

Triennial 2000: Final Report

The Eleventh Triennial Course in Insurance Medicine was held at the Westin Mission Hills Resort from February 27 –March 4, 2000. There were 127 paid attendees and 28 faculty. The course consisted of 12 Platform Presentations, 13 small group Workshops and an optional evening X-ray Conference, all of which took place as planned without any significant complications.

Participant feedback, both in the Course Results and in informal conversations, was generally highly favorable, with an overall consensus that the Course had achieved all of its educational objectives.

The quality of faculty teaching was strong.

Triennial Course for 2003 recommendation.

Length of the Course

Decrease the length from 5 full days to 4 ½ days -- starting with a Welcoming reception on Sat PM and end at noon the following Thursday.

Introduce several “Workshops from the Podium, including a couple in the evenings.”

(The success of the evening “X-ray Conference” at Triennial 2000 makes this a viable course of action that is worth pursuing on a trial basis for Triennial 2003.)

Cut the workshops from 2 hrs down to 1 hr 50 min. This can be accomplished by placing all platform talks relating to workshops be placed at the head of the schedule so that they present the relevant basic didactic information of importance. This allows the workshops to be cut in length accordingly, besides improving their focus on case discussion.

Expense of the Course

Expenses will be reduced:

Compressing the Course as above, so that all educational activities occur within a 4 1/2-day span would have an immediately favorable impact on price by:

- ◆ Reducing the room charge by 1 day
- ◆ Eliminating 1 breakfast
- ◆ Eliminating 2 breaks

Also eliminate one of the 3 evening meals, thus realizing an additional substantial price break.

Downsize the first night “Welcoming Reception” meal “Dessert & Drinks” if the next Triennial is held, as planned, at a site where multiple convenient evening dining venues are readily available, thus saving an additional substantial meal expense.

Converting several of the small group workshops to “Workshops from the Podium” would cut both meeting room & AV expenses. Combined with the shortened schedule, AV costs should be reduced by about \$1000.

Hold faculty honoraria at the same level.

The Triennial will be held at one of 3 sites in & around Tampa, which offers a major airport with reasonably cheap flights from many areas of the country. Each of the sites under consideration has offered us substantially lower room rates than the Westin Mission Hills rates.

Finally, charging non-AAIM members \$300-\$400 apiece more to take this AAIM course would go a long way toward balancing the next Triennial’s budget.

Mission & Content of the Course

Attendees have widely divergent views about what the Triennial Course should be teaching. Many believe it is a basic board prep course. Others believe it is a general review course. Still others view it as a rigorous exercise presenting cutting edge, state of the art Insurance Medicine knowledge in the areas of importance to that person’s particular area of work. These disparate groups tend to disdain the talks/workshops that do not conform well to their preconceived notions. They do not wish their available time at the Course to be misappropriated to a talk or workshop that is not relevant to their specific situation.

For example, over one-third of the attendees do not want any presentation on Disability at the next Triennial and some expressed strong dissatisfaction with its being presented. Similarly, many of the large numbers of international attendees would like to have MIB removed from the Course. Some of the more experienced Medical Director attendees would like to have MIB & all introductory-level material excised from the Triennial and confined to the Introductory Course.

For the next Triennial, it needs to be made very clear in advance – not just prior to registration for the Course but also prior to the selection of faculty, development of the educational objectives & finalization of the Course schedule -- exactly what is the role of the Triennial in the overall educational mission of AAIM. Shank Cannon’s call for the CME Committee to define & coordinate the educational objectives of the disparate educational programs must be heeded.

If it is decided that such topics as Structured Settlements, Managed Care, and DI need to be presented at the Triennial because they are in the Core Body of knowledge and/or need to be presented to attendees seeking Board preparation, despite the fact that approximately 85% of Triennial attendees express no desire to learn anything about them at that venue, then it needs to be made clear in advance to prospective attendees why AAIM believes it necessary.

My recommendation is for the Triennial to focus on the “Top 50” most common medical impairments that we see on a day in & day out basis. These will covered

primarily from a mortality perspective, but some will also be addressed from a morbidity perspective as time & available faculty allow.

A final major issue pertaining to the identity of the Course is whether, unlike all other AAIM educational activities, the handouts need to be provided ahead of time for advance study. A major expenditure in time & money (thousands of dollars) is required to accomplish this task for the benefit of the apparently relatively few attendees who take advantage of the opportunity for advance study.

Even then, several faculty members do not provide their materials in advance for various reasons, which does tend to cause some hard feelings. Thus, this question must be answered: Is the Triennial an advance-study Course or isn't it?

Platform/Workshop mix

Convert others that entail more didactic presentation of material to the previously mentioned "Workshops from the Podium" on a trial basis. This format would be used for presentation of 2 evening sessions on Life, Health & DI Claims, Structured Settlements, & possibly Viatical Settlements. (See attachment 4, general proposed schedule.)

Structured Settlements was covered nicely as an ACLI breakout session this year for the 12 or so people who showed up (despite the fact that it was the only one scheduled for its time slot). She could do it again at the Triennial 2003. However, I question whether that represents the optimal utilization of Triennial time when there are so many other topics in the Core Body of more general interest that could be discussed.

If the CME Committee believes it necessary to include these topics, then placing them in the evening would help to decompress the resentment of the many attendees who can simply opt to skip them.

Drop the Mortality Statistics workshop next time. But keep both the Mortality Overview & Decision Making platform talks intact to expand on the several topics in this area – like population tables – that, as Shank points out, have not been adequately addressed in any AAIM venue in the past.

Eliminate the DI overview talk(s).

The Faculty

Shank's observation about the desirability of providing the faculty with some direction in teaching effectiveness is very well taken. As a major first step in that direction, Mike Fulks has produced an outstanding set of guidelines for running a workshop that should be compulsory reading for all workshop faculty for Triennial 2003.

Triennial site & dates

A majority of past faculty much prefers the resort setting, which may be a significant draw in recruiting the best faculty. The Triennial has always been held in a resort setting, so there is perhaps some sense of tradition to consider, too. Moreover, some of the

disgruntlement about the Westin Mission Hills was seated in its deplorable dearth of on-site restaurants, its relative remoteness from other entertainment & dining options, and the refusal of the resort to offer transportation to such places.

We are currently looking at resort near Tampa that offers 8 restaurants on site, free shuttles to the beach, a town close by, all at guaranteed room prices up to \$100 a night cheaper than the Westin Mission Hills was. Moreover, I have been getting the strong impression that meal & AV charges are quite similar between urban hotels & resorts in Southern climes.

Holding the Triennial in (early) March. I favor March 1-6 for 2003.

Triennial Course Directors

Institute a Triennial Planning Committee comprised of a group of 4 co-Directors to plan and run the next Triennial.

It would be the expectation that one or more of the co-Directors “move up the ladder” on the committee the next time around to provide some desperately-needed continuity.

Both the Main Director & the Co-director of Education would serve as members of the CME Committee.

Reporting line(s) of authority

The reporting line(s) of authority for the Director and the Committee needs to be made clear because Triennial decision-making may potentially be pulled in several directions by a number of entities having potentially conflicting interests: the current AAIM President, the AAIM President for the year of the Triennial, the CME Committee chair, the CME Committee itself, the Triennial Subcommittee of the CME Committee, the Education Vice-President, & any possible new Executive Director who may appear on the scene in the interim.