

From the President

Change the World

Jenny Powell, M.D.

*"It's up to you, and it's up to me
No one can say what we get to be.
So why don't we rewrite the stars?
And maybe the world could be ours."*

Justin Noble Paul, "The Greatest Showman"

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

John F. Kennedy

As I look back on the last year as president of AAPS, on the past two years since the bishop of the Missouri United Methodist Church closed its churches to gathering in person in March of 2020, back nine years ago when I first opened Direct Primary Care Clinics LLC, back to my graduation day from University of Illinois College of Medicine in 1999 all bright-eyed and hopeful, I pause to think about the change my chosen career path has seen. If we think anything will ever "return to normal," our heads are stuck in the sand. And do we really want that? "Normal" was not looking good for independent physicians *before* COVID-19. We physicians need to understand that this is our chance to take control of our destinies, to wrest control from the hands of tyrants, and that we must run wild beyond their grasps.

Do you not like how hospital systems have relegated independent physicians to the basement, as if they were all a pack of red-stapler-loving-Miltons in *Office Space*? Or how they decided to mandate a string of injections more lethal and harmful than the "disease" they were intended to prevent? Or how they fire nurses while adding new wings to their monstrosities of buildings and investing in pretty landscapes?

Rather than putting up/shutting up, instead of moaning and groaning all the while persisting in a system that, let's face it, doesn't care about you OR your patients, instead of whispering in the doctor's lounge (if the hospital even still HAS one), why not do something about it? Look at this as a chance to make the system far better, far more patient-centered, less about the bottom line and more about the top priority of PATIENT FIRST.

But, you may retort, I'm just one person! What can I possibly do against this behemoth, this Goliath? I don't even have a slingshot! I'd be more likely to whack myself in the eye if I even tried to swing one of those about! I have kids in college, I have a car payment, I have a vacation home I just bought! (At which point I might say, friends, let me introduce you to a financial expert friend of mine, Dave Ramsey!)

There was a guy who had once been a prince of Egypt. He was out tooling around with his father-in-law's herd one day when he saw this bush on a mountain. Weird thing

was burning without being consumed! *So cool!* And when curiosity got the best of him, he went to check it out. Then he heard a deep commanding voice tell him to throw off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground! Did he cower? Did he soil himself? (Well, if so, that part was not in the retelling.) What **did** he do? *He argued with the Almighty!* "I can't possibly do that! I have a speech impediment! I have been kicked out of that place, and if I go back there, I will be killed!" *Waaa waaa waaa!!*

Can you identify?

The good news is, he went anyway. And he changed the world, at least for the people of Israel.

Queen Esther could have found herself quite deceased for even approaching her husband, Xerxes, to ask a favor. But she did it anyway. And she changed the world, at least for the Israelites in the kingdom of Persia.

There was another guy who had been a great military leader. He had been primarily responsible for freeing an entire struggling nation from the hand of a ruling tyrant (who fortunately lived across a rough sea). Thinking he had sufficiently served his people, he went home to farm, because that's what he really wanted to do with his life. But it wasn't long before some folks came knocking on his door, asking him to lead the new government.

He responded, "Have I not yet done enough for my country?"

"No, General Washington, there's just one more little thing we'd like you to do."

And he changed the world, at least for the people of the United States of America.

So many of medicine's issues are related to the unholy alliance of (sorry to curse) insurance companies and hospital conglomerates. (I include CMS, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as part of the aforementioned curse-word.) What would happen if more cash-only organizations—medical groups, medical supply, surgical centers, and, yes, even hospitals—were to open, giving patients not only real savings, but genuine priority?

When I realized that hospitals no longer have telemetry units on site, that they use remote monitoring, I thought, why can't we offer home hospitalization? Yes, there would be an initial investment, but how much could we end up saving our patients, not only financially, if we could offer many treatments in the comfort of their own home? And so, if you are an independent primary care physician, for instance, you could go in with other such independent physicians and purchase equipment that all could use.

I certainly hope the above paragraph makes a few hospital administrators quake a little bit in their shoes/high heels. Not that they will read it, but if anyone wants to leave

a copy of this Journal in a physician's lounge—again, if they still exist, I wouldn't know—open to this column, that would be great. **Sips coffee, again a la Office Space.**

In October, when you attend the AAPS Annual Meeting in Springfield, Missouri, you will hear how an orthopedic surgeon in southwest Missouri not only said goodbye to a tyrant of a medical system but believed he could do better. There is this great Surgical Center of Oklahoma, in Oklahoma City, that has been doing better for years now. There are primary care physicians throughout this great country who have been doing better for their patients. There are specialists of all types who have done the same.

I look forward to the day when cash-pay hospitals and hospitalization-at-home services pop up everywhere, offering a way around the Goliaths, who will be left with their vast empty buildings, their golden keys rusted, their fancy gates grown over with weeds.

I look forward to the day when licensing of physicians is no longer a monopoly, the day we return to apprenticeships, where "younger" physicians can learn under the tutelage of the experienced independent physicians, those who genuinely put patients first.

I look forward to the day when fellow physicians realize that medical schools are now merely extensions of Marxist universities, teaching our future physicians how to check off boxes and do as they are told instead of using their God-given gifts of discernment and intelligence for the benefit of the patient before them—when we might wrest control of medical education from the same giants who merely seek minions to do their bidding. The future of the art and science of medicine depends upon it. It has to start somewhere.

Why not with AAPS and its members?

"Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the not-quite, the not-yet, and the not-at-all. Do not let the hero in your soul perish in lonely frustration for the life you deserved and have never been able to reach. The world you desire can be won. It exists.. it is real.. it is possible.. it's yours."

Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*

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WILL YOUR GRANDCHILDREN BE ABLE TO SEE A PRIVATE PHYSICIAN?

The answer to that question probably depends on this one:

Will AAPS, the voice for private physicians, remain strong?

AAPS has defended private medicine for 77 years—since 1943.

AAPS relies on the generosity of its members to survive and thrive.

Please remember AAPS in your will or charitable annuity.

This is your opportunity to send a Final Message in support of freedom and private medicine.

Every gift helps, no matter how small.

For information on making a bequest, call or write:

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