

FSNEURO

# FLORIDA SOCIETY OF NEUROLOGY

FEBRUARY 2026

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## Thank you to FSN members!

On behalf of the Florida Society of Neurology (FSN), we thank everyone who contributed to the success of the 2026 FSN Annual Meeting, held January 17–18 at Disney's Yacht & Beach Club Resort. With nearly 220 attendees, two concurrent tracks, 33 speakers, and 50 posters from students, residents, and fellows, this year's meeting set another record. A special mentoring session and an exciting Neurobowl further enriched the program. Thank you all for making this meeting such a success!

## Highlights from the 2026 FSN Annual meeting



### Fun at the FSN Neurobowl!

Our students and junior members lit up the room with sharp thinking, fast moves and big smiles. It was an evening filled with energy, learning and laughs. Thank you to the Education Committee and **Dr. Nikolaus McFarland, President-Elect**, for sparking the return of this fantastic FSN tradition!

### First-ever Mentor-Mentee Session

Huge thanks to our amazing mentors and mentees who made this inaugural session such a success! Special thanks also to **Erika Marulanda, MD, MS, FAAN** who organized the session and matched each of the mentor-mentees. We're excited to help inspire and support the next generation of neurology leaders in Florida and beyond!



# Research Symposium A Record Year Again!



We were thrilled to receive 50 poster submissions, another record, with strong representation across all subspecialties! Congratulations to our research award winners-

**Residents:** Vishwatha Hari Baskar, MBBS; Brandon Donley, MD; Bryan Valasco, DO

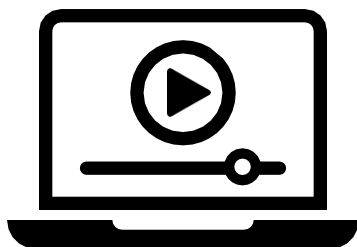
**Medical students:** Batul Yawer, Emily A. Holz, Manal Imran

**High school/college:** Samar Kaddoura, Sofia Malik, Ethan Hyunh

Special thanks to **Ilyssa Lazar**, FSN Executive Director, **Dr. Tim Hayes** of Academic CME, and **Sofia Peralta**, volunteer for their instrumental role in making the meeting possible. This year, we were proud to offer an outstanding lineup of cutting-edge research and clinical advancements from leading experts.

Special thanks to **Dr. Nikolaus McFarland**, FSN President-Elect, for his phenomenal leadership and the Education Committee, including **Drs. Bhavana Patel** and **Maria Bruzzone**, for planning a high-quality, engaging educational program.

Thank You to our Sponsors & Vendors. We extend our deep appreciation to all our sponsors and vendors for their generous support. Special thanks go to our **Bronze** sponsors, **UCB** and **Alnylam Pharmaceuticals**! Their contributions enable FSN to continue offering superb programming and meaningful professional engagement opportunities.



## VuMedi Access for FSN 2026 Annual meeting

Missed a session? No problem! Most lectures will be waiting for you on VuMedi, ready to replay whenever you want.

# Membership Highlights

## Enhancing Advocacy Efforts



Development of a new Advocacy Committee dedicated to protecting patient access to neurological care and supporting policies that advance our profession.

*Consider joining!*

## Expanding Educational Opportunities



Expanding Resident and Medical Student Committees to foster mentorship, education, and career development for the next generation of neurologists.

*We invite all students and residents/fellows to join!*

## Strengthening Year-Round Engagement

Creating more ways to stay connected and engaged between annual meetings.

## Subspecialty Chapters



Thanks to Dr. Maria Bruzzone & her leadership in establishing the Florida Epilepsy Chapter!

Initiatives include:

- Education Committee (UF, Miami, USF, Orlando Health, Mayo Clinic Jacksonville) & building a statewide centralized lecture repository.
- Launching quarterly, multicenter, fellow-led case conferences.
  - Planning Research and Clinical Care Committees.
- Building a durable statewide platform for epilepsy education, research, and care.

*More Subspecialty Chapters to come!*

## Telehealth in Florida



Florida faces a significant neurology workforce shortage, especially in rural areas. Tele-neurology expands access to specialist care statewide, allowing for telehealth visits by providers, and reduces unnecessary hospital transfers. Telehealth improves care for stroke, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, MS, migraine, and post-stroke disability.

Congress recently approved a critical extension of Medicare telehealth—originally set to expire in early 2026—through Dec 31, 2027. While this provides short-term stability, Congress is still debating long-term legislation to permanently remove these restrictions.

The FSN Board and Members sent a letter to Congress urging them to preserve Medicare telehealth flexibilities as a permanent component of care and will continue the advocate until they are permanently implemented.

## Message from incoming President:

# Nikolaus McFarland, MD, PhD, FAAN



*I would like to thank our Board, and especially our President, Dr. Teshamae Monteith, for her amazing leadership and example. Indeed, our past Presidents have all been inspiring and continue to provide input to the FSN. As I take the mantle, I hope to continue the tradition of strong leadership and collaboration with our Board of Directors and FSN members. As a Florida neurologist, I have come to understand the importance of the FSN's role in advancing neurological science and education, upholding standards for best practice, advocating for neurologists and neurological care alike, and fostering bonds between fellow neurologists, allied healthcare providers, industry, and the community at large.*

*My vision for the FSN is to make it a leading state society for neurologists to promote advances in neurological care and education in Florida. The FSN is already one of the strongest and most established state societies for neurology, but looking ahead we have room to grow, to lead, and to better serve Neurologists and our patients. To that end, I propose the following goals:*

- **Membership and Engagement.** *While our membership has grown, we need to reach out to more Florida neurologists and to grow more. We gain strength in numbers, diversity, and breadth, including learners, academic, private, and affiliates. More members also means stronger FMA representation.*
- **Advocacy.** *The FSN has a history of advocacy, yet we can do more. Advocacy can occur on multiple levels including personal, local, state, and federal Issues such as telemedicine access, coverage, prior authorizations, advanced-care practitioners, and ancillary services.*
- **Support (providers and patients/caregivers).** *I plan to advocate for a collegial, supportive, inclusive environment, integrity, ethical care, education and outreach.*
- **Outreach and Education.** *Mentorship Support of SIGN organizations, resident and fellowship programs . Annual meeting program committee to improve our educational offerings*

*In the coming years, I hope to work with all of you on these goals. I also hope to hear from you about your ideas and welcome new initiatives to foster growth of Neurology in Florida and the FSN.*

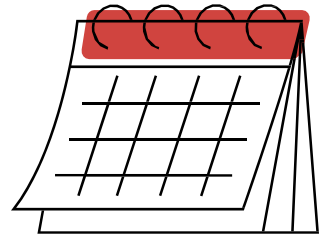
**Warm regards,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nikolaus McFarland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

**Nikolaus McFarland, MD, PhD, FAAN**  
**President, Florida Society of Neurology**

# Looking ahead to 2027

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Mark your calendars! The 2027 FSN Annual Meeting is tentatively set for **January 16–17 at Disney's Yacht Club Resort**. We hope to see you for another year of collaboration and learning. Thank you again for making this year's meeting a great success—we look forward to continuing this journey together!

## Support FSN - Renew or Join Today!

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**Your membership helps us maintain a strong society, ensuring FSN continues its vital work in advocacy, education, and professional development.**

Visit <https://fsneuro.org> to renew or join now!

**We are happy to maintain our fees as a very low cost.**

**FREE MEMBERSHIP for medical students & residents in Florida!**