

Chapter News

North Central Chapter

Elisabeth Devin, Councilor

Mayo Clinic graciously sponsored the North Central Chapter of the Health Physics Society (NC-CHPS) spring technical meeting 22 April 2016 at the Assisi Heights Conference Center in Rochester, Minnesota. Our new president-elect, Jan Braun, opened the meeting with introductions of new members and welcomed our vendors Mirion Technologies; Canberra Industries; Landauer, Inc.; and HI-Q Environmental Products.

Our first presenter, James Kofler, PhD, from the Mayo Clinic, talked about the health risks associated with the use of computed tomography (CT) scans. He focused on the benefits of medical CT by comparing the probabilities of a CT scan causing an issue, the risks associated with the procedure, and what the statistics show. The growth infrastructure—such as technological advancements, utilizing less-invasive techniques, and an increase in availability to patients—appears to show that the benefits outweigh the risks.



NCCHPS meeting speakers, left to right: John Bauhs, Greg Smith, Kathryn Van Schyndel, and Richard Vetter
Photo courtesy of Elisabeth Devin

Greg Smith, hazardous and radioactive waste manager at Mayo Clinic, provided an informed view on the best ways to document waste streams in a large medical facility. He determined what procedures were currently in place and how these could be considered negative by inspectors. Then, through use of advance problem solving, he decided on practices that would improve the program.

Kathryn Van Schyndel, a nuclear medicine technology student from St. Joseph's Hospital, joined us for the first time at the NCCHPS meeting. She discussed radiation exposure to technicians from myocardial perfusion imaging (MPI) scans compared to those who perform echocardiograms (echo scans). Her research group used echocardiograms as a baseline to compare to MPI scans. Temporary dosimeters were issued to those involved and their exposure levels were monitored closely to see if there was a need for concern. The research concluded that echocardiograms are safe for the technicians who are performing the job and that dosimetry is not needed.

Radiation safety considerations in ^{90}Y radioembolization procedures was a topic presented by Mary Ellen Jafari, a senior diagnostic physicist and radiation safety officer with Gunderson Health Systems in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. By discussing ^{90}Y products, dose preparations, and interventional radiology lab procedures, Jafari presented various considerations that aid successful patient dosing. Through patient education and the repetition of a solid and clear procedure, concerns for safety can be lessened for associated staff.

Kelly Classic, CMHP, Mayo Clinic, spoke with the group about appropriate ways to take complex ideas and turn them into plain language. Her focus was to build a basis for mutual communication between a speaker and the audience. By omitting unnecessary words, using more graphics, and using clear "need to know" statements, the audience becomes more receptive to the new information and is better able to retain newly acquired knowledge.

John Bauhs, CHP, PhD, from 3M's corporate offices, spoke on the potential for radiation exposure from the use of industrial gauges. He stated that understanding how an instrument works and identifying potential hazards before they occur allows users to work as safely as possible with ionizing radiation.

Retired Mayo Clinic radiation safety officer Richard Vetter, CHP, PhD, spoke on the future of medical health physics and how roles are changing. To encourage growth in the medical health physics

field, Vetter suggested that we should align ourselves with the needs of the patient, respond to new modalities, and have an awareness of the current safety culture. Future success depends on the abilities of the medical health physicist to adapt to change, stay connected within the field, and interface with credentialing organizations.

Columbia Chapter

Edward Wallace, CHP

The Columbia Chapter of the Health Physics Society (CCHPS) hosted its annual awards banquet on 28 April 2016 in Kennewick, Washington, with 52 members in attendance. Awards for Radiation Safety Technologist, Early Career Health Physicist, and Health Physicist of the Year, as well as the Herbert M. Parker Award, were issued. The awards ceremony was followed by a technical presentation on Monte Carlo nuclear particle (MCNP) modeling.



2016 Columbia Chapter awardees, left to right: Wes Boyd, CHP; Bonnie Harder; Gene Carbaugh, CHP; and Tom Sichler
Photo courtesy of Edward Wallace

The Radiation Safety Technologist of the Year Award was given to Tom Sichler. Sichler is a radiation control technician lead with 15 years of experience at Hanford. He is currently the Plutonium Finishing Plant lead ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) technician.

The Early Career Health Physicist of the Year Award was conferred on Wes Boyd, CHP. Boyd is a senior health physicist with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Richland Operations office overseeing work at the Hanford site. He is currently the DOE Richland Operations Radiation Control Program manager for Hanford operations.

The Health Physicist of the Year was awarded to Bonnie Harder, the Hanford Plutonium Finishing Plant dosimetrist and ALARA coordinator. She is a health physicist with 25 years of experience at the Hanford nuclear site.

The Herbert M. Parker Award is the Columbia Chapter's highest honor to recognize a member's technical contribution to the field of health physics. The award is named for Herbert M. Parker, one of the early pioneers of health physics. He began his career in clinical radiation therapy in England, then immigrated to the United States in 1938. He joined the Manhattan Engineer District in 1942 with positions at the University of Chicago, Clinton Laboratories at Oak Ridge, and then at the Hanford Engineering Works in southeastern Washington. Parker became the first director of the Hanford Labs, which became Pacific Northwest National Laboratories.



Jennifer Bean presenting "Exploration of MCNP Geometry" at the 28 April 2016 Columbia Chapter meeting
Photo courtesy of Edward Wallace

The 2016 Herbert M. Parker Award was presented to Gene Carbaugh. A certified health physicist with Dade Moeller, Carbaugh serves as the exposures evaluation technical lead for the internal dosimetry program at DOE's Hanford site. He has served as secretary, treasurer, and president of the CCHPS. He is an HPS fellow and is serving as the Local Arrangements Committee cochair for the 61st Annual Meeting of the HPS in Spokane, Washington.

A technical presentation followed the awards ceremony. Jennifer Bean presented "Exploration of MCNP Geometry." A radiological engineer for the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, Bean performs shielding calculations and dose assessments using Microshield, MCNP code, and Attila radiation transport software applications.