Well, it was April Fools Day but there was no foolishness going on in Houston, Texas. It was all business. It was the Annual Meeting of the ACCE Healthcare Technology Foundation. A jam packed agenda that did allow for a little networking and camaraderie. Upon arrival on Friday afternoon the group attended a fantastic tour and discussion roundtable at Cyberonics (see www.cyberonics.com).

Cyberonics, Inc. (NASDAQ: CYBX) pioneered the Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS Therapy™) System. Founded in 1987 to design, develop and market implantable medical devices for the treatment of epilepsy and other debilitating neurological disorders, Cyberonics has emerged as a leader in the neuromodulation industry.

The VNS Therapy System uses a surgically implanted medical device that delivers electrical pulsed signals to the vagus nerve in the left side of the neck. This therapy has proven effective in significantly reducing the number and/or intensity of seizures in many people suffering from epilepsy and has the potential for use in the treatment of other inadequately treated, chronic disorders.

That evening we reviewed all we learned over a fabulous Mediterranean buffet, what great falafel and baklava! Everyone attempted to obtain a good night’s sleep as the agenda for official business on Saturday was jam packed.

Yadin David started our Saturday with the following opening statement from his President’s Report:

Our Foundation continues to serve the founders’ mission and to act as a catalyst for widening the derived benefits of our combined expertise and thus to guide positive changes in deployment of our practices. Our Foundation continues to enjoy excellent brand recognition and to
be associated with core professional and ethical values. During the past year emphasis was put on establishing governance protocols, recruitment of board members and on fund raising activities. In addition, based on comments received during the past year from ACCE members and from representatives of industry – an increase in overall recognition for the Foundation’s vision was noted. Coverage in professional publications has been extremely positive and is increasing in volume of articles mentioning our Foundation’s purpose and work. It is exciting to note that we continued to receive financial contributions from board members, individual ACCE members, hospitals and from the medical devices industry. In addition, the Foundation entered into beneficial relationships with large organizations, such as ECRI and Cannon Communications, contributing to larger presence of our mission to potential future fund raising targets. The Foundation today is better funded more established and continues to serve its mission with vigor.

Yadin David continued his President’s report and summarized our accomplishments over the past year and vision for the next year. The rest of the morning was dedicated to governance issues. The treasurer’s report was presented and the financial situation of the Foundation is excellent and many projects moving forward with the available funding. We tackled the review of important IRS obligations and everyone obtained a better understanding of what their expectations are and our duty as Board members to meet those obligations.

We then proceeded with nominations. We began by reviewing the candidates, our bylaws, and approved the formation of an Advisory Board. Two candidates were elected: Dave Dickey and Denise Korniewicz. Three new candidates were elected to the Board: Hank Stankiewicz, Jim Wear, and Henry Montenegro. Three were reelected to the Board: Elliot Sloane, Frank Painter, and Tobey Clark. Welcome new members!

We then tackled the concept of a succession plan. Though we would all like to see all the executive officers stay forever we know that cannot occur. The Board approved for Henry Montenegro to assume the role as Treasurer, pending a transition phase. Over the next few months and before September 1st, Yadin David will move into an open position in a President Elect role, Wayne Morse will move into the President role, Jennifer Ott will move into the Vice President role and Jim Wear will move into the Secretary role. Whew! We were impressed with our progress and though we were a bit behind on our lengthy agenda we had accomplished a lot. Next were project updates.

1) Clinical Alarm Management and Integration
The clinical alarm report is obtaining the final touches before publication. The data from the survey provided great insight and depth to the problem scope. ECRI was very instrumental in providing content on alarm technology, standards and historical alarm issues. The report will certainly be published for the Clinical Engineering community but more importantly to our fellow clinicians. The committee is reviewing other publishable journals. The core report met the goals of the committee. Congratulations to Tobey Clark for his fine leadership and accomplishments.

Future goals include the development of a paper to publish in other medical venues, further data analysis and paper development, and comment analysis and paper development. The concept of a vendor and committee roundtable is also on the horizon to take this project to the next level. Tobey Clark is always on the look-out for fresh faces that can help support and even lead portions of this project. If you have any interest please contact Tobey at Tobey.Clark@ITS.UVM.EDU.

2) Professional Credentialing Committee

Since the program started there have been 44 applicants and 31 who have successfully passed the written exam. The overall pass rate has been 70%. There are more candidates scheduled to take the written exam in June and 12 who passed in November scheduled to take their oral exams in June. Another exam is planned for November 18th. Please check our website for additional information on deadlines, study assistance, and application materials. ACCE will be hosting a certification study session around the AAMI conference and information is available on the ACCE website. The Healthcare Technology Certification Commission is reviewing the body of knowledge results to determine the necessity to develop additional questions for the test bank. There are currently over 130 certified clinical engineering in the United States. All clinical engineers are encouraged to pursue certification and to maintain their certification through the renewal process.

3) Patient Safety and Education Committee

The brochure developed based upon the first educational module “Taking Medical Devices from Home to Hospital” is printed in both English and Spanish. The next phase is the development of a marketing plan for the brochure so that we can ensure it gets to those who can use it and meet our core mission of public education. If you know of any venues please contact Ode Keil, any assistance is greatly appreciated. Future plans include further promotion of the education module program in order to develop more tools for public education. Author solicitation is forthcoming for additional educational module development.
4) Clinical Engineering Excellence or CE^2

The goal is to promote patient safety through excellence in clinical engineering practice and technology management. This will include the development of benchmarks and indicators to survey programs and also assess leadership competency. Working with a consultant from Harvard on leadership development and trying to include what makes a clinical engineering leader excellent, what is the current baseline and what is required to bridge the gap? This project is currently in its infancy. Preliminary discussions with industry are very favorable. Yadin David is currently chairing with other Board member assistance. Look for further information in future updates.

5) Website

Our website is undergoing construction right now to make it easier to navigate and get all the great projects out and in the open. Hop on the internet and check it out!

6) Vendor Roundtable

This is the second annual meeting where we have allotted time to a vendor to come and brainstorm with the group on concepts they may be pursuing or other items of joint interest. Dr. Matthew Bloom, a general surgeon and trauma surgeon, and a member of the Tyco/Nellcor Advisory Board met with the group to review and discuss advances in wireless technologies and physiological parameters. We particularly reviewed the requirements for those who need the information, i.e. clinicians and the technological issues for those who oversee installation and service.

7) Future Areas of Interest

The Board discussed a resolution which Yadin David is taking forth to the medical device industry in the form of an operational editorial in a prominent journal: The ACCE Healthcare Technology Foundation call on representatives of the industry, regulatory and user communities to join in a collaborative initiative, led by the Foundation, to identify a framework for enhancing patient safety that will overcome the current lack of effective cooperation between these groups when evaluating adverse medico-surgical events that involve technology. Additional information and feedback will be shared once the editorial hits the stands.

8) Fundraising:
When you are part of such a fabulous 501©3 organization with such a great Board you hope that fundraising would just fall into your lap. However, that is not the case. It is still and always will be one of our biggest challenges. Without it we cannot continue with the great projects mentioned above or even consider new ventures. We appreciate any assistance you can provide either personally or through contacts with vendors you routinely work with every day. Should you wish to assist please contact Wayne Morse at vicepresident@accefoundation.org.

The ACCE Healthcare Technology Foundation had a very successful Annual Meeting and we continue to move forward on many projects. We again would like to thank our supporters. If you have any interests in a specific initiative please contact Yadin David or Jennifer Ott. We thank you for your support of the Foundation’s mission either personally or through your daily contacts. More information is available at our website: http://www.acce-htf.org.

A non-profit organization advancing healthcare through technology

Jennifer C. Ott, MSBME
Secretary
ACCE Healthcare Technology Foundation
secretary@acce-htf.org

Yadin David, PhD, CCE, PE, HCSP
President
ACCE Healthcare Technology Foundation
president@acce-htf.org