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By Beth Bales

New SVS president Ronald L. Dalman, MD, has several initiatives he'd like to see move forward during the year of his presidency.

These include a number of areas members have found challenging. "We put together the Crawford Forum [E. Stanley Critical Issues Forum] to address these issues: valuation, branding, wellness and how they fit together. And we got lots of positive feedback," he said.

He wants to add equity, diversity and inclusion, ongoing important topics, as well as appropriate reimbursement and appropriate outcomes.

"Unfortunately, some of our members, our colleagues, face disadvantages because of their gender, or their race, or other factors," he said. These factors have taken on new importance in the wake of the death of George Floyd, followed by demonstrations and protests around the country, as well as the recent controversy over an article about professionalism and social media published in the Journal of Vascular Surgery (JVS).

A year ago, then president Kim Hodgson created the SVS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force to study the issue, Dalman noted; it sent its formal report and recommendations to the SVS Executive Board in July for review and board recommendations. "The article confirmed the persistence of implicit bias and other structural and generational blind spots and insensitivities in both the SVS and the larger society around us," said Dalman. "We can and will do better for our membership in this critical domain."

He also noted that circumstances can precipitate a change in direction. "Most presidents have some idea at the beginning of the year what they want to focus on," said Dalman." For example, Michel Makaroun, MD, made the upcoming workforce shortage a primary focus. Several years ago, then-president Peter Lawrence, MD, had a focus—and then the New York Times published a story on the gross overutilization of services. "He pivoted to deal with that," said Dalman. "That became his topic and focus."

He knows he and the SVS will need to continue to deal with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the healthcare system and SVS members. The proposed Physician Fee Schedule from the Centers for Medicare and Medical Services (CMS) and other proposed CMS rules promise to affect vascular surgeons deeply and adversely, with a 7% reimbursement reduction coming down the line. It is, he said, a time of extraordinary pressure for the healthcare system, and he and SVS leaders will be working to find the best ways to support our members in a time of great uncertainty.

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"Maybe we can, as an organization, provide more to help members achieve everything they hope for in their careers," said Dalman, who has been an SVS member since 1998. When assuming the presidency on June 20 during the second Annual Business Meeting, he asked members to offer feedback and suggestions, a stance he repeats. "I encourage everyone to reach out to me if they have ideas on how to do our jobs better."

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