



ASA/APSF Ellison C. Pierce, Jr., Patient Safety Memorial Lecture

‘Sharpening the Vision to Do No Harm’

Robert A. Caplan, M.D.
Saturday, October 13, 2018

Mark A. Warner, M.D., President
Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation

The 2018 ASA/APSF Ellison C. Pierce, Jr., Patient Safety Memorial Lecture will be delivered by Robert A. Caplan, M.D. Dr. Caplan has chosen the topic “Sharpening the Vision to Do No Harm” for his lecture.

This annual honorary lecture was established by the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (APSF) and ASA to recognize and sustain the memory of Ellison C. (Jeep) Pierce, Jr., M.D., founding president of APSF and past president of ASA (1984). It was Dr. Pierce’s vision and unwavering commitment to anesthesia patient safety that led to the formation of APSF in 1985 as the first medical specialty foundation devoted solely to addressing patient safety. Today, the specialty of anesthesiology, ASA and APSF are recognized as pioneers in advocating for patient safety as APSF strives to achieve its vision that “no patient shall be harmed by anesthesia.”

APSF is the largest private funding source for anesthesia patient safety research, having provided more than \$12 million in support of 116 anesthesia patient safety research awards since the inception of the APSF award program in 1987. A byproduct of the APSF research award program



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is the development of a cadre of anesthesia safety scientists who can trace their early investigative careers to seed money provided by APSF. The foundation was an early supporter of research directed toward the value of simulation in anesthesia patient safety. The *APSF Newsletter*, the most widely read anesthesia publication worldwide, provides rapid and international dissemination of current and evolving anesthesia patient safety information.

Dr. Caplan is a native of Seattle, Washington. He received degrees from Harvard University and Yale Medical School and subsequently completed his residency training in Internal Medicine and Anesthesiology at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He currently is an emeritus staff anesthesiologist of Virginia Mason Medical Center and Emeritus Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology at the University of Washington, Seattle.

“His topic, ‘Sharpening the Vision to Do No Harm,’ is a fitting tribute to the memory and contributions of Dr. Pierce. His lecture will explore novel ways that all members of the anesthesia community can work together to make Dr. Pierce’s vision a reality.”

In anesthesiology, Dr. Caplan’s leadership roles have included prolonged and influential stints as chair of the ASA Annual Meeting Subcommittee on Patient Safety, chair of the ASA Committee on Patient Safety, chair of the ASA Committee on Professional Liability, and membership on the Executive Committee of the APSF.

Dr. Caplan’s clinical research has focused on the analysis of adverse outcomes. As a member of the ASA Closed Claims Project Committee for over 25 years, he participated in the publication of more than 30 articles describing lessons that were learned from the in-depth study of closed medical malpractice claims. Dr. Caplan served as an ASA Refresher Course lecturer on the Closed Claims Project for 20 consecutive years, from 1991 through 2011.

In 1990, Dr. Caplan led the ASA Task Force on Guidelines for Management of the Difficult Airway. This guideline served as a template for more than 20 subsequent practice parameters developed under the auspices of the ASA Committee on Standards and Practice Parameters. Working with methodologists Dr. Richard Connis and Dr. David Nickinovich, Dr. Caplan helped ASA implement a robust guideline development process that is recognized for its effective integration of scientific knowledge, expert opinion and clinical feasibility.

At Virginia Mason Medical Center, Dr. Caplan served as the Medical Director of Quality, Chair of the Quality Assessment Committee, Chair of the Professional Liability Committee, and Editor of the Virginia Mason patient safety newsletter. His leadership work focused on promoting safe processes for health care delivery, with emphasis on the Toyota Production principles of zero-defect and source inspection. The centerpiece for this work was the design and implementation of the Virginia Mason Patient Safety Alert (PSA) System. This is a single, enterprise-wide program for safety reporting and safety improvement. The PSA system features a formal protocol for halting and fixing clinical processes (“stopping the production line”) when critical safety problems are detected.

Dr. Caplan and his acclaimed international contributions to advocating for anesthesia patient safety make him an outstanding selection to deliver the 2018 ASA/APSF Ellison C. Pierce, Jr., Patient Safety Memorial Lecture. His topic, “Sharpening the Vision to Do No Harm,” is a fitting tribute to the memory and contributions of Dr. Pierce. His lecture will explore novel ways that all members of the anesthesia community can work together to make Dr. Pierce’s vision a reality.



Ellison C. (Jeep) Pierce, Jr., M.D.