

April 30, 2020

Dear ISSWSH Community,

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2020-2021**

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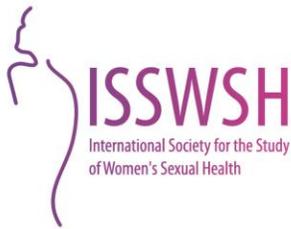
Association Manager

Bobbi Hahn

It is a distinct honor to begin my term in 2020 as the President of this remarkable society. We were very fortunate to hold our annual meeting in Orlando last month amidst the growing COVID-19 pandemic. While we felt the absence of our European and Asian colleagues who could not attend due to travel restrictions, we were thankful that our overall attendance remained robust. I am sure that you are all experiencing some degree of headline fatigue and have grown weary of words like “unprecedented”. Yet, the spread of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, first detected in Wuhan, China in late 2019, has indeed changed our world. Arguably, the pandemic’s impact worldwide over the last several months is on a scale not unlike armed conflict between nations and has strained the capacity for medical care in many countries.

As healthcare practitioners, researchers and educators, we feel compelled to continue working remotely to help patients, granting them access to valuable treatments and information. It is indeed challenging to practice the healing arts when the proverbial “laying on of hands” is severely restricted by policies instituted by local and national governing bodies. Furthermore, research is inherently a collaborative activity and the inability to congregate in groups and loss of support staff makes it even more difficult to sustain. Distance learning is certainly a more well-established practice, but even so, we all recognize the advantages of physical proximity during teaching/learning activities. Raising questions, obtaining feedback and having discussions are all enhanced by the immediacy of being in the same room at the same time.

In these ways, our work has been compromised but I know that your passion for helping your patients and for being lifelong learners endures. As a society, ISSWSH is not merely weathering the storm, but actively planning for contingencies and pressing onward to carry out its tripartite mission of providing opportunities for interaction among scholars, researchers and practitioners, supporting the highest standards of ethics and professionalism, and providing the public with accurate information about women’s sexual health. Our newly formed [Board Committees](#) are already hard at work to sustain and grow our society. In addition, we have two clinical practice guideline publications that are in preparation and several important initiatives for patient education that are taking shape. You will be hearing more about these in the months ahead.



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I would also like to announce that my goal over the next two years is to prioritize increasing ISSWSH's commitment to funding [research in women's sexual health](#). Everything that we do from increasing our membership, investments, donors, etc. will be for the purpose of making ISSWSH financially sustainable so that we can support both basic science inquiry and clinical outcomes research that will eventually enable better education and patient care.

Please take advantage of the [ISSWSH Community Forum](#) to ask questions and engage in discussions with fellow members. For those of you on social media, stay connected through ISSWSH's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) pages and feeds. While the term "social distancing" has become a part of our everyday language, I agree with some who propose that "spatial distancing" is a more appropriate term. Physical distance is what separates us. Well-established collegial relationships are bonds that tie us together and must remain strong.

Although I trust that the great majority of our membership remain in good health, for those who may be personally impacted by illness or grieving the loss of friends or family members, our hearts, thoughts and prayers are with you. Along with each of you, I look forward to a time of healing when gatherings, handshakes and hugs will once again be a part of our normal daily interactions.

Humbly in your service,



Noel N. Kim, PhD, IF
President, ISSWSH