



From the Executive Director | Expanding the Vision of SVS Member Value

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As Dr. Samson noted in his column (page 2), the words of Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan remind us the times are a-changing.

One thing is certain. We are living together through an era of unprecedented change and transformation. Social change, demographic change, political change, economic change ... health system change. It is the nature of change that it is all at once exhilarating and frightening, heartening and painful. The beauty of change is that its ultimate impact directly correlates with our response to it. Every change, large or small, when viewed objectively and strategically, generates new opportunities to be leveraged, and/or threats to be minimized. We don't always like change because it can be uncomfortable, unfamiliar and just plain hard work. But if we effectively lead our way through change, and adapt, we grow.

The traditional view of membership is to treat it like a product, where the value of membership is determined by whether the tangible benefits received are perceived as equal to or greater than the dues you are paying. SVS has done an excellent job of meeting this demand with active members paying \$595 and receiving, by very conservative estimates, \$1,300 in tangible value from subscriptions and discounts alone! But this is really where member value begins, not ends. It is only a small slice of the whole of member value. This really hits home when going through unprecedented change, or perceiving opportunity or a threat on the horizon.

Your Journal of Vascular Surgery or VAM registration fee discount will not help you understand how best to chart a course to the future, or navigate the perils along the way. They will not help you get on top of coding strategies to

optimize payment. They will not advocate on your behalf to ensure that the principles and values of vascular surgeons – and the value of vascular surgery – is preserved and is a critical part of the future that is shaped. This type of value is often referred to in traditional models as “intangible,” but to me that is a misnomer. Member-only access to intellectual property, advocacy or community ... these may comprise the most tangible value of all member benefits.

Yes, it is harder to monetize, but what is it worth to you to have colleagues and professional staff sorting through information and summarizing it for you so you can get it at a glance, saving you precious time? Fighting on your behalf to support positive, and block harmful legislation? Having an organization that welcomes your participation and engagement, and fosters and facilitates your professional and leadership growth? Having an organization that cares about you and thinks about your needs every minute of every day, and answers every call with dedication to serving you? It is hard to monetize, yet highly valued. From my perspective, member value is not defined simply by our products, it is defined by ensuring that member value permeates through everything SVS does.

As SVS looks to the future, I am encouraging and supporting members and leaders as they embrace a thoughtful approach to the process of change. This includes the future of SVS membership. The demographic make-up of SVS members is changing and your needs as a member, driven by changes in the world around you, are changing. It is time to envision the vascular surgeons of the future, 10 to 15 years from now, thriving in their practices and careers, providing optimal care across all settings in which they may choose to practice.

- What professional support will you need to not only remain up to date on clinical advances, but also understand health systems, health economics, leadership and team care models, relational communications and so many other skills sets?
- What personal support will you need to remain healthy and vital, financially strong and connected to the things that really matter?
- How do you want to interact with SVS and how do you want SVS to interact with you?

There are some good examples where this kind of visioning is well underway. I applaud the boldness of the SVS Foundation Board as it charts a new course with an expanded mission to support not only basic science and clinical research, but also programs and initiatives focused on quality, health system improvement, vascular health prevention and awareness, and leadership. The SVS Education Council just completed a Member Needs Assessment that is challenging SVS to expand its educational models to build knowledge and skills to enhance not only the surgical event horizon, but also the care of the patient from preparation and pre-op through surgery and post-op, a comprehensive vascular surgical care model. And to do so in a variety of formats.

We are on an exciting journey together to find the answers to the questions raised above, and reshape SVS membership, member benefits, and member value, to fill any critical gaps we find. If you have any thoughts about these questions, please share them with me (kslaw@vascularsociety.org).

Membership is the lifeblood of SVS. Members are the SVS’ most important asset. We will most certainly continue to experience large-magnitude changes in the future, and we will be working hard to ensure you believe your membership in the SVS is one of the most important investments you make each year.

(For all of the News from SVS from the December 2016 Specialist, please click [here](#) .)

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