

Virgil M. Airola, II, M.D.
Past President

You ask, “Who are you and why did you want to become president of the California Society of Anesthesiologists?” Both questions are excellent and deserve straightforward answers.

I’m a fourth generation native Californian of Italian and Scottish ancestry. I grew up in Sacramento where my father was an orthopedic surgeon. I was an undergraduate at UC Berkeley with a double major in English and Zoology. I obtained my medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. I trained in anesthesiology at SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, N.Y. I’ve practiced pediatric and adult anesthesiology in Fresno for over 25 years with the majority of my time spent giving one-on-one anesthetic care to children in Children’s Hospital of Central California in Madera County, just across the river from the Fresno metropolitan area. I have an appointment from UCSF as an Associate Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology and Pediatrics. My anesthesiologist wife and I have three kids.

I’ve been involved in organized medicine since moving from Syracuse to Fresno. For years I was quietly a member of our local county medical society, CMA, AMA, CSA, ASA, the Society for Pediatric Anesthesia, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Since the early ’90s I’ve become more involved. Initially, I wanted to learn what changes were in store for my group of pediatric anesthesiologists and pediatric intensivists. As I learned more about what the senior leaders in organized medicine were trying to accomplish, I began to find ways I too could help create a better future for my colleagues and my patients. I became more involved. I served as President of the Fresno-Madera Medical Society in 2001. I’m currently a member of the CMA Board of Trustees, representing the physicians in the Central Valley’s CMA District VI along with two other CMA Trustees. I’ve been the CSA District V Director, the Chairman of the CSA’s Legislative and Practice Affairs Division, and the Chairman of GASPAC.

I’ve also been involved in my community. I’m a Board member of the Central California Blood Center. For five years I developed and ran a windsurfing fund raiser for my pediatric hospital. For 11 years I was a member of the San Luis Sailboard Safety Patrol, based near Los Banos at the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area.

What I began to understand in my career and my other activities was that we create our own future through the things we do and say, and also with the things we leave unsaid and undone. If I don’t help to create the future that I would like to see, then I can only blame myself for those lost possibilities. When I learned through my involvement what might happen, I wanted what will happen to be something better!

When I joined CSA, I didn’t imagine I’d become its president one day. But becoming CSA’s president became an opportunity for strengthening CSA by increasing membership, encouraging members to become CSA leaders, encouraging CSA members to financially support GASPAC,

and leading today's CSA leaders together as we build tomorrow on the solid foundations laid by past CSA leaders. Those are my goals and they led me to become CSA President.