

ASA/APSF Ellison C. Pierce Jr., MD, Patient Safety Memorial Lecture: ‘Is Safety Becoming the Poor Stepchild of Quality?’

Mark A. Warner, MD

The 2020 ASA/APSF Ellison C. Pierce Jr, MD, Patient Safety Memorial Lecture will be delivered by Matthew B. Weinger, MD, MS, at this year’s virtual ANESTHESIOLOGY 2020 annual meeting. Dr. Weinger has chosen the topic “Is Safety Becoming the Poor Stepchild of Quality?” for his lecture.

This annual honorary lecture was established by the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (APSF) and ASA to recognize and sustain the memory of the founding president of APSF and past ASA president (1984) Ellison C. (Jeep) Pierce Jr., MD. It was Dr. Pierce’s vision and unwavering commitment to anesthesia patient safety that led to the formation of APSF in 1985 as the first medical specialty foundation devoted solely to addressing patient safety. Today, the specialty of anesthesiology, ASA, and APSF are recognized as pioneers in advocating for patient safety as APSF strives to achieve its vision that “no one shall be harmed by anesthesia care.”

APSF is the largest private funding source for anesthesia patient safety research, having provided nearly \$13 million



Matthew B. Weinger, MD, MS

in support of 132 anesthesia patient safety research awards since the inception of the APSF award program in 1987. A byproduct of the APSF research award program is the development of a cadre of anesthesia safety scientists who can trace their early investigative careers to seed money provided by APSF. The foundation was an early supporter of research directed toward the value of simulation in anesthesia patient safety. The *APSF Newsletter*, the most widely read anesthesia publication worldwide and translated into six languages, provides rapid and international dissemination of current and evolving anesthesia patient safety information.

Dr. Weinger is uniquely qualified to give this honorary lecture. His career in anesthesia patient safety spans more than three decades. His primary contribution in the field has been his use of scientific and engineering principles to create methods and an evidence base for patient safety research and application. His pioneering work demonstrably spans many domains in science, with a heavy emphasis on bringing scientific discovery to patient safety through innovation and education. Over his career, he has been awarded more than \$12 million in direct research support from federal agencies and major non-profit foundations. He has been an investigator on more than 50 grants and contracts, including 14 as

the principal investigator. He has nearly 200 publications. These publications have been crucial to advancing patient safety in our specialty and perioperative medicine in general.

Dr. Weinger graduated with a BS in Electrical Engineering (focused on computer science) and an MS in Biology (neurobiology) from Stanford University in 1978. He went on to receive his MD from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) in 1982. After completing residency training in anesthesiology at the University of California, San Francisco in 1986, he started a postdoctoral fellowship in behavioral neuropharmacology at The Scripps Research Institute under George F. Koob, PhD, currently the Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. At that same time, he studied medical technology and simulation under Norman Ty Smith, MD, at UCSD.

Dr. Weinger currently holds the Norman Ty Smith Chair in Patient Safety and Medical Simulation and is a Professor of Anesthesiology, Biomedical Informatics, and Medical Education at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. He is a Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering (Risk and Reliability) in Vanderbilt University’s School of Engineering. At Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), he serves as Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs in the Department of Anesthesiology. Dr. Weinger is also the founding Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Research and Innovation in Systems Safety as well as the Director of Research for the Center for Experiential Learning and Assessment, VUMC’s institutional simulation center. He has been a Department of Veterans Affairs physician for 33 years.

Dr. Weinger has held leadership roles for numerous organizations in addition to his long tenure as an APSF officer and director. He has been a key leader in organizations such as the Anesthesia Quality Institute, ASA, and the Society for Technology in Anesthesia. He has been an expert consultant for the Food and Drug Administration, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and



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the United States Pharmacopeia. He also has served on both federal and foundation grant study sections.

During Dr. Weinger’s longstanding active involvement in the APSF, he has promoted patient safety research, the career development of junior faculty interested in patient safety, advanced safety curricula for clinical trainees, the use of pre-procedure checklists, and mandatory training in the use of complex medical technologies. He has also strongly advocated for continuous electronic monitoring of hospitalized patients who received parenteral opioids to decrease preventable opioid-induced respiratory arrests.

Dr. Weinger has received many awards for his remarkable contributions. These include:

- J.S. Gravenstein Award from the Society for Technology in Anesthesia in 2018
- Laufman-Greatbatch Award from the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation, its highest honor, for his “leadership and dedication to medical instrumentation, service, patient care, and patient safety” in 2014
- Designation as a Fellow of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (the only physician to have received this honor) in 2012
- James S. Todd Memorial Award for Patient Safety Research from the National Patient Safety Foundation in 1998

Dr. Weinger and his acclaimed international contributions to advocating for anesthesia patient safety make him an outstanding selection to deliver the 2020 ASA/APSF Ellison C. Pierce Jr., MD, Patient Safety Memorial Lecture. His topic, “Is Safety Becoming the Poor Stepchild of Quality?” is a fitting tribute to the memory and contributions of Dr. Pierce. ■

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