

COUNTDOWN TO BOSTON

20 DAYS



"U" is for Updates

Are we still meeting in Boston?

Yes, absolutely. Only the city of Boston and/or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can shut down the 50th/Golden Anniversary Meeting at the Hynes Convention Center at this point. Cases are rising in many parts of the country, and beginning to plateau in others. With 40-50% of our members within a day's drive of Boston, and this being the 50th/Golden Anniversary Meeting, I feel we need to hold on to the prospect of meeting in person as long as possible, hoping for movement in a positive direction a week or two before the meeting, prepared for the possibility there may not be. The virtual meeting platform will be fully ready for prime time the last week of September. Déjà vu all over again....

How many are registered as of September 9?

837 for Boston (888, including guests); 311 for Virtual.

What are the contingency plans?

Live in-Boston registrations can transfer to virtual registration any time (or vice versa) by contacting registration@childneurologysociety.org and referencing your confirmation #. If Boston/Hynes cancels, registration will automatically be assigned to the Virtual Meeting.

What basic protocols are in place for the meeting?

1. Masks will be mandatory in the convention center (speakers may remove their mask during presentation).
2. Vaccination is requested and, frankly, expected among our attendees, but there will be no active, across-the-board monitoring or enforcement related to proof of vaccination. See "V is for Vaccination (Proof of...)" below.
3. Social distancing will prevail both by design and default (ie the # of likely attendees is 50 per cent below the originally projected 1800).
4. Cancelled: history-based scavenger hunt in exhibit hall and the 70s-theme for Friday reception; Reception is still happening: just "come as you are" and have a good time with great company, great food, and great music.

What deadlines apply to presenters?

1. **Posters.** PDF uploaded by **September 8**. See guidelines on CNS Website Annual Meeting page. <https://www.childneurologysociety.org/colleagues/network/cns-annual-meeting/>
2. **Speakers** (symposia, seminars, platforms):
 - Presenting in Boston? Must upload and check in to Speaker Ready Room 24 hours before session begins.
 - Presenting virtually from home/office? Zoom link will be provided to present live, in real-time from your computer.

What about alumni receptions?

Program chairs and coordinators: [click here to go to application portal](#)(SurveyMonkey).

Limited rooms available Wednesday, Thursday, Friday nights at the Hynes. Will refer to Boston CVB to help find and book offsite venues.

Further Updates:

Check CNS Website. Updates will also be included in daily Countdown to Boston *Connections*.

"V" is for Vaccination (Proof of....)

I seem to have come full circle. In my "L is for LaCrosse" entry I played with the notion that 50 years ago my wilder 17-year-old self might conceivably have joined with friends, the sons and daughters of Mayo Clinic doctors, and using a fake ID to pass as an 18-year-old, taken a seat in the Holiday Inn Bar next to the "La Crosse 8" as they busily plotted a future association of child neurologists in September 1971. It's a classic counterfactual history "What if?" moment. What if, say, we had disrupted that foundational meeting? Would we have unwittingly delayed momentum toward forming the CNS and holding its first meeting in Ann Arbor? Or, what if instead, 10 years later, Ken Swaiman walked into the outer office at the U of M Division of Pediatric Neurology on my first day on the job, looked me over quizzically and asked "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" I absolutely would not be writing this entry today.

What if the technology used to create fake IDs improved so much over the past 50 years that it might now be 50x easier to forge a proof of vaccination card getting me into a medical association meeting than it was creating a fake ID to drink beer in a Wisconsin bar in 1971? Too far-fetched? I don't think so. And while that's far from being the sole basis of my resistance to requiring proof of vaccination to get into the CNS Annual Meeting, it will serve as an entry point for laying out some of my reasons for not requiring proof of vaccination as an entry into the Hynes Convention Center.

As it happens, "POV" is an acronym for both "Proof of Vaccination" and "Point of View," a telling coincidence. For, in many respects, "Proof of Vaccination" is more of a perspective than it is an effective preventative measure. It won't, as it turns out, fully keep you from being infected or even infecting others. Nor is it designed to. It's designed to mitigate the serious outcomes that might present if you do get infected. It's a security blanket that might help you sleep better at night, but it won't keep you safe from all harm. Because there are so many other variables out there, so many other threats to your health and safety, some of which you can control, most of which you can't.

If the CNS were meeting in a self-contained resort, as we did in Phoenix in 1997, or hoped to last year at the San Diego Marriott conference center and hotel, we might plausibly be able to control our environment enough to make mandatory vaccination a workable requirement rather than just a reasonable request for our meeting at the Hynes Convention Center in downtown Boston. But we are not alone in Boston; we are not even alone at the Hynes. Another group will be meeting on the front end of our meeting, whose policies and activities we have no control over. Nor do we have control over who enters the Hynes itself, whether from Boylston Street (one block away from where the bomb went off near the finish line of the 2013 Boston Marathon, for those clinging to illusions of 100% security), or the Prudential Center, a heavily trafficked skyway-level mall with dozens of shops and restaurants, connecting the Hynes to the Sheraton, the Marriott, and the Westin Hotel, among others. Attendees will be coming from those and other nearby hotels, none of which, I'm sure require proof of vaccination, and native Bostonians will be commuting from homes full of kids coming home from school.

You yourself will be coming to the meeting after having spent an hour or more in one or more airports and another 2-3 hours on an airplane, none of which require proof of vaccination. You may very well have, just the day before, seen unvaccinated patients, moved about in hospitals that are either considering or have begun newly implementing mandatory vaccination policies, but have not yet done so or have set deadlines falling weeks after the CNS Meeting ends. So why, I am asking, in all seriousness ("obtuseness," you may say), the sudden, insistence by some on Proof of Vaccination to get into the CNS meeting? If we have no control over the far larger and more numerous threats to your health and safety before and after you enter the Hynes for the meeting each day, why pretend to do so within the meeting space itself? Because pretense is all it is. Your rational mind, the one that tells you "trust the science" knows this to be true. Meanwhile, the irrational fears, anger and anxieties we all have seen tick upward in the past 18 months wells up inside of you, compelling you to cry out: "Do something!"

You know that cry. It's all too familiar. What do you do when a parent, holding a shaking or listless child in their arms, looks you in the eye and through gritted teeth cries, "Do something!"? Do you

prescribe a drug or enroll them in a clinical trial you know won't help the child, but will at least offer visible evidence you are "doing something?" No, you don't. Nor will I in this particular situation prescribe a remedy to plausible fears about one's health and safety that might quell the fears but will do little or nothing to substantively address overall safety. We will all be in relatively highly secure environment just by virtue of the fact that 99 per cent of attendees are likely vaccinated (granting, of course, that is no guarantee against breakthrough infections; something two support staff for the meeting wrestled with in the past two weeks). Masks will be required in all areas of the Hynes, the CNS staff is fully vaccinated, and our vendors have policies, some including proof of vaccination or negative tests, that will be posted and available on the CNS website.

That is as good as we can practically do at this point, which is why we say vaccination is requested and expected, but not required; the latter term suggests levels of monitoring and enforcement we cannot honestly provide. I know several associations are scrambling to get something in place for meetings beginning 2-4 months from now, not 3 weeks. Nobody knows how they can vet companies charging exorbitant fees for these services based on no real track record, no viable data set by which to measure their ability to fully perform contracted services. And nothing less than "fully" will do. In which case, it really is just a security blanket, isn't it?

We have all dwelt too long in a pandemic-panicked world that has eroded nearly all our reserves of Keatsian "negative capability," that capability "of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason." There are too many uncertainties involved in holding a meeting in an urban environment beyond even the pretense of control. Pretending to shield oneself against all those uncertainties with a little piece of cardboard, and an easily forged one at that, will not do. All that one can do at this point is inventory individual risk thresholds; they will differ for each person based on as many variable considerations as there are variable and variants encompassing the Hynes, Boston, New England, and the entire web of airports from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

If, by not requiring Proof of Vaccination, I am preventing you from coming to Boston, I am truly, deeply sorry. Surely, by now, after 35 years, you know that. But I have, or rather, Sue Hussman has, provided you with an option: a virtual meeting platform that will deliver 90% of the CME content livestreamed from the Hynes Convention Center, the only threat to your safety being your family and the colleagues surrounding you daily. Anyone who wishes to may email registration@childneurologysociety.org to request their registration for the live meeting in Boston be converted to the virtual meeting. Those gathered in Boston will miss you. I will miss you. I wish it were otherwise.

Until tomorrow ("T")
Roger

Roger Larson, CAE
Executive Director

On-line Registration is Open!

Registration is now open for the long awaited 50th Golden Anniversary Meeting of the Child Neurology Society in Boston. Registrants attending this milestone meeting live and in-person in Boston will want to register early (some sessions are limited and reservation-only). You will also want to book hotel rooms ASAP. A link and access code to the Sheraton Boston Hotel will be included in your registration confirmation email.

[Click to Register](#)

2021 CNS 50th Annual Meeting

For more information, click button below.

[Click for More Info](#)



