

AFG Leadership Team (2025-26)

Chair - Dr. Joseph S. Butterfield



Joseph S. Butterfield MD, MS, MPH, EMT-P, PA-C is the current Chair of the AsMA AFG. A member of AsMA since 2010, he has a long interest in aerospace medicine and space exploration. He currently works in primary care.

Senior Chair-Elect - Dr. Nina Purvis



Nina is a surgical resident doctor in the NHS, England. She served as the European Space Agency's Research MD and Search & Rescue Lead at Concordia Station, Antarctica for 13 months (2024-2025). She holds degrees in medicine (MBBS), space physiology (MSc), and physics (MPhys, PhD).

Junior Chair-Elect - Mr. Kevin Divers



Kevin S. Divers BSC, MBA, FeSAFE is the current Junior Chair-Elect of the AsMA AFG. A member of AsMA for 12 years, he has a long interest in flight test, human factors engineering, and aerospace physiology. He currently works in product design and air worthiness certification.

Secretary - Dr. Lisa Brown
(Bio not currently available)

Deputy Secretary - Dr. Mohammad Hirzallah



Mohammad Hirzallah, MD, MMSc is a physician scientist specializing in Neurology and Neurocritical care with research emphasis on brain physiology in the critical care unit and during space flight. His research efforts include biomedical research with commercial space flight missions, developing research solicitations for NASA and TRISH (Translational

Research Institute in Space Health), monitoring the long-term consequences of spaceflight on the brain and eyes in NASA astronauts, and the development and evaluation of non-invasive intracranial pressure monitoring techniques.

Treasurer - Dr. Clifton Nowell (Gnome)
(Bio not currently available)

Immediate Past Chair (ex-officio) - Dr. Lisa Snyder (SWAT)
(Bio not currently available)

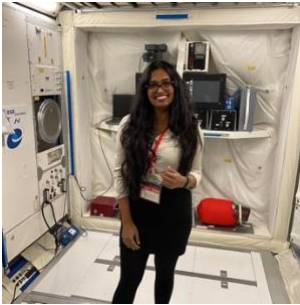
Second Past Chair (ex-officio) - (Dr. Joe Britton)
(Bio not currently available)

Ellingson Award Committee

Mr. Kevin Divers (Chair) [Details above]

Dr. Mohammad Hirzallah (Deputy Chair) [Details above]

Dr. Lydia Kolaparambil Varghese (Deputy Chair)



Lydia Johnson Kolaparambil Varghese, MD, is an anaesthesiologist and emergency medicine physician in Germany, serving as Research Director at Mühlenkreiskliniken JWK Minden, Ruhr University Bochum. She is a member of the Advisory Board of the European Society of Aerospace Medicine.

Her research focuses on resuscitation science and aerospace medicine, with particular emphasis on cardiopulmonary resuscitation in microgravity, airway management in helicopter and offshore rescue environments, and altitude-dependent hypoxia. Her work includes contributions to European guidelines on CPR during spaceflight and systematic investigations into operational medicine in extreme environments.

Mr. Stephen Merriman (Contributing Member)



Steve Merriman has BA and MA degrees in psychology, a program management certificate from the Defense Acquisition University and 55+ years of experience as a practitioner of human factors engineering (HFE) and human systems integration (HSI).. A member of AsMA for 37 years and an Associate Fellow since 2012.

Dr. Sasirajan Jeevarathinam (Contributing Member)



Sasirajan Jeevarathinam M.B.B.S., M.D. (Aerospace Medicine), DAvMed (UK), M.AeSI is currently working with Royal Air Force of Oman as 'Aviation Medicine Specialist' at an air base as well as an 'Aeromedical Instructor ' at Aviation Medicine Training Centre, Muscat. Earlier

served at Apollo Hospitals (Chennai, India) which is a DGCA empanelled Class I medical centre as AME and 'Authorized Immigration Panel Physician' for USA, Australia and Canada. He is an 'Associate fellow' of the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) and Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine (ISAM). He is an 'Academician' and 'Selector member' of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine (IAASM).

Informatics Committee

Dr. Rowena Christiansen (Chair)



Dr Rowena Christiansen practises medicine in extreme and austere environments, focusing on space health and wellbeing, and pre-hospital healthcare. She is dual-qualified in medicine and law, with post-graduate studies in emergency and critical care, aerospace medicine, disaster management, child health, and space studies. She

also holds qualifications in business, humanities, and education. Rowena is a Fellow of the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) and the Aerospace Human Factors Association. She developed a

year-long subject, "Human health in the space environment", for the Melbourne Medical School, lectures on 'humans in space' and 'space biotechnology' for Swinburne University, and is a space health researcher, academic editor, reviewer, and mentor. A passionate aerospace medicine advocate, Rowena is the first Australian to serve as an AsMA and OSMED Vice-President, Founder of the *ad astra vita* project, and Co-Founder of the *International Space Surgery Research Consortium*. She is the Research Director, Health Law for the *Jus Ad Astra* human rights in space project, a UNOOSA Space4Women mentor, an ISU alumna, and volunteers in support of diverse professional organisations. Rowena is a six-year finalist in the Australian Space Awards, receiving the 2023 "Innovator of the Year" award, and has also received several aerospace medicine awards.

Dr. Diego Garcia (Deputy Chair)
(Bio not currently available)

Membership Committee

Dr. Aubrey Florom-Smith (Chair)
(Bio not currently available)

Dr. Mohammad Hirzallah (Deputy Chair) [Details above]

Merchandising Committee

Dr. Ryan Keller (Chair)



Ryan J. Keller, M.D. is a PGY-3 Emergency Medicine Resident Physician at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. He attended Baylor University where he earned a B.S. in Mathematics. Subsequently, he earned his M.D. from Baylor College of Medicine in 2019. He is currently serving as an Active Duty Captain in the U.S. Air Force and a PGY-3 Emergency Medicine Resident at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, where he also currently serves as Chief Resident of Academics. He has completed the PASM Course at UTMB in Galveston, Texas, the NASA JSC Aerospace Medicine Clerkship, and CCATT Initial Course at the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine (USAFSAM). He also earned his flight surgeon wings from USAFSAM in August of 2025. He has published multiple research articles including two in *Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance*. He has also served many years in executive leadership in the Aerospace Medicine Student and Resident Organization (AMSRO) as well as the ASMA Membership Committee

Nominations Committee

Mr. Kevin Divers (Chair) [Details above]

Dr. Lisa Brown (Deputy Chair) [Details above]

Dr. Peter Letarte (Deputy Chair)



Dr. Peter B. Letarte MD, FAANS, FACS is a retired Captain in the United States Navy. He spent eight years as a full-time practicing flight surgeon in the US Navy and an additional 32 in the Naval Reserve. He has significant aeromedical experience deploying to the field with the Marines and on the USS

Nimitz. He has civilian and military aeromedical evacuation experience which includes over 143 scene flights. He spent two years engaged in human factors research as a flight surgeon, acquiring expertise in high G and multi axis acceleration, ejection seat biomechanics and hypothermia. He participated in the hypothermia validation of NASA's Advanced Crew Escape Suit (ACES). He has completed graduate course work in Bioengineering, Systems Analysis and Biomechanics. He is currently working on an MPH in epidemiology and a certificate in AI and digital health at the Ohio State University. He is a board-certified neurosurgeon and a neurointensivist and neurotraumatologist.

Receptions Committee

(No Chair at present)

Dr. Micah Siegel (Deputy Chair)



Dr. Siegel is a distinguished medical professional with multifaceted expertise spanning undersea and hyperbaric medicine, wound care, aerospace medicine, and wilderness medicine. He

serves as President and Medical Director of Extreme Environmental

Medicine, LLC, New Orleans, Louisiana, where he leads initiatives in specialized care and environmental medicine. Previously, as Program Director of the LSU Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine Fellowship in New Orleans, he played a pivotal role in shaping the education and training of fellows in this specialized field. His experience as core faculty enriched the program by providing invaluable insights and knowledge in wound and hyperbaric medicine.

Beyond his clinical and leadership pursuits, Dr. Siegel serves as a commissioned officer in the US Air Force Reserves, holding the positions of Flight Surgeon and Deputy Chief of Aerospace Medicine for the 307th Medical Squadron. His military service underscores his commitment to advancing medical care in diverse environments, including aviation and aerospace settings.

Dr. Siegel's dedication to holistic healthcare is evident in his pursuit of certifications and fellowships. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine (FAWM), reflecting his passion for providing medical care in remote and challenging environments. Additionally, his attainment of the Diploma in Diving and Marine Medicine (DiDMM) highlights his expertise in dive medicine, further complementing his diverse skill set. He holds credentials including CHT, and Fellow of the American Professional Wound Care Association (FAPWCA), and is board certified in Family Medicine and Undersea & Hyperbaric Medicine.

Scientific Program Committee

Dr. Michael Schmidt (Chair)

(Bio not currently available)

Dr. Aubrey Florom-Smith (Deputy Chair) [Details above]

Dr. Michael Stephens (Deputy Chair)

(Bio not currently available)

Dr. Matt Makowski (Contributing Member)



Matt Makowski is board-certified in Critical Care and Aerospace Medicine. For his research role, he studies the physiology of breathing gases in relation to spacecraft cabins and pressure suits. He rounds part-time in the Medical ICU.

Ad-hoc Scholarship Creation Committee

Dr. Hansjorg Schwertz (Chair)



Hans is board-certified in Occupational Medicine. His research is centered around platelet (PLT) and megakaryocyte (MK) biology in health and mediating host responses. His team currently investigates the development of MKs under microgravitational conditions, spanning research from the *in vitro* approach to human subject investigations (NASA grant# 80NSSC22K0255).

Dr. David Cole (Deputy Chair)

(Bio not currently available)

AFG Representative to AsMA Council

Dr. Lisa Snyder (SWAT) [Details above]