health crisis. The bipartisan agreement brings us one step closer to get us to better public health; but more work needs to be done. #ThisIsOurLane illustrates that physicians are already part of the solution. Getting more involved in efforts to reduce firearms trauma, injury, and death is well within the lane of healthcare practitioners who specialize in OEM.

Every year our annual Western Occupational Health Conference (WOHC) helps our members to get to a place of greater understanding by providing education and camaraderie. Among the many stellar sessions planned for WOHC 2022 is one on General Internal Medicine that will include an exploration of the role providers can play in helping to reduce firearms injuries and deaths. I hope to see you at WOHC 2022 in Napa, California!

Enjoy your summer as you walk away from where you have been to get to where you want to go.

References

Ranney ML et al. #ThisIsOurLane—Firearm Safety as Health Care’s Highway. N Engl J Med 2019; 380:405-407.

CMA calls for immediate action to address epidemic of gun violence (cmadocs.org)

President Gerald E. Harmon, MD, remarks on gun violence at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the HOD | American Medical Association (ama-assn.org)

Around the States – Hawaii

Aloha and Malama Pono from across the sea!

The single negative of being an islander is being far away from my WOEMA Ohana. I dream of securing the biggest canoe to bring all of you here.

Living pono (doing good) and practicing kuleana (reciprocal responsibility for others and the land and sea) are in perfect alignment with our WOEMA core values.

That said, we do have our challenges. Our remote and outer island populations lack adequate primary care and are woefully deficient in preventive services (breast and lung cancer screening, immunizations). DM and pre-diabetes affect half of our islanders.

It is difficult to recruit primary care physicians. Medicare reimbursement is that of Ohio, and our physicians pay general excise tax (we are the only state in the country where that is required).

There are glimmers of hope: such as funding for loan repayment and med student rotations in these underserved areas.

On the positive side, no matter how disadvantaged, our people embrace Malama 'Aina (preserving and protecting our land). That includes not depleting the soil, voluntarily cutting back on water utilization, and planting more shade trees so that the city will have a 35% canopy cover.

My dear WOEMA Ohana ... this will always be your home too

With much love and aloha from all of us here to each of you

JEDI Focus

June is LGBTQ Pride Month, which celebrates the self-affirmation, dignity, equality and aims to increase visibility, of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer / questioning and people of other gender identities and sexual orientations.

The celebration of Gay Pride was initially sparked by the June 28, 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan, New York, which was a “tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States,” According to the Library of Congress. In the US, Gay Pride Day was initially celebrated on the last Sunday in June. Today the celebration is a month-long series of events and is celebrated all over the world.

Recently, there have been a number of attacks on sexual and reproductive rights, which may be harmful to the health of affected individuals. Moreover, both social determinants of health and environmental exposures can disproportionately impact the health of the LGBTQ+ population. WOEMA's JEDI Committee is committed to lifting up and ensuring equity for the LGBTQ+ community and believes that reproductive and sexual rights are human rights. We encourage our members to learn more about LGBTQ+ issues as they are certainly relevant to our work environment, patient care, and public health.

Included below are a few resources to help increase awareness of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, health impacts, and advocacy as they pertain to the LGBTQ+ community.

Resources for Education

[Affirming Organizational and Human Resource Policies for an LGBTQIA+ Workforce](#)

[Guidelines for Care of LGBTQ Patients](#)

[Library of Congress Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Pride Month](#)

[GLAAD LGBTQ Resources](#)

[My Pronouns](#)

[Queering Environmental Justice: Unequal Environmental Health Burden on the LGBTQ+ Community. Goldsmith L and Bell M, 2022: American Journal of Public Health 112, 79-87.](#)

[Transgender People in Everyday Work and Life UCSF LGBT Resource Center](#)

Resources for Advocacy

[Straight for Equity in Healthcare](#)

[National Coalition for LGBTQ Health](#)

[Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equity](#)

WOEMA honored Juneteenth National Independence day, which commemorates the date marking the end of slavery in the United States in 1865. While much remains to be done to dismantle structural racism, we celebrated this day as a celebration of progress and an affirmation that change is possible.



Remembering Dr. Jerald "Jerry" Gerst M.D.

January 11, 1947 - April 15, 2022

Dr. Jerald "Jerry" Robert Gerst, 75, of Sebastopol, passed away on April 15, 2022, following a brief hospitalization.

Dr. Gerst was a member of the WOHC 2022 Planning Committee.

Born January 11, 1947, in Burlington, Iowa, Jerry was the son of Robert Clarence and LaVera Evelyn Burgus Gerst, and was the eldest of his four siblings. After graduating from Mediapolis High School as a National Merit Scholar, Jerry received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University in 1969. He received his graduate degree from the University of California Davis School of Medicine in 1973. He served his residency and internship at the US Public Health Service Hospital.

[READ MORE.](#)

Residents' Corner

*James E. McNicholas, Jr., D.O., M.P.H., F.A.C.P.
University of California, San Francisco*

What should comprise occupational and environmental medicine (OEM) residency training? To answer this question we must settle on what an OEM physician is, and herein lies the challenge. In some ways, our medical specialty is like any other – we care for patients and there is a range of topics which we are particularly well-credentialed to address. But there is something about our field which sets us apart from the rest. What that something boils down to, in my view, is professional diversity.

I first considered training in OEM during my initial residency in internal medicine. At the time, I had the clear sense that I wanted to pursue professional activities outside of the clinical care environment. However, I didn't want to leave clinical medicine entirely, and the path to a middle ground was not obvious. I spent months reading blogs, conferring with my residency colleagues, and reaching out to mentors for perspective. When I finally landed on OEM, I had the unmistakable feeling of having found the right answer – a discipline rooted in clinical medicine but uniquely poised to address challenges at a number of interesting interfaces, including the intersection of medicine and public policy, regulation, and the law. In the years that followed, this feeling has only solidified through my experiences as a resident at UCSF.

Embracing the breadth of our field as a trainee requires a willingness to schedule rotations which, by the lens of most clinical specialties, are decidedly non-traditional. I appreciate the diversity of backgrounds which leads others here, and understand that not everyone will share my enthusiasm for varied rotation experiences. Given many residents dedicate most of their first OEM training year to acquiring a Master of Public Health degree, this leaves a single year of training before graduation. That is a short time to pack in quite a bit of learning, no matter what kind of career one desires. So it is natural for residents with clear career goals to want to focus their training on one or a few areas. If this resonates with you, my humble suggestion is to be open-minded about the possibility of a more wide-ranging training experience.

As an internist with a career interest in clinical and administrative leadership, I had reservations about a rotation scheduled early in my second year at the Western States Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU). However, working with co-directors Mark Miller, MD, MPH, and Stephanie Holm, MD, PhD, MPH, was a true pleasure and together we tackled a number of challenging issues raised by parents in California, ranging from condo renovation involving asbestos without the legally required abatement procedures, to a school district's controversial decision to implement an ozone-generating electronic air filtration system in response to COVID-19. In retrospect, this rotation presented a one-of-a-kind experience in public health, wherein my medical knowledge as physician needed supplementation by knowledge of environmental epidemiology and the law. I had some background from my MPH year, but benefited substantially from being afforded dedicated time to read on these topics during the

rotation. To have missed this experience in an effort to narrow my focus would have been a loss. We have many years ahead of us to pursue mastery in our chosen practice setting. The time for exploration, for being wrong, in many cases without penalty, is now.

WOHC

Call for Nominations!

Wanda-Ellithorpe Fletcher Occupational Health Nurse Leadership Award

The Wanda-Ellithorpe Fletcher Occupational Health Nurse Leadership Award was created to celebrate and recognize nurse leaders in the occupational health field as a legacy and tribute to Wanda Ellithorpe-Fletcher. Wanda Ellithorpe Fletcher Occupational Health Nurse Leadership Award recognizes a registered nurse practicing in occupational nursing who exemplifies the practice of compassionate, quality nursing care, demonstrates a career commitment to the occupational health nursing profession, and possesses leadership skills that advance their occupational health program to a higher level and inspires their co-workers to grow and develop.

This year's recipient will be recognized at the annual NAHOP conference to be held September 18-21, 2022 in Charleston, SC. The recipient will receive a \$1,000 cash prize.

Nominations must be submitted by July 31, 2022. For more information on the award, including selection criteria and eligibility, please click [HERE](#).





Western Occupational Health Conference is coming to Napa, CA from October 6-9, 2022! The early bird registration deadline is coming up on July 9th, so do not miss out. We will be earning up to 23 CME credits at the beautiful Silverado Resort & Spa. This venue features an array of amenities. Check out the highlights below! Along with educational sessions, you will have the opportunity to connect with old and new friends, enjoy the Signature Event, and relax at the resort. Take a break from the daily grind and jump right into the fun!

- Keynote speaker, Dr. Tomas Aragon, CDPH Director will discuss emerging public health issues
- Post Graduate sessions and worksite tours including a winery site visit
- Enjoy a round of golf with WOEMA colleagues and learn skills in musculoskeletal rehabilitation from a physical therapist
- Women in WOEMA lunch with Dr. Lekshmi Santos
- Join us Saturday, October 8th for a signature event with the theme of "Roaring 20's"! Come dressed to impress and enjoy wonderful music and food with us!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

WOEMA is a regional component of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) and is dedicated to high-quality medical care and ethical principles governing the practice of occupational medicine.

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