

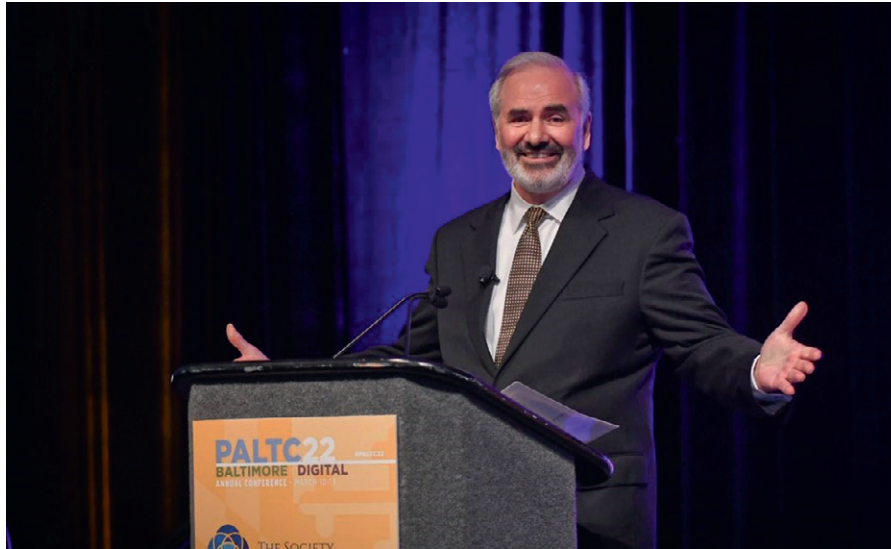
NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

Laxton Leaves a Legacy of Growth, Change, and Innovation

Ten years ago, Christopher Laxton, CAE, became the executive director of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. He brought with him 35 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, governance, and operations, as well as firsthand knowledge of the workings of PALTC. Last year, Mr. Laxton announced that he would be retiring this spring, and *Caring* sat down with him in January 2023 to reflect on his tenure with the organization, his fondest memories, and the tremendous impact he has had on the organization so many PALTC practitioners call their professional home.

In many ways, Mr. Laxton's past led him to the Society. In his role as executive director, he has been able to use his skills and experience in management, medical publishing, credentialing, strategic planning, and more to lead the Society. "I've had the opportunity to use a career's worth of experience in this position, and that has been very gratifying," he said.

As he looks to his time after the Society, Mr. Laxton said that he will most miss the people. "I have great admiration and affection for our volunteer leaders and members. They bring so much of themselves to a field that is not well understood. Our volunteers have very robust involvement, and we have a strong board of directors," he explained. "I've also been fortunate to work with a committed, hardworking staff. They've shown great agility and passion, even in the most trying of times. I'm very proud of our team."



Christopher Laxton at PALTC22 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Although the volunteer leadership and staff are small in number, Mr. Laxton noted, they have had a huge impact. He said, "Our reputation in the field is that we must be a large organization with lots of people, but we actually are small and lean. The strength of our volunteers has really allowed us to punch above our weight class."

Challenges and Legacies

Mr. Laxton's time at the Society has been marked by many successes as well as some challenges. "When I first joined the organization, we had moved away from pharma industry support, and we had to build a very different business model. There were some years of deficits, but I am pleased with our cash management. We have only gone into our line of credit once in 10 years, and that was to build a

strong infrastructure and to upgrade our database and website. That is a source of great pride," he said.

Of course, the pandemic was beyond devastating. "COVID itself presented a huge clinical challenge. We knew so little about it, just that it presented a huge risk to our residents. We didn't know if we had the tools and resources to protect them. [Personal protective equipment] was in short supply, and we didn't have a vaccine. We had to find ways to address all this," he said. The organization responded with great efficiency, energy, and teamwork.

During the pandemic, the Society started putting out information daily, particularly to address rumors and misinformation in real time. They also started an online discussion group where people could share expertise and

ask questions; and the organization held COVID-specific webinars and podcasts. "There was so much anxiety and fear, and we were able to help dampen this. I was pleased to be in a leadership role during this time, but I can't take credit for our response to COVID. Our volunteer leaders, members, and staff worked tirelessly, and I'm incredibly proud of them," Mr. Laxton said.

He is also pleased to have led the Society into a new era of membership. The organization is no longer just about medical direction. It now speaks to and serves other members of the interdisciplinary team, including nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and more. Additionally, he said, "We're not just nursing homes anymore. We are committed to the entirety of the post-acute and long-term care setting and providing strategies, tools, and resources to support all PALTC settings."

More than ever, Mr. Laxton noted, the Society has an impact well beyond its membership. "It's important to offer resources to those beyond our membership. For instance, during the pandemic our COVID information and resources were available to everyone, and that is still true. We also have webinars and other programs, such as the Drive to Deprescribe and More of a Good Thing initiatives, that are available for everyone," he said. "The more we do this, the more we extend our mission to the entire clinical team and have a greater impact."

A growing and strong advocacy program is another success Mr. Laxton nurtured. "We didn't do Hill visits [to Washington, DC] before, but I was persuasive about their value. And we've done them every year since I started here," he said. Of course, they weren't held during the pandemic, although they did have some Zoom meetings with legislators and their staff. As a result of these efforts and the relationships established, the Society was able to get a bipartisan bill introduced to mandate that nursing homes disclose who their medical director is. "This is a huge accomplishment that was 10 years in the making," said Mr. Laxton. "If it is signed into law, I want to be part of the signing ceremony."

Goodbye, Hello

Mr. Laxton will miss much when he steps down as executive director. "I will especially miss the collegiality of our AMDA family. I love working with our volunteers, and I will miss all our members and staff," he said. However, he will have a full plate with a move to Portland, OR, where he and his wife are building a house next to their daughter's home. "I will be spending much of my time chasing my grandchildren, and I'm looking forward to that," he said with a smile.

President

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offered me the inspiration, knowledge, and community that I needed. The rest, as they say, is history.

At our 2023 Annual Conference in Tampa, I am elated to be ushering in the largest number of Foundation Futures participants ever: about 90 including 12 advanced practice clinicians! Please join me in welcoming these new members of our Society. In number, diversity, and commitment, they embody the evolution and impact of PALTC. They are the future leaders of our field, and they are needed now more than ever.



Dr. Gillespie is president of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care. She lives in Rochester, New York, where she is associate professor of medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 9-12, 2023

PALTC23

Tampa, FL

Website: <https://bit.ly/3QXC1iE>

April 19, 2023

NCSPALTC Annual Seminar

Sioux Falls, SD

Website: <http://bit.ly/3jXKjMK>

April 19, 2023

Parkinson's Disease: 21 Pearls from Sub-Specialty Practice

Website: <http://bit.ly/3K7RJJaR>

April 28, 2023

CMDA Annual Conference

Website: <https://cmda.us/event-4819273>

May 17, 2023

NYMDA Spring Education Meeting

Albany, NY

Website: <http://bit.ly/3YT5PRS>

July 21-23, 2023

Core Synthesis Summer Session

San Antonio, TX

Website: <https://bit.ly/3j1XDyJ>

August 25-26, 2023

Ohio Long-Term Care Symposium

Dublin, OH

Website: <http://bit.ly/3YwKCx1>

October 14-15, 2023

CPALTC Annual Meeting

Charlotte, NC

Website: <http://bit.ly/3K7e2gP>

December 1-3, 2023

Core Synthesis Virtual Fall Session

Website: <https://bit.ly/3j1cFFa>