



---

**In this edition:**

[President's Corner](#)

[Wildfire Season](#)

**News from ACEP:**

[Resources and Latest News](#)

[Grassroots Advocacy](#)

[Upcoming Events and Deadlines](#)

---

**President's Corner**

Tony Salazar, MD, FACEP

Hello NM ACEP members,

I hope our newsletter reaches you at a good time. We missed many of you at our June quarterly meeting. At the meeting, we accomplished some important tasks. We elected our NM Councilors who will proudly represent us at the ACEP Council meeting October 7-8, 2023 in Philadelphia! Dr. Emily Bartlett, Dr. Scott Mueller (President-elect) and Dr. Chris Swyers will serve on the Council and have already begun their pre-Council work. Our chapter decided to co-sponsor a Resolution submitted by the Rural EM Section which focuses on "Addressing Interhospital Transfer Challenges for Rural EDs."

Our NM ACEP PAC now has two Board members, Dr. Eric Ketcham and Dr. Heather Marshall Vaskas. I am proud to have two Past-Presidents on our PAC Board who will work to revitalize our PAC. If you are interested in also serving on the PAC, please contact me. Please also consider a donation to the NM ACEP PAC.

Our commitment to the future of Emergency Medicine continues to grow. NM ACEP is working with the UNM School of Medicine's Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG), the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine's EMIG and the ACEP New Mexico Medical Student Council, which is the recently chartered student member section of NM ACEP. Together, we identified 21 students to sponsor as members of our chapter, many of whom are quite active in NM ACEP, EMRA and ACEP. Our student members have been very productive and the Burrell EMIG was recently nationally recognized by the EMRA-Medical Student Council and received the 2023 EMIG Community Service Award!

Our next quarterly meeting will be virtual and will be held mid to late September. The date is currently TBD, but you will receive an electronic invitation from our Executive Director, Jennifer Valenti. The focus of this meeting will be to discuss Council Resolutions. Our winter meeting will be in person and will take place Saturday, January 20, 2024 at 5pm at Savoy Bar & Grill in Albuquerque.

As always, if there is anything NM ACEP can do for you, please reach out to us. Hope to see you all soon!

Sincerely,  
Tony

Tony Salazar, MD, FACEP  
NM ACEP President

---

### **Wildfire Season**

Elizabeth Lynch, MD, PGY2

I used to love the smell of campfires in the summer air. My nose would smile with the memory of smores, stars overhead and the mesmerizing flames warming me. Now, the smell of smoke stops me in my tracks. I sniff the wind, is it coming from the bosque, the mountains or someone's backyard? Will the air be thick haze tomorrow? Will the mountains burn down again, will the floods and landslides come back? As an East Coast transplant I never worried about wildfires until I started exploring the west. Hiking in the Sierra Nevada's through haunted woods obscured by haze from the fires, hurrying through canyon's knowing the fires were not far off, I felt their heat coming, unstoppable destruction bearing down on us. Now it is a part of life that I still haven't adjusted to, and neither has our public health system.

Last year's respiratory season was marked by record hospitalizations for children experiencing RSV and influenza. Colorado Children's Hospital described it as a more severe and earlier respiratory season unlike any that had been seen before. According to the T.H. Chan School of Public Health children are more susceptible to the particulate in the air from wildfires due to the volume of oxygen and depth of inhalation relative to their size. This can increase the risk for more severe respiratory illnesses in the future.

The particulate in the air most dangerous to lungs during wildfire's is called PM2.5, due to its size of 2.5 microns (or smaller) and its ability to penetrate deeper into the lungs. A study in Montana measured the exposure to PM2.5 and the level of influenza in the following respiratory season. Although PM2.5 is released by other substances as well and combustion from wood stoves etc. the study found that the increase in PM2.5 during wildfire season was associated with a higher influenza level in the subsequent respiratory season.<sup>[1]</sup> Another study in Montana measured the exposure to PM2.5 in two different communities during the wildfire season and then compared the lung function of the two communities a year later. Predictably, the community with the higher exposure to PM2.5 had a more significant decrease in lung function testing. This correlation is thought to be due to the impairment of alveolar macrophages to remove damaging particulates from the

lungs, and the inflammation caused by smoke inhalation. As we know and evidence shows, increased pulmonary stress also leads to increased cardiovascular stress and exacerbation of chronic illnesses.<sup>[1]</sup>

But the consequences of wildfires extend beyond the physiological damage. New Mexican's experienced the heartbreaking destruction of the Calf Canyon/ Hermits Peak Fire last year, two poorly managed National Forest Service burns that merged into one fire burning 341,471 acres, the largest fire in the contiguous United States in 2022.<sup>[2]</sup> In that same year, homelessness in New Mexico increased by 48% according to a Legislative Finance Committee report. The socioeconomic consequences of losing a home reverberate for generations. As Emergency Medicine providers every day we see the patients impacted by loss of home or loss of livelihood. We treat the patients with severe influenza, heart failure exacerbations and asthma attacks and then discharge these patients back to the car they are living out of, the homeless shelter, the friend's couch they are sleeping on, or worse, back to the street.

Our patients may not share if they lost their home because of a wildfire, a drug addiction, or the increasing cost of rent in New Mexico, nor may we be able to identify if their lung inflammation is the result of the wildfire last summer. But as we experience more fires, burning for months at a time, we know there will be health consequences for our patients and increased strain on our health system. While it can be daunting to contemplate the impact of the environment on our health, we need to start addressing and anticipating the worsening environmental conditions if we want to better serve our patients and our planet.

[1] 1.Orr, A.; A. L. Migliaccio, C.; Buford, M.; Ballou, S.; Migliaccio, C.T. Sustained Effects on Lung Function in Community Members Following Exposure to Hazardous PM<sub>2.5</sub> Levels from Wildfire Smoke. *Toxics* **2020**, *8*, 53. <https://doi.org/10.3390/toxics8030053>

[2] Erin L. Landguth, Zachary A. Holden, Jonathan Graham, Benjamin Stark, Elham Bayat Mokhtari, Emily Kaleczyc, Stacey Anderson, Shawn Urbanski, Matt Jolly, Erin O. Semmens, Dyer A. Warren, Alan Swanson, Emily Stone, Curtis Noonan, The delayed effect of wildfire season particulate matter on subsequent influenza season in a mountain west region of the USA, *Environment International*, Volume 139,2020,105668,ISSN 0160-4120, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2020.105668>, (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412019326935>)

[3] Gleason, M. Lohmann, P., FEMA Has So Far Paid Out Less Than 1% of What Congress Allocated for Victims of New Mexico Wildfire. <https://www.propublica.org/article/fema-paid-out-less-than-one-percent-of-claims-new-mexico-wildfire>

---

## FROM NATIONAL ACEP



### ACEP Resources & Latest News

**ACEP President shares highlights of ACEP victories.** In the July issue of *ACEP Now*, Medical Editor in Chief Cedric Dark, MD, FACEP, checks in with ACEP

President Chris Kang, MD, FACEP, for the latest on the College's work to address ED boarding, physician burnout, private equity in EM and more. [Read more.](#)

**Advocacy victory:** In a big win for emergency physicians, changes to the surprise billing process are now in the works. We heard your concerns and used our voice to call out extensive flaws in the law's implementation. This is your dues dollars at work. [Read more.](#)

**Latest updates related to the APP closure:** In the wake of American Physician Partners' closing, many members need immediate support. Even if you weren't directly impacted, the changing landscape of healthcare brings uncertainty - and ACEP has [tools](#) to help.

- Watch our recent [legal webinar about job transitions](#) to help with contract decisions.
- Access our **new** [contract toolkit](#) with extensive, members-only FAQs about insurance, contracts and legal issues during career transitions
- Email [presidentkang@acep.org](mailto:presidentkang@acep.org) if you or a colleague has been affected, and share specific circumstances so ACEP can provide tailored assistance.

**Your newest member benefit helps with contract review and negotiations!** ACEP's new partnership with Resolve gives you free access to real-time salary data, a contract scorecard to rate any new or existing contract, and updates on the current J-1 waiver cycle. ACEP members also get 20% off additional packages from Resolve. [Read more.](#)

**Millions in Funding Set for ALTO, MAT Programs.** ACEP advocacy resulted in millions of dollars in grant funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The significant boost for emergency physician-led Alternative to Opioids (ALTO) and Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) programs will help save lives and improve care related to opioid use disorder. ACEP developed and worked to pass the law to establish ALTO and strongly supports MAT expansion, including the recent repeal of the "X-waiver." [Read more.](#)

### **ICYMI, ACEP releases statements on Diversity and CMGs**

On July 14, ACEP issued a [Policy Statement on the Corporate Practice of Medicine](#). ACEP believes the physician-patient relationship is the moral center of medicine. The integrity of this relationship must never be compromised.

On July 20, ACEP issued a Joint [Statement from EM organizations on efforts to diversify healthcare](#) professionals in the U.S. [See all policy statements.](#)

## **ACEP Grassroots Advocacy**

### **ACEP's ED Visit Program**

As part of ACEP's federal advocacy efforts, we aim to have as many legislators as possible visit emergency departments in their communities to see first-hand the inner workings of an ED and those patients seeking care in the ED. Members of Congress rely heavily upon input from their constituents when considering issues

and making policy decisions. As the front line of our nation's health care delivery system, emergency physicians are well-positioned to educate legislators on a wide range of issues including patient access, public health concerns, rural and inner-city health issues, and quality of care.

ACEP assists in the scheduling and preparation for these visits, including talking points and tips on coordinating the visit with your hospital staff and administration. For more information about hosting an ED visit for your federal legislator, please contact [Jeanne Slade](#) or [Liz Demorest](#) in the ACEP Washington, D.C. Office.

### **NEMPAC Networking Opportunities at ACEP23:**

The NEMPAC Board of Trustees is inviting NEMPAC VIP donors to two exclusive events at ACEP23 – don't miss the opportunity to network with ACEP leaders and colleagues who support emergency medicine advocacy!

#### **NEMPAC VIP Donor Reception**

When: Sunday, October 8, 6-8 p.m.

Where: The Liberty View at Independence Visitor Center, 599 Market Street, Philadelphia

How to Receive an Invitation: Donate \$600 (\$365 for transitioning and retired members, \$60 for residents)

#### **NEMPAC “Give-a-Shift” Donor Lounge**

When: Monday, October 9 – Wednesday, October 11, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day

Where: Philadelphia Convention Center, Level 100, Room 117

How to Receive an Invitation: Donate \$1,200 (\$365 for transitioning and retired members, \$120 for residents)

[Donate to NEMPAC](#) by October 4 or during ACEP23 to join us at the Reception and Lounge!

## **Upcoming ACEP Events and Deadlines**

**Aug. 23:** [Virtual Grand Rounds: Risk Management](#)

**Sep. 18:** Nominations due for [ACEP's Medical Humanities Writing & Visual Arts Awards](#)

**Oct 9-12:** [ACEP23](#) Scientific Assembly, Philadelphia, PA

## **Contact New Mexico ACEP**

Tony Salazar, MD, FACEP - President

Jennifer Valenti - Executive Director

[jennifer.valenti@gamamed.org](mailto:jennifer.valenti@gamamed.org) | 505.821.4583 | [Website](#)

**New Mexico Chapter ACEP**  
**c/o Greater Albuquerque Medical Association**  
**P.O. Box 94838**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87199**

