

OTA Tip-of-the-Month – May 2012

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Our past president Andrew Pollak certainly understood his potential in this realm. Andy's efforts to raise public awareness and obtain funding for war-related extremity injury research proved tremendously effective and continue to influence government policy on this and related issues.

Trauma is the number one killer of Americans under the age of forty-four and is the fifth leading cause of death overall. Because of our opportunities to help patients over-come injury-related disabilities, we are intimately involved in enabling injured members of the productive workforce to return to work and lead fruitful lives! In addition, our efforts enable the most valiant group of all, our military veterans, to return to "life well lived" after severe combat-related trauma. We deal daily with what are commonly referred to as "White Hat" issues – that is – our efforts to improve care for our patients appear, and are, far less self-serving than those of many other interest groups that advocate on Capitol Hill. Furthermore, improving orthopaedic trauma care provides social and economic benefits for all of society, far beyond the personal interests of a group of surgical sub-specialists.

When we talk with our local, state and national leaders, we should always advocate on behalf of the patients and never for our personal interests. Always introduce yourself as an orthopaedic trauma surgeon – it gets their attention and helps identify you as a selfless servant of society, endeavoring to help the misfortunate often at your own personal cost. Remind elected officials of the tremendous benefit that our treatment makes in the lives of their constituents – especially with personal stories of fantastic recoveries. Tell them of the significant advances in care resulting from the research that we have done. Leave them with an "ask" – something that you came to ask them to do for the benefit of the injured patient. Through this process, you can become a trusted advisor to elected leaders of our country and advance the care for the trauma patient!

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