



# COMSEP

Better Health for All Patients  
Through Pediatric Education

## The Pediatric Educator

Council on Medical Student Education in Pediatrics

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### Message from the President

Hello COMSEP!!

I have some exciting updates to share with you:

The Curriculum Revision Working Group has spent a great deal of time on the COMSEP curriculum and is hosting a 40 minute webinar to share their progress with COMSEP. They will make a presentation for 30 minutes and answer questions for 10 minutes. The webinar will take place on Tuesday, December 16 at noon Eastern, 9am Pacific. You will need to register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6232872320297856513>. The webinar will be recorded and posted on our website.

Teams have been busy reviewing abstracts and workshops for the annual meeting next April in Denver. We are planning lots of great things for the annual meeting and look forward to welcoming you all!

We are in the process of reaching out to all pediatric clerkship directors that are not members of COMSEP and letting them know about our organization. We would like to support the pediatric medical education programs at all schools in the United States and Canada and feel that joining COMSEP may assist educators in supporting their students and their faculty and furthering their own careers.

This is a busy time of year. I hope you will take time to enjoy your family and your friends and take care of yourself. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday.

Susan Bannister, MD  
COMSEP President



# Tech Corner – Medical Student Blogging

## Medical Student Blogging

Philip Malouf, MD, FAAP

*The LTTF continues its Tech Corner series where we introduce COMSEP to our favorite apps, tools, and gadgets for teaching pediatrics to medical students. The authors and editors have no relevant financial relationships with the software and devices that we discuss.*

I often feel like medical students do not get sufficient experience counseling patients on their health. One way to give students the opportunity to learn and practice this vital skill is by allowing them to blog on health topics. Assign students a core topic that general pediatricians are often counseling parents about. Have them write a concise blog post addressing that topic. Edit and/or give feedback on their medical accuracy and professionalism. Use this as an opportunity to show them how their choice of words, use of visual aids, and displays of empathy can have a profound effect on what the parent takes away from the encounter. Then publish the post so they can share with their families and help parents in need.

Why a blog post? Why not just have the student turn in an essay on the topic? Student's get more out of experiences that make them feel like a contributor or which let them take ownership over something. Knowing that their information is going into the public sphere often motivates students to ensure their contribution is accurate and polished. Check with your institution's legal department regarding the risks of this activity. Make sure the blog site includes appropriate language indemnifying the institution and informing the reader that the site is for educational purposes only and that all medical questions should be addressed by their health care provider. Here is an example of a disclaimer page: <http://www.parent6.com/disclaimer>. Additionally, consider including additional language on each blog post such as this:

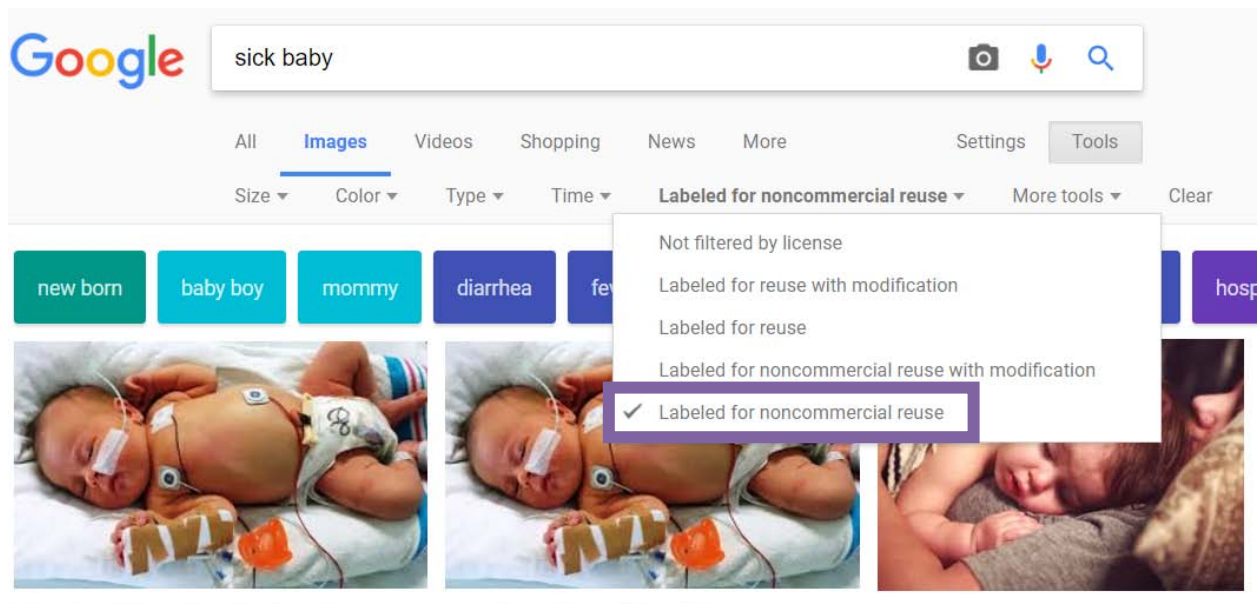
"If the reader or any other person has a medical concern, he or she should consult with an appropriately-licensed physician or other health care worker. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read on this blog or in any linked materials. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately."

Once you've got the legal matters sorted out, you'll want to find a platform to share your blog posts. There are a number of free resources for publishing web blogs. Some examples include:

- Wordpress: Highly customizable. <https://wordpress.com/>
- Blogger: Quick and simple. <https://blogger.com/>
- Weebly: Website builder for a more professional look. <https://www.weebly.com/>

Now you need to lay ground rules. Instruct the students to consider language that the lay-reader will understand and avoid medical jargon. Encourage the use of visual media (images and videos) to help educate. Have them use visual content that is public domain. Refer them to [Pixabay.com](http://Pixabay.com) or Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)) to find visual aids or teach

them to use Google image search tools to find images that are “labeled for noncommercial reuse” (see image).



Direct them to citations guides (<http://www.bibme.org/citation-guide>) to ensure their references are properly cited. Encourage them to refer to and cite a variety of resources. Finally, make sure the students understand that plagiarism is a serious offence and constitutes a severe professionalism violation. In the end, this should be a fun and worthwhile experience for them but it is vital that they respect the power and reach of the digitally printed word.

As students submit their work, it should be reviewed carefully. Make sure the information is accurate. It should be concise and follow a clear agenda. I suggest having them submit their work to you in the form of an editable document file. That way you can use track changes to make edits and suggest changes. Review their references and give feedback on their selection. Make special comment about how the article might read to the lay person. Is it appropriately engaging or too impersonal? Give feedback on displays of empathy and understanding the plight of the parent in *a world full of ailments waiting to befall their child*. Have students submit their initial drafts by the midpoint of the rotation so you can give feedback and then get a second draft back by the end. And take it easy on yourself! You're a busy pediatric educator! Make them keep it short (2-3 paragraphs) and split editing duties among your able-minded colleagues.

After you have received and approved a final draft, you should post it. Most of the common free blog sites should allow you to just copy, paste, and publish. Pretty easy! At the very least, you'll want to share the link with the student. Consider sending it to the students rotating in pediatrics at that time, to the entire class, or HECK, the entire school. Have a link to the article published on the school's webpage or use social media to disseminate the article. Publish the blog post to your school's public Facebook page or just it's non-public pediatrics Facebook group. Find an interested

group of students to handle the nuts and bolts so you can focus on reviewing the content. If you split the work among your colleagues, understand what your objectives are so you can provide constructive feedback. Enjoy seeing students' creative sides...this becomes an enjoyable and valuable experience for them!

## Call for Nominations and Annual Meeting

### Call for Nominations for Elections

[Please nominate your colleagues/self nominate for the following leadership positions.](#) Any COMSEP member in good standing may be nominated and may be nominated for more than one position.

#### Treasurer (1)

Serves a two-year term on the Executive Committee.

#### Executive Committee Member-at-Large (2)

Serves a three-year term as one of seven at-large members of the Executive Committee

#### Nominations and Awards Committee (1)

Serves a two-year term as one of three members of the Nominations and Awards Committee, which is chaired by the Past President

**Nominations will close on December 10, 2017.** The slate will be finalized in January and elections will take place mid January – mid February so that new officers may be certified prior to the 2018 COMSEP Annual Meeting (April 11-13, 2018).

### Call for Nominations for Awards

The Annual Meeting in Denver, CO will mark the seventh year that we honor individuals with COMSEP awards. The goal of the Awards program is to recognize COMSEP members who have made substantial contributions in the areas of:

Teaching / Education  
Research / Scholarship  
Clerkship Administration

In addition, the **COMSEP Achievement Award** is given to a current or former COMSEP member who has made major contributions of great significance to our organization and our member

[Click here for information about the award descriptions and criteria for nominations.](#)

**Nominations for the awards can be submitted now. The nominations system will close on January 15, 2018.**

Save the Date- Registration opens in January!



**DENVER, CO**  
**APRIL 11-14**

**THE GRAND**  
**HYATT DENVER**  
**1750 WELTON ST.**

## **Climbing Every Mountain: Reflective Practices and Storytelling Across the Continuum**

Miller Sarkin Lecturer:  
Daniel Weinshenker  
*Story Center*

Daniel Weinshenker is a writer, storyteller, and proponent of reflection in healthcare. Daniel facilitates workshops through *Storycenter*, a group dedicated to transforming lives and communities through the acts of listening to and sharing stories. At the University of Colorado, Department of Pediatrics, Daniel has facilitated workshops for medical students, residents, faculty, and staff to reflect on medicine – as a practitioner, a learner, an educator, a patient.

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