

Join a Committee!

Anthony Wagstaff, M.B.B.Ch., BAO, Ph.D., Dip.Av.Med., MBA

As I embark on my journey as president of AsMA, it is with a feeling of gratitude for the trust and honour, but also awe. Trying to “fill the shoes” of those who have been in this role before me is a daunting challenge in itself. AsMA is the largest and most important association for aerospace medicine specialists and scientists in the world. AsMA's membership, footprint, and impact are global. This didn't happen overnight or by itself, but through dedication, collaboration, and a long line of professionals tied together by the idea of supporting human flight in Earth's atmosphere and beyond.

Recently, the executive committee of AsMA met at our new HQ in North Palm Beach, FL. In the spring meeting, one of the issues we discuss is to revisit the larger strategic picture for our association. This is important since the world around us, and the challenges and opportunities which come with it, constantly change. So does aerospace medicine, including all the specific fields of our members.

An important strength of our organisation is the diversity of background and knowledge: physiologists, doctors, psychologists, pilots, engineers, or indeed other professionals may find their way to our organisation. Networking, knowledge exchange, and the potential for developing new scientific understanding becomes even greater with such a wide range of competencies. The growth in human space activity in our time provides an example of an area where the human again is the limiting factor—AsMA is already playing an important role here, but continuing to meet this challenge is itself a challenge which we must address and focus on.

Two important pillars of AsMA are the Annual Scientific Meeting and our Journal. However, the most important is our membership. The achievements and value of AsMA are only as much as the sum of its members, whether they are from the United States, from the wider international group, or from within the corporate membership.

As a young aviation medical doctor from Norway in the 1990s, I navigated the AsMA meetings as best I could by presenting papers and learning from other Aerospace Medicine colleagues. However, it took me a long time before I understood how I could actually engage in the organisation as a member. It wasn't a lack of inspiration, just a lack of understanding. I may have been a bit “slow”, but... I don't think I am alone in this! One of the most important factors that decide how AsMA will develop in the coming years is how we involve our membership in the governance of AsMA, and how we make sure that we include the variety of people and competencies which our great organisation possesses. AsMA can only be as great as the involvement of its members, so here are some basic facts and a challenge:



The Council is the highest governing body and includes:

- **Executive Committee (Ex-Com):** President and President-Elect, 4 Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, 3 Members-at Large (selected from Council), and the Executive Director;
- Representatives from the 14 **Constituent organisations**;
- 12 elected Members-at-Large;
- Representatives from Associate Fellows and Fellows;
- Representatives from the American Medical Association and American Osteopathic Association; and
- The Journal Editor-in-Chief and the AsMA Parliamentarian.

The ExCom conducts AsMA's ongoing business on behalf of the Council, acting as its delegated authority between formal meetings.

AsMA Staff: These are the important people whom we rely on for running AsMA as an organisation. They include the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Membership Director, Managing Editor (Journal), Associate Managing Editor, Editor-in-Chief, and Assistant to the Editor.

The Committees: AsMA's nearly 20 Committees handle much of the Association's day-to-day work; each is charged with specialized functions such as Safety, Education, Membership, Communication, Space Medicine, etc. This is where any member can join—meetings are usually online. Here you can make a difference and really get to know AsMA from the inside. Experience is not necessary, as you will interact and often get some mentorship within the committees as you go along.

Each committee is listed on our website and described in greater detail in the Bylaws. Chairs and members of the committees are listed with contact details under the members section of the AsMA website (Members Home/Members/Member Services). If you are an AsMA member and would like to get more involved, joining a committee is a great way to get started. Who knows where it will end!

I hope this gave you some ideas for how to participate and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Annual Scientific Meeting in May!

Reprint and copyright © by the Aerospace Medical Association, Alexandria, VA.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3357/AMHPP9705.2026>

CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: President@asma.org • **Website:** www.asma.org • **Facebook:** Aerospace Medical Association • **X:** @aero_med_1929 • **YouTube:** @aero_med_1929