

Engaging Members in a New Way: Sue Ann Greco Leads AMA Alliance Through the Challenges of COVID-19

Sue Ann Greco, past president of the SLMMS and MSMA Alliances, completed her term as 2020-21 president of the AMA Alliance in June. With in-person events shut down due to COVID-19, she led the Alliance in adapting its programs to a virtual Zoom format. The result was continued strong participation and continuing to achieve the core of the national Alliance mission—connecting and supporting physician families and providing health education.



Sue Ann Greco

The AMA Alliance carries out health awareness programs such as Stop America's Violence Everywhere (SAVE) and Hands Are Not for Hitting, and conducts education for the physician community on burnout and opioid abuse. It supports physician spouses families through regional meetings and the annual Physician Family Day, and by publishing the *Physician Family* magazine that covers topics of concern promoting wellness among physician families.



Sue Ann Greco, back row second from right, with fellow AMA Alliance board members as they drop their masks for the photo.

Q&A with Sue Ann Greco

In the following Q&A, Sue Ann shares her thoughts on the Alliance and the year just completed.

What adjustments did you and the AMA Alliance have to make to carry on during COVID-19?

It was clear to us in May 2020 (before my term began) that our members needed to be together on Zoom calls. We were all feeling stressed because of COVID and the impact it was having on our spouses' professions. We decided early in June to present bi-monthly Zoom calls. The first Thursday of the month Zoom calls were designed to keep Alliance state and county leaders abreast of what was going on in the organization and offer guidance as to how they could keep their affiliate members active and engaged. The Zoom calls on the third Thursday of the month were hosted by the Membership Council and topics for presentations and discussion were suggested by members. The topics they chose often reflected their needs at the time, such as how to deal with homeschooling children; how to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in health care; how the AMA was assisting physicians during COVID; and how to deal with the emotional aftermath of COVID.

We encouraged state and regional groups to continue to meet via Zoom. Most of the state annual meetings and installations were via Zoom. As president, I missed the opportunity to visit states and reach out to potential members. We held two meet-and-greets to introduce our board to members via Zoom. One of our meet-and-greets was specifically for the young career spouses, including those married to medical students, residents, or early career physicians. This group continued to meet via



Icons promoting AMA Alliance events during the year.

Besides her involvement in the Alliance, Sue Ann for the past 10 years has served as practice manager for her husband, Thomas Greco, MD. She holds BSN and MSN nursing degrees and completed post-graduate courses in health care administration and legal studies. She has worked as an instructor of nursing and a legal nurse consultant. They have four grown daughters, Marissa, Tori, Ali and Lizzie.

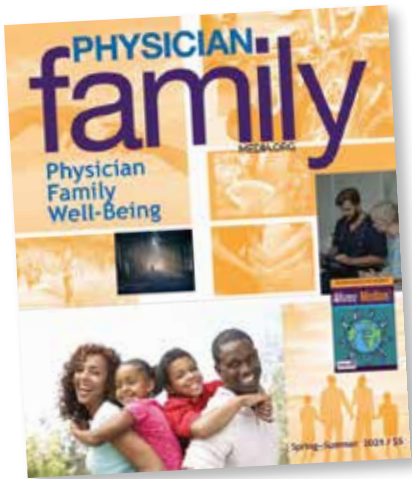
A virtual celebration in honor of Sue Ann's presidential year was held on Saturday, June 12. More than 70 friends and family members attended, with tributes presented by many MSMA, SLMMS and Alliance leaders. Special guest was past AMA President and current World Medical Association President David Barbe, MD, of Mountain Grove, Mo.

Zoom and hosted speakers on topics of particular interest to them, such as financial security during the early career years.

We decided back in October that our June 2021 Annual Meeting would have to be virtual. This gave us time to prepare a comprehensive meeting with guest speakers. All in all it went very well, but we are hoping to be together in person in 2022 when the AMA Alliance celebrates its 100th Anniversary.

What do you see as your greatest accomplishment(s) of the year?

Our greatest accomplishment this year was engaging our members across the country in a new way. We saw each other via Zoom more frequently than we would have during a normal year. We kept ourselves educated about current topics. We also partnered with the AMA by supporting their MaskUp program on social media and hosting several of their members and staff on our Zoom calls. We felt a stronger connection as an organization and even gained some new members in the process.



The AMA Alliance's publication *Physician Family* provides valuable insights on issues of concern to family members of physicians.

In a changing world, with both spouses employed and many two-physician couples, how is the role of the Alliance evolving? What contributions can the Alliance make in today's medical world?

Our society has been undergoing these changes for the last several decades. Alliance membership has continued to decrease since about 1973. The Alliance continues to try to find ways to adapt. One way we have adapted is to become more of a virtual organization. We have a much stronger presence on social media than we used to. Our *Physician Family* magazine, which is available online and on social media, is designed for young working couples. Virtual gatherings have given us a new way to connect physician spouses and physician families across the country. Young physician spouses still have a strong need to connect with others going through the same experience of moving for residency and training. We are seeing more male spouses of physicians who want to connect and want to become engaged as leaders in the organization. The AMA Alliance has a dual role in that we support physician families through

connection, but we continue to encourage state and county affiliate groups to engage in health promotion projects and advocacy. That is still part of our legacy.



Sue Ann and her husband, Thomas Greco, MD, appeared in a video promoting the annual Physician Family Day in August.

What did you learn during the year?

One thing I think we all learned is that physician families are very resilient. Physician spouses have always had to adapt to their spouses' long hours and career paths, but during COVID, we had to adapt to the fact that our spouses were putting themselves in harms way on a daily basis. While our adult children were working from home, our spouses never missed a day of going into their office or the hospital. That is why keeping our connection to our members this past year was so important. We all supported each other and helped keep each other informed on all the latest news about the virus and the vaccinations. We became role models for our communities in terms of following the science and staying strong. I hope that the AMA Alliance can always be seen as positive influencers when it comes to public health. This past year called us to be at our best, and I truly believe that AMA Alliance stepped up to the challenge. It was my pleasure to serve as their president this past year. ➔

2021 PHYSICIAN FAMILY DAY | SATURDAY, AUGUST 28

Learn more about the AMA Alliance
<https://amaalliance.org/>

BE AN ALLIANCE MEMBER

Join with the SLMMS Alliance in community health promotion projects and in supporting physician families. For membership information, contact Sandra Murdock, sesandram@aol.com or 314-872-8429.