

EDITORIAL

Cynthia A. Stuenkel, MD, NCMP, 2009-2010 NAMS President

Dr. Cynthia Stuenkel became the 2009-2010 President of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) in San Diego, CA, during the society's 20th annual meeting on September 30 – October 3, 2009. She follows Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton and will serve a 1-year term.

A founding member of NAMS, Dr. Stuenkel is a clinical professor of medicine at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), School of Medicine and an attending physician for the university's Endocrinology and Metabolism Service. She is a board-certified internist and endocrinologist.

Dr. Stuenkel's interest in menopause was forged during her UCSD reproductive endocrinology fellowship. "While attending patient information sessions with Sonia Hamburger, a founding NAMS member, I was struck by hearing the same story over and over from women whose symptoms were not understood and whose needs were not being met. As a fellow of Dr. Samuel S.C. Yen, I had the opportunity to learn more about gynecology and reproductive hormones than most internists. And as an internist, I brought knowledge about osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease to the table, topics less familiar to most gynecologists at the time. Working with women facing the challenges of menopause seemed a perfect fit for me."

After completing her fellowship, Dr. Stuenkel established the Comprehensive Menopause Program at UCSD. It was at that time that she learned about Dr. Wulf Utian and his menopause work in South Africa. "I was thrilled to enlist as a founding member of NAMS. Meeting Wulf and other luminaries at my first NAMS meeting in Montreal constituted a most memorable event. In San Diego, our UCSD clinical program was a success. Our unique focus was recognized by the television news program *20/20* in a 1990 segment on menopause. I realized for the first time the power of working with the media to help reach the widest possible audience."

In the early 1990s, enthusiasm for recommending menopausal hormone therapy (HT) for the prevention of disease, particularly cardiovascular disease, came into vogue. Although clinical practice revealed the breadth and depth of the menopause experience, it soon became clear that questions about menopause and HT often exceeded the available answers. At this juncture, Dr. Stuenkel began her work with Dr. Elizabeth Barrett-Connor in the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, at UCSD. The Postmenopausal Estrogen and Progestin Interventions trial was underway, and the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS) was on the horizon.

"It was a perfect opportunity for testing hypotheses derived from observational studies. I wanted to help establish whether hormones really delivered on the promises we were making to the women we faced across the consultation table."

Dr. Stuenkel's clinical research interests include HT, heart disease, and preventive strategies for postmenopausal health. An investigator in numerous key clinical trials of postmenopausal women's health, Dr. Stuenkel has been involved in pivotal trials such as the HERS, the Raloxifene Use for the Heart, and the Long-Term Interventions on Fractures with Tibolone. "The real satisfaction of clinical trial work, beyond seeking and gleaming answers to the questions of the day," says Dr. Stuenkel, is meeting and working with the incredible women who volunteer to participate and experiencing the network of national and international investigators.

As a dedicated member of NAMS since its inception in 1989, Dr. Stuenkel has served on numerous committees, including the Professional Education Committee (1998-2006); Abstract Review Committee (1999-2006); Scientific Program Committee (2001, 2005-2007, and 2009); Ethics Committee (2006-present; chair, 2007-present); Research Committee (2006-2007); Strategic Marketing Relationships Committee (chair, 2007); Board of Trustees (2005-present; secretary, 2007); Finance Committee, (2008); and Exam Committee (2008-present; chair, 2010). Dr. Stuenkel is a frequent contributor to many NAMS educational activities and to *Menopause Management*, which includes her popular annual "Top 10 Stories in Menopause."

One of Dr. Stuenkel's ongoing goals is to further the awareness of women and their providers of new developments in the science of HT. After the initial announcement of the results of the Women's Health Initiative in 2002, Dr. Stuenkel was recruited as a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Task Force on Hormone Therapy, formed in 2004 under the leadership of Dr. Nanette Santoro and Dr. Isaac Schiff. As an active member of The Endocrine Society, Dr. Stuenkel also serves on the Women's Health Task Force of The Hormone Foundation (its consumer education area) and, among other activities, coauthored with Dr. Nanette Santoro the 2009 fact



sheet for women, *Menopause Management: Hormone Therapy and Alternative Treatments*. She is also a diplomat of the American College of Physicians. Dr. Stuenkel serves on the advisory panel that has updated the past three NAMS HT position statements, which serve as a guide worldwide. She has authored or coauthored numerous reviews, invited papers, and book chapters.

Dr. Stuenkel serves on the editorial boards of *Menopause*, *Menopause Management*, and the ACOG consumer resource *Pause* and the journal review boards of journals including *Menopause*, *Circulation*, *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, *Journal of Reproductive Medicine*, *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *Women's Health in Primary Care*.

Dr. Stuenkel lectures locally, nationally, and internationally at women's health symposia on postmenopausal cardiovascular disease prevention, osteoporosis prevention and treatment, and breast cancer prevention. She founded and for 7 years has directed and moderated the annual 3-day UCSD Women's Health Issues in Primary Care course. She relishes opportunities to teach about menopause and interact with UCSD medical students, residents, fellows, and faculty.

Dr. Stuenkel has appeared in local, national, and international media to discuss women's health, including the BBC, Medscape, MSNBC.com, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, and *MORE* magazine. She has provided regular women's health segments for the ABC-TV affiliate in San Diego. In 2001, she was named the American Heart Association's (AHA) First Women's Legacy honoree in recognition of her efforts to promote cardiovascular health in women. In 2004, she was the recipient of the NAMS Consumer Healthcare Education Excellence Award.

Dr. Stuenkel received her undergraduate degree from Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH, graduating magna cum laude, and she received her medical degree from the University of Illinois in Chicago, where she won the Outstanding Graduate Award. She completed her internship and residency at the University of Chicago. Dr. Stuenkel was a clinical research fellow at Harvard Medical School in the Endocrine Hypertension Division at Brigham and Women's Hospital, as well as a research fellow in reproductive endocrinology at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Stuenkel was awarded the Andrew Mellon Foundation Faculty Scholar Award from UCSD in 1988.

"The 2009-2010 NAMS President is no stranger to the Society," said Dr. Wulf Utian, NAMS Founding Executive Director. "Dr. Cynthia Stuenkel's level of involvement in all aspects of the organization has been extraordinary. During this critical term, when I retire after 20 years as Executive Director and Dr. Margery Gass takes the helm, Dr. Stuenkel's

knowledge of and devotion to NAMS will be indispensable in meeting the many challenges to come."

Outside of the medical arena, Dr. Stuenkel is a board member and immediate past-president of The Charter 100, a women's networking group in San Diego that provides mentoring and financial support for emancipated minors who have "graduated" from the foster care system. She served 4 years on the executive board of the Francis Parker School Parents' Association, most recently as vice president of parent education. She is also on the board of directors for Camarada, a chamber music performing group. She and her husband have led fund-raising events for the San Diego chapter of the AHA and Sharp Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Stuenkel lives with her husband of 26 years, Dr. Brian Jaski, an invasive cardiologist in private practice. "Our adventure began as house staff in Chicago, and we moved together from Boston to La Jolla, CA. As we look back over our decades of marriage, besides the incomparable blessing of our daughter, the milestones in our lives together fall into two categories: great parties and great trips." Most recently, their travels took them south of Shanghai to view the longest total solar eclipse of the century. Their daughter, K.C., whose travels began at 3 months of age and encompass six continents, recently passed on her gavel as high school student body president and enrolled as a freshman at Harvard College.

"It is my distinct honor and privilege to serve as president of NAMS at this pivotal juncture in our history," said Dr. Stuenkel. "As we enter our 21st year, there is no question that NAMS has come of age. While we face real challenges, our priority remains promoting the health and quality of life of women through an understanding of menopause and the years beyond. As we fulfill our vision to continue as the preeminent professional organization dedicated to this mission, we remain mindful of the uncertainties of the global economy, the increasingly stringent climate regarding conflict of interest, and the accelerating pace of US healthcare evolution. Our work is cut out for us.

Fortunately, we are ready. At NAMS, we continue to reap the benefits of our first-rate team in our central office. As we bid adieu to Dr. Utian, our incomparable founding executive director, we welcome our new Executive Director, Dr. Margery Gass, who brings incredible energy, experience, and enthusiasm to NAMS. Our diverse and indefatigable Board of Trustees is fully committed to building upon Dr. Utian's legacy while forging ahead with new initiatives. I hope we can count on each of you for your continued service to NAMS and the journal *Menopause* and support of our mission as we enter this next exciting phase."

The Editors