

**Aisha T Liferidge, MD***Immediate Past President, Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (EMRA)*

Aisha T Liferidge, MD, is Immediate Past President of the Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (EMRA) and an Emergency Attending Physician at Washington County Hospital in Hagerstown, Maryland, a University of Maryland affiliate. She has served on the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) Public Health Committee and is on the Maryland ACEP Chapter Board of Directors. She also serves on the Maryland ACEP Public Policy and Public Relations Committees. Additionally, she is active locally through the Baltimore City Medical Society where she serves on the Membership Committee. She has focused her research on stroke and is a published author. Dr Liferidge completed her emergency medicine residency training in June 2006. Following graduation, she remained at the University of Maryland Medical System as a junior faculty member.

The specialty of emergency medicine has evolved tremendously since its creation in 1979. Countless monumental strides have been made since the days of horse-drawn ambulances and patients being treated in single emergency 'rooms' rather than departments: today, America's patients enjoy experience- and evidence-based treatment from residency-trained, board-certified emergency physicians serving on the front lines of our nation's healthcare safety net. Now handling over 114 million visits per year and championing the plight of the more than 40 million uninsured US citizens, emergency medicine has become a vital and essential force within American culture.

The 23rd officially recognized medical specialty, emergency medicine currently supports over 180 Residency Review Committee-recognized allopathic and osteopathic residency programs nationwide, producing quality additions to the workforce every year. The Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (EMRA), the nation's only independent resident medical specialty organization, has nearly 8,000 members in over 20 countries worldwide, including emergency medicine residents as well as medical students.

The specialty now delivers an increasingly diverse and sophisticated breadth of clinical disciplines, while offering multiple subspecialties and advanced training opportunities. From model airway management to zoonological infection treatment, the multidisciplinary approach of emergency medicine fosters co-operative teamwork with a focus on unconditional patient care. Additionally, the current social and legislative climate in the US has created opportunities for emergency physicians to advocate for their patients through public health and health policy initiatives.

As emergency department patients present with more severe illnesses and the average length of stay prior to inpatient transfer increases, critical care medicine has naturally become an inherent, well-recognized component of emergency medicine. For example, emergency-department-based treatment algorithms for illnesses such as sepsis have recently been created and have gained worldwide acclaim. The vast majority of emergency medicine residents across the US experience intense and consistent exposure to state-of-the-art critical care management modalities while training in emergency departments. The skills they learn include advanced airway and ventilator management, central intravenous line placement, and arterial and venous gas monitoring. In fact, a significant percentage of the time-dependent, life-saving treatment received by patients with critical illnesses takes place in the emergency department, well before transfer to an intensive care unit.

In many regards, the daily—and often unsung—heroic acts of emergency physicians exemplify a devotion to their patients as well as to medicine, as the nation's healthcare safety net is successfully served. This issue of *Emergency Medicine & Critical Care Review* masterfully illustrates the many fascinating clinical topics within emergency medicine, and is sure to provide informative insight. ■

**The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA)** is a U.S.-based international association for professional nurses dedicated to the advancement of emergency nursing practice. Whether you are a staff nurse or manager in an emergency department, an administrator, prehospital, flight, pediatric or trauma emergency nurse, an emergency clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, student or educator, the scope of benefits offered through ENA membership is beyond compare.

Since its inception in 1970, ENA has promoted advocacy, diversity, and excellence of emergency nursing practice through its publications (*Journal of Emergency Nursing*, *ENA Connection*, and *Disaster Management & Response*), educational seminars and classes, grants and scholarships, continuing education programs, as well as many other programs, products, and services.

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