



Like You, I am Angry

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Bryant Sheehy, MD

Why am I here?
Why did I let myself be in this position?

These are questions I may ask myself many times over this year as your President. I am, of course, honored and privileged to occupy this position, held by so many dedicated physicians since the organization of our Society in 1868.

Why? Because I am angry with so many aspects of the practice of medicine. And much of the blame is mine and my peers. For years we quietly cared for our patients while non-physician business opportunists took advantage of our profession.

While we cannot neglect our responsibilities to our patients, we do need to get involved in activities that preserve good healthcare. In a busy practice, this can seem impossible, but it can be done. It has to be done. If not, if we do not make the sacrifice, future generations (including our own descendants) will pay the price.

No one can accomplish these tasks but us! It is not too late! We can cure the problems in the delivery of healthcare! But it will take the cooperation and effort of all of us. I cannot imagine any physician not being angry with the predicament we find ourselves in today.

We can only be effective through organizations - our network of local medical societies, the California Medical Association and the American Medical Association. If you are not serving on a committee or performing a service for our Society, I implore you to contact the Society to find how you can best be of service.

It is very helpful for physician members to inform the Society Board of Directors of changes or problems in their areas of practice, or to make recommendations for Society action. The Society office can give you the name of your representative to the Board. With the participation of our members, the work of our Society and those elected to serve and represent you, we will preserve the quality of healthcare we all strive for. Then we can all smile again!

An earlier article by Ed Rudin, MD, quoted the inaugural address of H. Bert Ellis, MD, in 1904 as the California State Medical Society President:

"A physician who knows nothing and does nothing but his professional work, is ordinarily a poor doctor and is more likely to be at outs with the whole community. Narrowness of interest creates narrowness of mind, and no vocation needs broader minded grasp than medicine...

"Every practitioner of medicine should augment the strength and resources of a Nation or State and...protect its citizens in their rights and...preserve and improve their laws....Whenever medicine has touched politics, politics has been bettered, but whenever

corrupt politics has touched medicine, medicine has been smirched."

A physician's responsibility extends beyond the medical care of his patients. As your new president, I will strive to meet your expectations.

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