

Meet Our NEACSM Past President



NEACSM's 15th President: Donald A. Mahler

Education: BS - Butler University, MD - Loyola University of Chicago Stritch School of Medicine

Current or most recent affiliation: Director of Respiratory Services at Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, New Hampshire

Honors & Awards: New England Chapter Honor Award

Professional Interests: Evaluation, measurement, and treatment of dyspnea in COPD

NEACSM Service

1. What first inspired you to enter the Exercise Science/Sports Medicine Field? What made you decide to pursue your advance degree and/or line of research/service?

Exercise testing is one approach/stimulus to understand what limits activity performance in patients with respiratory impairment.

2. As a student, who were your mentors and what role did they play in your professional development? As a professional, was there anyone who was also instrumental in your career

As prominent respiratory physiologists, both Karlman Wasserman, MD, PhD, and Norman Jones, MD, PhD, inspired me. I had numerous interactions with these talented individuals.

Gunnar Borg, PhD, was another important person in my professional development as he provided guidance and encouragement when I started to apply the 0 – 10 Borg scale for patients to quantify dyspnea and leg discomfort during exercise.

3. What is it about Exercise Science/Sports Medicine that still inspires you today?

Exercise testing is an integrative approach to identify what limits a person's ability to perform physical tasks.

4. Why and how did you decide to get with NEACSM? How did your service help you grow as a professional?

As a young faculty member at Dartmouth, I was alone in my professional interests in exercise testing/science. The NEACSM provided a great opportunity to meet others with similar interests and to network. I then served on the Board and later became President.

5. What are your most memorable moments from your service to NEACSM?

The social get-togethers on the eve of the NE Chapter Annual Meetings. The real highlight was Lee Cunningham's homemade zucchini bread washed down with beer.

6. What were some of the main issues confronting NEACSM at the time of your presidency?

The goal was to make the Annual Meeting better and better each year by having national keynote speakers and promoting less traditional disciplines of exercise health/science.

7. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to NEACSM?

As a pulmonologist, I brought a unique interest and perspective to the New England chapter.

8. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to the field of Exercise Science/Sports Medicine?

The application of the 0 – 10 Borg scale for patients with respiratory disease to rate both levels of dyspnea and leg discomfort during exercise. With the late John C. Baird, PhD, we received NIH support and developed a computerized system with mouse and monitor for subjects/patients to provide continuous ratings (“whenever you experience a change”) in these symptoms throughout exercise.

9. What advice would you have for future leaders of NEACSM?

Provide interesting educational activities that enable members to meet and network. Mutual interests and collaboration may then develop as it for me.

10. What advice would you give to students who are looking to pursue a career in Exercise Science/Sports Medicine?

As I have told my four children, follow your dream and pursue your interests. Work hard and you will achieve success.

Educational website for those with COPD and family members: <http://www.donaldmahler.com>