|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A picture containing person, sky, outdoor, person  Description automatically generated | **President’s Update Feb 2021** | A white circle with red text  Description automatically generated with low confidence |

Dear Colleagues, Fellow Members, Friends

A belated Happy New Year to you all from me and from the VASBI council. I can’t believe we are already into February. For most of us January has been a bit of a blur with another national lock down and many of us re-deployed or having to work very differently due to the effects of the latest wave of the pandemic on our services, colleagues and patients.

Many of us had huge hopes that as 2020 drew to a close we would enter into this year with the pandemic behind us and some form of normality returning. Little did we imagine in early December 2020 that things would be as bad as they have been this past couple of months with this second wave. To have seen the old and young, medically vulnerable and healthy as well as friends and family hit by the virus has been sobering to us all.

I continue to be struck by the incredible hard work that is going on in so many centres. I am particularly grateful to the many dialysis and vascular access nurses across the country who again in this latest wave have gone above and beyond for our renal patients. Many have provided round the clock dialysis care for a vulnerable and high-risk cohort of patients, many of whom have been COVID positive, whilst others have supported ITU settings to deliver acute dialysis care, putting patients first and themselves second. I am also hugely appreciative of the many clinicians including nephrologists, access surgeons and radiologists who have not only done all they can to maintain renal services to some extent but have also willingly worked outside their comfort zones and redeployed to COVID areas or supported other aspects of healthcare provision. A huge thank you to you all from me as president, from council and from our patients.

The start to 2021 has not only been challenging from a pandemic perspective but has also seen the passing of one of our admired and loved renal colleagues Donal O’Donoghue. We have all been deeply saddened and shocked by the news of his death from COVID 19 in early January.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Professor Donal O’Donoghue OBE was a consultant nephrologist who worked and dedicated most of his professional career to Salford Royal. He worked tirelessly to improve the care of kidney patients in his own unit and also across the UK and was consider by many to be the ‘big daddy’ of British Renal Medicine. Donal was the National Clinical Director for Kidney Care at the Department of Health from 2007-2013, where he worked to improve renal and vascular access services across the NHS. He was President of the Renal Association from 2016-2018, and Registrar at the Royal College of Physicians. He was awarded an OBE June 2018 in recognition for his dedicated service to kidney patients. He was kind, 'down-to-earth' and always happy to provide advice and help. Once he met you, he never forgot who you were or where you worked! | A person in a suit  Description automatically generated with low confidence  ***Donal O’Donoghue, OBE***    ***1956 - 2021*** |

As I look back at 2020 from a VASBI perspective I think there are huge amounts to celebrate. The 2020 Congress had to run virtually but was a huge success with 3 excellent industry sponsored sessions, a high-quality Scientific session and the usual high calibre and entertaining Mega MDT. The closing Vascular Access Nurses (VAN’s) session has provided an exciting platform to develop and nationally approved job description for the role and also mandated requirements regarding numbers required per dialysis patients in each unit. I know a number of you are working on this and hope to see something for consultation later in the year.

We sincerely hope that VASBI Congress 2021 will go ahead in person and at this point are planning for a face-to-face meeting in Glasgow on 16th and 17th September.

VASBI also had a strong presence at a number of other meetings in 2020 including VASA, CiDA, GEMAV and BSIR and that will continue into 2021 starting with the VAS meeting that is now virtual and on 6th – 9th April. Do sign up if interested. It is an exciting progamme.

VASBI has also contributed to a range of discussions and guideline developments in 2020 including the exciting amalgamation of the BRS and RA which will hopefully come to fruition this year. More recently we have developed a key position statement on the importance of maintaining and /or restarting dialysis access programmes with clear recommendations around key surgical procedures that must be offered for renal patients to ensure they start dialysis with definitive access and also have opportunity for access to be maintained. This statement should have been circulated and is also available on the website.

Finally, can I encourage as many of you as possible to ensure that you are signed up members to the organisation. It enables us to keep connected with you and also will ensure you get reduced rates at our annual meetings when they restart. You will also have access to the members area and a range of education material.

Please do stay safe and get some rest to recharge. I very much look forward to us all meeting again very soon

With Best Wishes

James Gilbert

VASBI President