



WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The news from Western Africa is all about the tremendous human disaster of the Ebola pandemic. Thousands have died and the healthcare systems of these beleaguered nations have been stressed to beyond the breaking point. Western nations have intervened to stem the tide of this plague and President Obama has pledged 3000 United States military personnel to combat the virus. There have been outbreaks of Ebola before, but they never seemed to be a problem for us here in the American homeland. Our sense of security, based on belief and trust in the US health system plus an ocean of removal from Africa has been called into question by the recent spread of the disease to America's shores. One man travelling from Africa has died here and a healthcare worker who attended him has tested positive for the disease. Our thoughts and prayers are with those suffering.

I hope that those who have taken up public service as politicians will consider the fragility of complex systems and institutions as they work to make the system better with access for all. To date they have failed. The American people deserve better.

This unhappy episode once again highlights the advantages and blessings we seldom appreciate that accompany living here in the United States and enjoying American citizenship. Likewise, we seldom truly recognize and marvel at US healthcare, a 1.7 trillion dollar continental enterprise that cares for 330 million diverse individuals. We expect that it will not cost us too much for access even though we demand immediate response and high quality. We have come to enjoy such attributes as a right, a concept which is reinforced by the pronouncements and promises of various politicians.

To read this is to intuitively understand the potential unreasonable nature of such expectations; yet they persist because, so far, the system has delivered as promised for most Americans. We get away with this because we spend so much of our productivity as a

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LOUIS F. MCINTYRE, MD
President, WCMS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Doctors of Distinction Awards Ceremony
Thursday, October 30, 2014
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
The Bristol
Armonk, NY
- Holiday Party
Friday, December 12, 2014
6-9 p.m.
Orienta Beach Club
Mamaroneck, NY

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333 Westchester Ave., Suite LN01
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914.967.9100 / FAX 914.967.9232

PETER J. ACKER, MD
Editor

KAREN A. FOY
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*FROM THE EDITOR...***WEEKEND AT MANHATTANVILLE**
PETER J. ACKER, MD

Recently I participated in the Fall Writers Weekend at Manhattanville College, which is held every year. It was of some moment for me for a few reasons. Firstly, my participation secured my last two credits to fulfill the requirements for an MFA in writing. Secondly, it was led by the renowned Kenyan writer, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. I and ten other students spent long hours with him beginning on Friday night, extending all day and into the evening on Saturday, and continuing on until late afternoon on Sunday. Our time was spent talking, writing, and reading our work out loud. Mr. Thiong'o, a diminutive African man in his mid-seventies, gently guided us with suggestions and commentary. He talked a bit about his life, which is remarkable. He was born in rural Kenya and grew up in a small enclave which consisted of four huts - one for each of his father's four wives. He had twenty-five siblings. He gave a vivid description of his early schooling, sitting on an earthen floor with a small slate to write on. Later, his talent becoming apparent, he was smuggled across tribal lines to attend boarding school and eventually ended up in college. While in college he wrote a play which was critical of the government and he was imprisoned. He put his time to good use by writing his first novel on toilet paper! He is currently a professor of literature at the University of California, Irvine, and has authored numerous novels, two memoirs, and a host of scholarly articles on literature theory. You would never guess this by witnessing his low key charm and self-deprecating manner.

One of the assignments he asked us to do was to remember the first day we had come to the campus and to write about it. I have reproduced this assignment here.

My First Day at Manhattanville-Tale of A Late Bloomer

My first day at Manhattanville - I have no firm memory - I know that I somehow heard of Summer Writer's Week about eight years ago and decided to give it a go - but I don't have any real recollection of, for example, what the weather was like that first day, or what my impressions were as I strolled up to the castle. According to brain scientists, it is all up there stored but, like a messy attic, a single item would be hard to find. Perhaps one day, a la Proust, an odor will elicit a nervous signal that will worm its way into the deep recesses of my rhinencephalon and unleash a memory of that day with all its myriad impressions. It certainly was a day of some moment, because it marked my first actual steps towards what had been a lazy inchoate ambition for most of my adult life. The following years of multiple treks to the campus for writing classes have created so many memories, that the memories of that first day are subsumed by all that followed.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *(continued from page 1)*

nation on the healthcare enterprise, 17% and climbing each year. The economic numbers on the US system are routinely compared to other nations, but such comparisons miss the vast scale of our system. Our level of spending is deemed profligate but is that really the case when the expectations of the American people regarding healthcare are considered? Isn't that money wisely and prudently spent on our health? Many argue that outcomes from our expenditures are inferior to other nations that spend much less but those comparisons miss the diversity of the American population and how that affects those outcomes. In addition, the US system, with its tremendous investment in research and development subsidizes the rest of the world to a significant degree, especially in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries.

The real problem is that we expect someone else to pick up the tab for our healthcare. Over 100 million Americans are covered by government insurance through Medicare, Medicaid, and the VA system. The majority of the rest are enrolled in employer-based plans. The result is that the overwhelming majority of us are completely oblivious to what our healthcare really costs. This is the moral hazard of third party reimbursement, overutilization of goods and services based on insulation from price. Without price, there is no recognition of *value*. Thus, the value derived from our system is constantly questioned and attacked. Indeed we are bending over backward to provide value surrogates because of the lack of a true price structure mechanism. These surrogates take the form of concepts such as PQRI, Meaningful Use, and P4P. They lead to programs such as Hospital Acquired Conditions and Never Events in addition to pernicious programs such as RAC, HAC and ZPIC audits.

Notice that the value paradigm conveyed through these programs accrue to the payers of healthcare (the government and insurers), not the end-users (patients). ObamaCare recognizes this moral hazard and establishes plans with high deductibles and copays which are meant to incentivize value-driven healthcare purchasing by patients. Unfortunately, these plans are also burdened with costly coverage mandates making their monthly premiums very expensive and thus defeating many of the economic benefits for patients with these plans.

This is but one of the many poorly considered and unpopular aspects of ObamaCare along with the Independent Payment Advisory Board, the 2.3% tax on medical devices, confiscatory tax rates on some health plans, \$500 billion in cuts to Medicare, the mandating of untested, consolidated practice organizations (ACOs) plus the glaring omission of no meaningful tort reform. Healthcare reform, beginning with the HITEC EMR mandate and ending with ObamaCare, has stressed our system considerably and, despite that, the CBO states that 20 million will still lack health insurance by 2020.

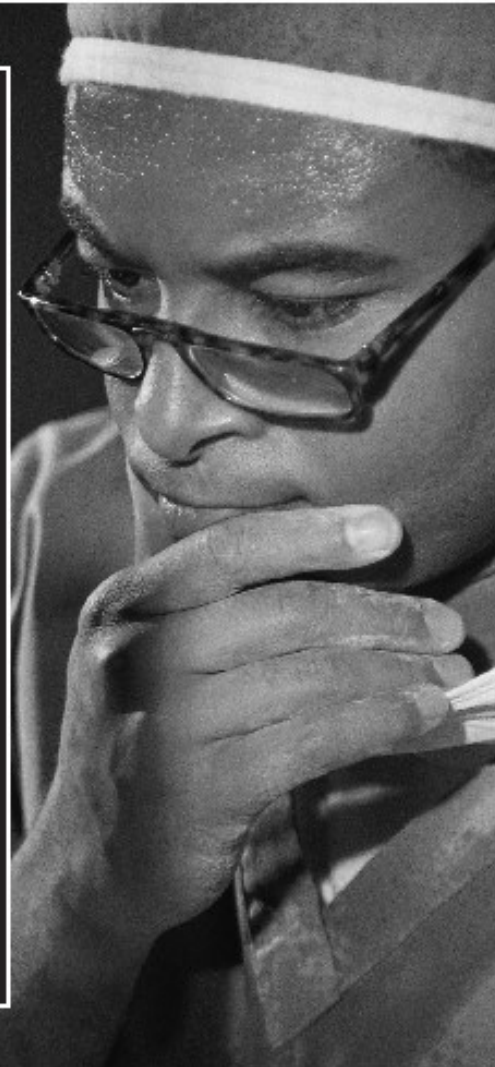
With all of this change and tumult, will this massive system still be able to deliver as promised to Americans and to people of other nations such as those from Western Africa now coming here needing treatment for a deadly disease? I hope that those who have taken up public service as politicians will consider the fragility of complex systems and institutions as they work to make the system better with access for all. To date they have failed. The American people deserve better.



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WEEKEND AT MANHATTANVILLE *(continued from page 2)*

However, many memories more immediately accessible are unleashed as I try to resurrect that first day: my parents and childhood for one. My parents met in Hawaii just after World War II. My father's aircraft carrier returned from the West Pacific and my mother, with a newly minted BA in hand, had come from Southern Iowa in search of vistas other than cornfields as far as the eye could see. It was a typically short post-war engagement and soon they were married and stateside. Both were aspiring writers and used to wake up at 5:30 a.m. to write. Writing was not all they did and soon my older sister was on the scene. My father gave in to practical considerations and took a job with a large corporation. My parents allowed their dreams of writing to fade, but remained devoted readers and ours was a book filled home. My father, as a boy of 12, created a small stir in his small town, by being the first person to ask the local library for a copy of Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*. *The New Yorker* magazine was avidly consumed by all each week and the dinner table conversations often included descriptions of books we were reading. We were somewhat competitive about it and I found myself slogging through books that I didn't really understand. The end result was to inculcate within me a lifelong love of reading.

And this leads me to realizing why I write...because the act of sitting down and writing begins to elicit memories that are not accessible in any other way. Much of my fiction draws on hospital experiences I had as an intern and when I start a story a rich trove of memories is revealed like an ebb tide showing all that was previously hidden.



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Westchester Academy of Medicine

Golf Outing & Fundraiser

October 2nd—Westchester Country Club

On Thursday, October 2nd, forty-one golfers took advantage of the beautiful fall weather and enjoyed playing in the *5th Annual Westchester Academy of Medicine Golf Outing & Fundraiser*. The Outing was held at Westchester Country Club in Rye. Following the golf, an additional twenty people joined the golfers for dinner, fellowship, and prizes. Thomas T. Lee, MD, President of the Academy, who welcomed everyone, thanked the Golf Committee, recognized and thanked all sponsors, and presented Joseph J. Tartaglia, MD, with the 2nd Annual "Friend of the Academy" award. All proceeds directly benefit the Academy's very busy CME activities and its scholarship fund, which annually contributes toward events which foster student interest in careers in medicine.

The Academy would like to thank the following for their generous support of this year's outing:

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2014 Golf Committee

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Robert Antonelle, MD ♦ Elaine Healy, MD ♦ Robert Ciardullo, MD
Mary Ellen Pilkington ♦ Steve Malfitano ♦ Brian Foy ♦ Karen Foy

“FRIEND OF THE ACADEMY AWARD”

Presented to

Joseph J. Tartaglia, MD



A highlight of the Golf Outing Dinner was the presentation of the 2nd Annual “Friend of the Academy” award to Joseph J. Tartaglia, MD, Immediate Past President of the Academy and a Past President of the WCMS, for his many years of support and dedication to the Academy

Academy President Thomas T. Lee, MD presents the award to Joseph J. Tartaglia, MD .



Phil Schuh, EVP, MSSNY; Dan Canniff, MLMIC; Brian Foy, Executive Director, WCMS; Mark Cappola, Executive Director, Nassau County Medical Society



Drs. Robert & Kira Geraci-Ciardullo



Mary Ellen Pilkington; Joseph Tartaglia, MD; Michael Kitt; Joseph Ponticiello, MD



Dr. Tartaglia presents Dawn Tinger with the Women’s Closet to the Pin Award

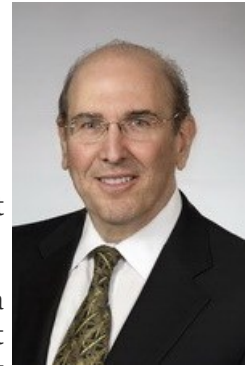


Dr. Tartaglia presents Ken Goldman, MD with the Men’s Closet to the Pin Award



Dr. Gino Bottino, WCMS Vice President and Dr. Christine Sapka

A MESSAGE FROM ANDREW KLEINMAN, MD MSSNY PRESIDENT



Colleagues:

Are you happy with where things stand now in practicing medicine? I didn't think so. But what are **you** doing to help improve our practice climate?

Last month the Physicians' Foundation released a report that concluded that a solid majority of physicians (56%) nationally described their morale as somewhat to very negative. Little wonder, with 81% of surveyed physicians describing themselves as either "over-extended or at full capacity." What was particularly concerning was that 44% plan to take steps that would reduce patient access to their services, including cutting back on the number of patients seen, not accepting new patients, working part-time, retiring, or seeking non-clinical jobs. That's potentially a huge loss of access to care for our patients.

As I read that high number of unhappy physicians, I also wondered how many of those 56% were actually participating in efforts to improve their practice climate such as actively participating in their state medical society and joining their PAC. My guess is some, but not many. As I've said before, if you do not participate in medical society efforts to meaningfully educate legislators regarding the problems with our health care system, and help to elect those who are most responsive to these concerns, you forfeit your right to be heard at all on these issues. In order to improve our practice climate, **you must be involved with MSSNY and MSSNYPAC.**

We now stand on the verge of a precipice. I have previously reported to you how MSSNYPAC is routinely being overwhelmingly outspent by many interests that have policy agendas that directly contrast with those of physicians. And now we are just weeks away from the critically important November elections where we will elect a Governor and determine which party controls the New York State Senate. There are so many legislative threats we face so let me ask you:

Do you want to be sued more often and for even greater amounts?

Do you want to enable insurance companies to have even greater clinical control over patient care?

Do you want to face greater governmental regulation of patient care?

Do you want to enable non-physicians to provide medical services that they are not qualified to perform?

Do you want your Workers' Comp fees to be slashed?

Of course not. But we could face any or all of these calamitous consequences if things do not change.

You have the power in your hands to better ensure that our legislators will be responsive to our perspectives. In fact, there are many physicians in your community right now who are already doing their part. But we need so many more to help us.

(continued on page 11)

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A MESSAGE FROM DR. KLEINMAN *(continued from page 8)*

Please join the MSSNYPAC right now by going to www.mssny.org and clicking on the Governmental Affairs tab. You can become a member for just \$15 a month. If you are a PAC member already we thank you, but strongly urge that you consider becoming a Chairman’s Club member for \$85 a month.

I know there are many of you who find political participation unseemly, but let’s be frank, if we do not participate meaningfully in the process to select those who make policy, we risk losing any real ability to help shape the policy they make.

I happen to be very optimistic that we can improve our practice climate and reverse these sagging morale numbers. Your MSSNY and MSSNYPAC have a broad agenda to fight for you and your patients. But we need you to join with us to really make a difference and help to elect legislators who will better ensure that physicians - and not our opponents - will be the ones who determine how we should deliver care to our patients.

Andrew Kleinman, MD



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WCMS Board Highlights — September 2014

At its meeting on September 11, 2014, the WCMS Board...

Welcomed Alan Antin of Nuvita Wellness, who presented to the Board on the Nuvita Lifestyle coaching services and the company's desire to do a pilot program with a primary care practice in the greater New York area. The ideal test partner location would be one that is owned/operated by the practicing physician(s). Most importantly, the mindset of that practitioner is one geared towards lifestyle medicine and preventative health practices. Nuvita offers a program/platform that is a proven effective solution for weight loss and related co-morbidities (type 2 diabetes, hypertension). Nuvita has been delivering outcome based services as a worksite wellness program with over 15,000 people served so far as well as several medical efficacy pilots. Nuvita believes that there is an opportunity to offer these services in conjunction with primary care providers. The Board thanked Mr. Antin for his presentation and offered to assist Nuvita in identifying suitable medical practices for collaboration.

Welcomed Robert Glazer, CEO, ENT and Allergy Associates, and thanked him for agreeing to pay for membership in WCMS and MSSNY for all 160+ physician members of the group, spread throughout the downstate counties. Mr. Glazer introduced two of his group physicians who practice in White Plains: Dan Gold, MD and Nitin Bhatia, MD. He expressed interest in having his members more involved in all aspects of organized medicine at the county and state level and briefly discussed several issues important to the group, including legislation pending in Albany involving hearing aids.

Heard from Louis McIntyre, MD, President, who reported that the Executive Committee met immediately prior to the Board Meeting and discussed the following:

- That the WCMS and PCMS have agreed on revised language to update the existing Memorandum of Understanding to address the possibility of vacancies in officer positions within PCMS;
- That the WCMS will support and attend the Westchester County Association Fall Leadership Dinner on November 20 honoring, among others, Robert Glazer of ENT and Allergy.
- That the Executive and Audit Committees will meet jointly on September 30 to consider audit proposals from two independent firms.
- Authorized the Executive Director to pursue a proposal to upgrade the existing office internet and telephone capabilities.

Heard from Thomas Lee, MD, President Westchester Academy of Medicine, who reported that the 2014 Westchester Academy of Medicine Golf Outing and Fundraiser will be held on Thursday, October 2nd at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY. On behalf of the entire Board, Dr. Lee also expressed sincere thanks once again to Robert and Kira Geraci-Ciardullo, MD for hosting another very successful Member Pool Party on August 9. Over 80 people enjoyed a spectacular day of food, fun and fellowship. Following his report, Karen Foy, Director of Membership and CME, updated the Board on the CME program.

Heard from Jason Winkler, MD, Chair, Young Physicians Section (YPS) and newest member of the Board. Dr. Winkler discussed his vision for the YPS and getting younger physicians more involved in the WCMS and MSSNY. The Board warmly welcomed Dr. Winkler.



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