

American College of Emergency Physicians

Section of Medical Humanities

September 8, 2025

Salt Palace Convention Center

Salt Lake City, UT

MINUTES

Participating in all or part of the meeting were: Kamna Balhara, MD, MA, FACEP, section chair; Lars Beattie, MD, FACEP; Karimah Best, MD; Diane Birnbaumer, MD, FACEP; Alexander Chasin, MD; Judith Dattaro, MD, FACEP; Suchismita Datta, MD, FACEP; Iyesatta Emeli, MD, MPH, FACEP; Jay A. Kaplan, MD, FACEP; Lawrence Melniker, MD, MS, FACEP; Anne Merritt, MD; Jenna Paul-Schultz, MD; Diane Savitzky, MD; Luz Silverio, MD, FACEP; David Sklar, MD, FACEP;

Others participating: Tracy Napper, ACEP staff liaison; Diana Nordlund, DO, JD, FACEP, ACEP Board Liaison.

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Current Activities

- A. Building community through art (15 mins)
- B. Writing/Visual Arts Awards for 2025 (10 mins)
- C. Council Update (10 mins)
- D. White Paper Think Tank Update (5 mins)
- E. Approve Revised Operational Guidelines (10 mins)
- F. Future directions: Section Brainstorming (5 mins)
- G. Reminder: Online Repository (5 mins)

Dr. Birnbaumer

Adjourn

Major Points Discussed

Current Activities

- A. Dr. Balhara called the meeting to order. We engaged in a quick introductory activity, looking at a gallery of images and choosing one that speaks to the ways in which the arts and humanities enhance our personal and/or professional lives. The activity was based on the [Personal Responses Tour](#).

- B. Dr. Balhara presented Dr. Marc Borenstein with the 2025 Writing Award-Poetry for his piece, “Un-Clearance.” Dr. Anne Merritt received the 2025 Writing Award-Prose for her piece, “The Miniature Doubts We Cradle.” Dr. Carlan Wendler received the 2025 Visual Arts Award for his photo, “Patient Transport, Burundi Style.” He was unable to attend the meeting. All pieces will be featured in future newsletters.
- C. Dr. Birnbaumer reported on the proceedings of the ACEP Council meeting and ACEP elections. She thanked members for their emails providing feedback regarding the resolutions. The new president elect is Ryan Stanton, MD, FACEP. She named the three new Board members (Daniel Freess, MD, FACEP; Steven B. Kailes, MD, MPH, FACEP; Bing S. Pao, MD, FACEP) plus one incumbent (Kristin McCabe-Kline, MD, FACEP). Resolutions discussed issues such as liability; diversity, equity and inclusion; 3- vs 4-year residency programs, as well as what to say about the changes at the CDC and reaffirm a statement with other organizations. She thanked the section for the opportunity to be the councillor and welcomes others to try it. If anyone needs more information about the Council meeting or being a councillor, please contact her.
- D. Dr. Balhara gave an update on the white paper think tank. Over the past year, section members who expressed interest have been working towards a consensus paper on the relevance of the humanities in emergency medicine – with the goal of publishing it to encourage further integration of the arts and humanities across emergency medicine care and education. The group decided to use the nominal group technique to answer the primary question of “What is the relevance of health humanities to emergency medicine?” We now have 8 themes. Humanities as essential for clinical skills; as a means to process unique challenges and building communities; and as a portal into understanding social aspects of care are the three main “buckets” for the themes. Other interested members should contact Dr. Balhara – currently Drs. Balhara, Kaplan, and Kowalsky are engaged in writing. An initial draft is nearly completed and we welcome others who wish to commit time to writing and refining the manuscript.
- E. Dr. Kaplan noted we had a successful section hall crawl last night and had several new members sign up. He said that the purpose of our section is to support members taking what they experience every day and taking that pain and anxiety and transforming it.
- F. The members unanimously voted to approve the revised section operational guidelines.
- G. Dr. Balhara mentioned our future directions which include publishing the white paper in the next year and building out the online section member repository, which is a Google document where members can record their interests and accomplishments to share with the section. Our hope is that this repository can spark collaborations or act as a speakers bureau of sorts. The link can be found here: [Medical Humanities Repository - Google Sheets](#)
- H. Dr. Rachel Kowalsky and Dr. Jay Baruch will be hosting a series of webinars about

writing in January. These will be one-hour virtual meetings. If anyone has a topic they want to lead, please contact Dr. Balhara. We are also exploring having an online venue for rolling submissions from ACEP which would serve as a platform for multimedia creative works relevant to emergency medicine, including visual, written, music, videos of performances, etc and be “published” yearly. If anyone has ideas for the platform please contact Dr. Balhara or Ms. Napper. An additional goal for next year is supporting didactic submissions on the humanities to ACEP.

- I. Dr. Sklar said he is developing a new medical school at Arizona State. The first course is an introduction on becoming a physician. He is working with a humanities professor for this one-week course. The school is combining engineering with medicine as well. If anyone has thoughts or suggestions for topic areas for the one-week course, please send to him at david.sklar@asu.edu.
- J. Ms. Napper also reminded the group of our “Med Hums Monday,” which are Zoom calls on the first Monday of each month where members can discuss their current projects and share resources. Members were also reminded of our online humanities curriculum, “Humanities at the Bedside,” which can be found at <https://www.acep.org/education/humanities-at-the-bedside>.
- K. Dr. Emeli reminded members about our book club and suggested we make it more formalized and invite the wellness members. Dr. Savitsky reminded members about the importance of storytelling. She encouraged cross pollination between sections, especially during Wellness Week, which is moving from May to January. Each day has a focus to participate in. She suggested perhaps brainstorming ideas on the next Med Hums Monday.

The meeting was adjourned.