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essential for payer negotiations as it is important to patients expecting high-quality care in every echocardiography lab.

5. Standardizing Echo Reporting: In addition to work on strain standardization, ASE is participating in the Standardized Data Collection for Cardiovascular Imaging Initiative with collaborating imaging societies and the U.S. Food & Drug Administration—developing agreed-upon definitions for the key data elements reported by different cardiac imaging modalities. This will facilitate the use of clinically acquired echocardiographic data in research studies. Another area to be pursued is improving the reproducibility of clinical echocardiographic measurements; ASE awarded a research grant in 2012 toward this end. Building ASE guidelines into the software of echo instruments is one possible avenue for improvement—with text and image clips demonstrating not only normal value ranges but also proper caliper and sample volume positioning for LV outflow tract echo and Doppler measurements at transcatheter aortic valve replacement evaluation, or proper LV endocardial border measurement for LV volume and mass calculation by 2D echocardiography.

6. Reaching New Echocardiography Users: The ASE New Practice Applications Taskforce continues to work collaboratively with new users in the emergency department, intensive care unit, and general practice arenas in developing practice standards and educational materials. It is critical for ASE to be involved in these new applications of echocardiographic technology evolve. We will have a booth at the Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics conference in October to focus attention on ASE’s new products for this special market, and we will formally participate in the Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics sessions.

Of course, because advocacy and education are always the top priorities when ASE members are surveyed, advocacy remains a top priority in the coming year. A practice environment supporting our commitment to excellence must be assured, and challenges are always on the horizon! Developing a Current Procedural Terminology code for interventional transesophageal echocardiography which reflects the time and intensity of echocardiographic decision-making during transcatheter aortic valve replacement, device closure of septal defects, and mitral valve interventions is a laborious but essential process for our Advocacy team. And, an aggressive effort to prevent further spread of pre-authorization requirements for echocardiography continues, encouraging Appropriate Use Criteria or “gold-carding” through TTE Echocardiography accreditation or NBE certification as alternatives.

Finally, growth of the ASE Foundation in the coming year is a real priority. Its funding for ASE’s humanitarian and research efforts gives ASE Foundation a special place in the hearts of all who love echocardiography.

We’re off on a great year! Enjoy it by participating in one of our many ASE activities. Remember, the best things in life happen when you’re on your way to something else!