

# Southern Society for Clinical Investigation

Official Journal - *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*



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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am truly honored to serve as the 2020-21 President of the Southern Society for Clinical Investigation (SSCI). In the eight years since I have joined the SSCI, the organization has had many wins, advances, outstanding innovations, and changes; but we have never seen anything like COVID-19. Indeed, these are some of the most remarkable and unpredictable times in academic medicine. The SSCI has demonstrated time and again great resilience as the premier clinical research organization for internal medicine for the southeastern US, and I am certain that we will pull through these current challenging times stronger than ever. I would like to specifically emphasize that we are carefully monitoring the current situation and will be ready to adapt to whatever this virus throws our way, so as to better serve you, our valued members. There is no question that more now than ever we live in an ever evolving world, and for us to be successful, we will need to adapt with it.

Let me take a moment to specifically thank Dr. Gailen Marshall for his outstanding leadership this last year, and for leading us through another outstanding annual meeting. I am privileged to serve in his footsteps and cannot thank him enough for sharing his advice and wisdom. He has so much passion for the SSCI that it rubs off on us all. My own passion for the future of the SSCI has grown enormously in the past year thanks to him.

Our annual Southern Regional Meeting in New Orleans was outstanding with 777 registrants and 675 abstracts. The quality of presentations, including posters, oral talks, and material at the different sessions was outstanding. The SRM Joint Plenary and the SSCI Presidential Symposium sessions were also absolutely outstanding. In simply walking from session to session, I was so impressed by the energy and buzz everywhere in the meeting.

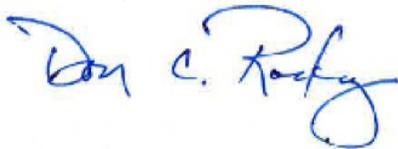
If I may indulge you, I would like to take just a few moments of your time to share with you my vision for our organization and where we are headed. First and foremost, I am committed to developing creative ways in which the SSCI can bring greater value to you as a member. For one, we have already begun very active discussion about ways to further enhance the annual meeting. We are thinking about ways to create greater engagement opportunities for our meeting attendees, with bigger audiences for those who have been selected to give oral presentations. We are also talking about optimizing the club sessions, by focusing on state-of-the-art topics and by developing ways for all trainees to attend. Additionally, we are exploring ways that we can collaborate with our colleagues who attend SSGIM. This represents a major opportunity for alignment.

It is also important that our members benefit from the value that the SSCI provides – not only via the annual meeting, but throughout the year. One of the most important advances over this last year is that the organization has completely revamped its membership process. We have now created three membership categories – Member, Fellow and Emeritus - that will hopefully encourage greater participation across the breadth of individuals in our departments. I am especially enthusiastic about our most junior members, and we will be creating additional ways for them to get involved with the organization. The idea is that members will ascend the membership ladder to become Fellows. Additionally, these categories will allow a broad spectrum of individuals in all realms of academics to join and to become engaged.

One additional point – about SSCI’s scientific journal – *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences*. The journal has never been stronger, and under the capable guidance of Dr. Jesse Roman, promises to continue to rise. Thus, I invite you to look carefully at the journal and encourage you to submit your work there. You will find the reviews to be carried out quickly and with exceptional quality and the value of the articles to be outstanding.

Finally, I would love to hear your ideas. Thus, please feel free to reach out to me directly at [rockey@musc.edu](mailto:rockey@musc.edu) or call me at 843-792-2914. I look forward to working with you all to bring you SSCI’s best this next year.

Please stay safe and be well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Don C. Rockey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Don" being the most prominent.

Don C. Rockey, MD, President  
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