

# WOEMA

education | advocacy | equity

# WINDOW

**July 2024**



## **President's Insights**

By Akbar Sharip, MD, MPH,  
FACOEM

Dear WOEMA Members,

As we approach the midpoint of 2024, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the strides we have made together in advancing occupational and environmental medicine. I am honored to lead such a dedicated and passionate community of professionals committed to promoting and protecting the health, safety, and well-being of individuals in their workplaces and environments.

I am delighted to share the success of the recent American Occupational Health Conference (AOHC), chaired by our own Dr. David Caretto, where I had the pleasure of meeting many of our esteemed members.

The conference was a testament to the strength and vitality of our community. The exchange of ideas, the collaborative spirit, and the commitment to advancing our field were truly inspiring. I am grateful for the opportunity to connect with so many of you and discuss the future of occupational and environmental medicine.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all members who actively participated in the recent ACOEM membership meeting regarding ACOEM bylaw changes. Your meaningful contributions and decision-making are crucial in shaping the future direction of our organization. Your input and vote are vital to ensuring that WOEMA remains a leader in occupational and environmental health.

A special acknowledgment goes to all who have participated in our legislative activities. Your engagement has been instrumental in achieving significant milestones. Our legislative committee's relentless efforts led to the landmark decision by the Cal/OSHA Standards Board to adopt WOEMA's silica Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS). This crucial step protects workers in the stone fabrication industry from exposure to respirable crystalline silica, setting a precedent for worker health and safety.

Additionally, WOEMA recently led a successful initiative resulting in the California Department of Public Health updating the state's lead standards. This change significantly enhances protections for workers exposed to lead, reducing permissible exposure limits and tightening safety



Hello WOEMA Ohana,<sup>1</sup>

“For Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders within ‘ohana, there are no barriers; everyone should feel safe and cared for. ‘Ohana, fosters the reciprocal relationship between kānaka (people), ‘āina (land), and akua/pili ‘uhane (spirituality). We are all one ‘ohana.”<sup>2</sup>

The next Western Occupational Health Conference, scheduled for Wednesday, August 28 through Saturday, August 31 in Las Vegas at Caesars Palace, is set to be brilliant in content but also a place to convene with our ohana.

We will be learning so much together! We’ll see the life of Independent Medical Examiners and how they practice. We’ll have the opportunity to obtain or renew our FMCSA Examiner training so we can sit for the FMCSA Medical Examiner Examination. We will be taking a deep dive into acute, subacute, and chronic pain medications in Power Pharma. A lucky few will be taking tours (space is limited, sign up early!) with Atomic Test Site pensioners at the Atomic Museum or looking behind the scenes at Cirque du Soleil. I hear these are quite the E-ticket adventures.

When we aren’t enjoying a little rest and relaxation poolside in a cabana, we have amazing plenaries that touch on the various aspects of the work environment: accommodations for pregnant workers, return to work, Qualified Medical Examiner / med legal work, traumatic brain injuries, diversity in the workplace, mass casualty hazards, and neurological occupational medicine, because what is the body except a vehicle with which to move the brain?

In the spirit of Ohana, we will be having a cosplay fundraiser at the Signature Event on Friday night, to support our work in various areas: Residency Programs, Justice/Equity/Diversity/Inclusion, Legislative Action Committee, and the WOHC General Fund.

For the fundraiser, bring your best toga and laurels if you fancy yourself a legislative advocate. We’re open to you dressing the part of a champion/gladiator for worker health. If law enforcement officer health is more of your practice, come dressed as Roman soldier! If you’re having a Damn it Jim moment, dress up as Galen, doctor to the gladiators. But remember that whatever you wear, be comfortable enough to shake a tail feather while the DJ bestows us with music that truly allows us to VIVA WOHC VEGAS!

Sonya Meyers, MD MPH FACOEM, WOHC 2024 Conference Chair  
On behalf of the WOHC 2024 Planning Committee  
July 11, 2024

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<sup>1</sup>Ohana [Hawaiian] – Fancy Rat defines this as “no one is left behind or forgotten”

<sup>2</sup> AANHPI ‘Ohana Center of Excellence, <https://aanhpi-ohana.org/what-is-ohana/>, last accessed 11 July 2024

## Education Committee Update

As we reach the midpoint of 2024, we're thrilled to share an update on the exciting developments from the WOEMA Education Committee. Our focus on providing valuable educational resources continues to drive our efforts, and we're delighted to highlight the success of our webinar and podcast series during the first half of this year.

Kicking off 2024, Dr. Sara Aghamohammadi presented “Physicians Wellness Session on Burnout & Tips to Start the New Year” wherein she explored the daily stress, challenges, and burnout affecting physicians today. Understanding the importance of initiating programs that support and promote well-being, such as wellness or peer-to-peer networking.

Dr. Robert Harrison hosted our February webinar on the topic of “Silicosis” as he covered the key points in relation to the regulations that apply to employers in California and those covered by federal OSHA for protecting employees from exposure to silica dust.

Our March webinar, “New CCP for OEM Physicians” was a collaborated effort presented by Dr. Jeffrey Levin and Mr. Christopher Ondrula of the American Board of Preventive Medicine. The webinar content focused on the changes in the maintenance of certification (MOC) and transition to the Continued Certification Program (CCP) as well as how these changes will impact our physicians.

Dr. Michael Kosnett hosted the “Marijuana Urine/Blood Testing & Interpretation” webinar in April. As we move forward with the legalization of marijuana, it is becoming increasingly crucial for occupational medicine and primary medicine physicians to learn about it. Dr. Kosnett enlightened the attendees about marijuana and the implications for potential workplace impairment, including laboratory testing as well as related approaches to confirmation.

Our most recent webinar in May was a JEDI topic – “Waves of Change: Migrant Labor Yesterday & Today” - jointly presented by Mr. Michael Flynn of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and Dr. Rupali Das, our WOEMA JEDI Committee Chair. The audience learned about the Bracero Program followed by a comparison of the Bracero Program and the current system of labor migration from Mexico and how this system circumscribes the occupational safety and health of immigrant workers today.

As part of our WOEMA webinar series, the Education Committee has launched a new concept this year called “Link and Learn” wherein the speakers and attendees may continue post-webinar for an additional 20-30 minutes (non-CME) to discuss what was just learned, share comments, experiences, and feedback. Any attendees who wish to stay logged-on after the webinar has concluded are invited to share their comments in the chat feature, the speakers and/or moderator may call on the attendee – we will then unmute that particular attendee for open discussion. Link & Learn has been very well received by our attendees and presenters!

As we look ahead to the remainder of the year, we have an intriguing lineup of webinars planned, as follows:

June - “Recent Advances in Managing Spine Injuries in Occupational Medicine” presented by Dr. Yusef Sayeed.

July - “HFN1 Influenza” presented by Dr. Christian Sandrock and Dr. Carol Cardona.

August - “CDC and ACIP guidelines for vaccine preventable respiratory communicable disease and values and advantages for vaccination” (non-CME) hosted by Dr. Amy Khan, Pfizer Medical Director of Vaccines.

October - “Joint Steroid Injections for Common Occupational Medicine Conditions” presented by Dr. Yusef Sayeed

November – TBD

December – “FLU/RSV/COVID Update” hosted by Dr. Christian Sandrock.

Please enjoy our past webinar recordings and/or register for our upcoming webinars by visiting the Education section on the WOEMA website here: [WOEMA Webinars](#)

We're excited to share the latest episodes of our WOEMA Podcast Series, featuring insightful discussions on pertinent topics in occupational and environmental medicine. Tune in to gain valuable knowledge and hear from the utmost, respected experts in the field [WOEMA Podcasts](#):

"Asthma Updates Made Wheezy" with Dr. Laren Tan

"LGBTQ+ Issues in Occupational Medicine" with Dr. Deborah Smith

"Silicosis" with Dr. Robert Harrison



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