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While recently attending my daughter’s medical school graduation I bumped into an old friend. We both were “special hooders,” meaning a physician family member invited to wear the ceremonial regalia of graduation and stand on the podium to vest our new graduates with the colorful green and orange hood denoting their alma mater, a medical school of the University of Texas. Before the ceremony we were asked to don our robes and line up in anticipation of the procession. My friend, whom I had known since medical school and residency days, was beside me and we caught up. He has a successful practice and leads a large group in Dallas. He asked what I was up to and I told him about being involved with DCMS. Afterward he said he had never been a joiner but our conversation inspired him to change his mind.

The day before, I had attended TexMed, the annual statewide meeting of the Texas Medical Association, and I sat in on the

board meeting of TEXPAC, TMA’s political action committee. The outgoing chairman, Dr. Robert Rogers, gave his farewell address and spoke about the importance of membership, not just in TEXPAC, but in all medical societies—county, state, national, and specialty-specific. He spoke of membership, not to preach to the choir, but to challenge those present to go out and recruit one new member. He said, “Imagine doubling our size overnight” and “The best way to cause change is to become a member.”

Texas is one of the best states in the country to practice medicine due in no small part to the strength of our county medical societies. One may be lulled into complacency thinking that nothing I could do would make a difference, or that things will happen no matter what. The evidence is that membership matters. Just joining matters. Joining opens possibilities and opportunities.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Kevin W. Klein, MD

David Fleeger, MD, our newly elected TMA President, has made increasing membership one of his top priorities. One of his first aims is to increase participation of academic physicians, residents, and students. The Dallas County Medical Society membership has recently plateaued at around 7,500 members despite a growing number of physicians in Dallas County. One reason perhaps is that UT Southwestern and Parkland resident participation is at an historic low of around 10%. This has occurred in part because resident dues are no longer subsidized by the medical and life insurance company that Parkland used to provide these benefits. When Parkland “self-insured,” residents, unlike medical students, were no longer automatically enrolled. Although resident dues are only \$30/year for both DCMS and the TMA, this is still an impediment for many trying to subsist on their meager resident salary

and contend with educational debt.

DCMS is working diligently to increase resident membership. Most residency programs in Dallas and across Texas that support dues have 100% membership participation. The challenge at Parkland is that with approximately 1,500 house officers, the cost would be \$45,000 annually. DCMS is actively working with Parkland and UT Southwestern to see what can be done to support dues. In the meantime, DCMS had an excellent recruitment effort at the Parkland new resident orientation in June. This was due to the dedicated effort of DCMS staff present throughout the day answering questions and guiding the new doctors with their online applications. It was obvious that the new house staff were enthusiastic to join, but were reluctant to pay another fee when they were already overwhelmed starting a new job, setting up a new place to live, and just trying to

get through the week. One of the benefits to entice the new members was a “Happy Hour” at Social Pie on Maple. It was well attended and the pizza was excellent. Several of the residents were interested in learning more about physician advocacy so we hope to have another gathering soon.

On Sunday, August 18, we will have our 44th Annual DCMS Medical Student Dinner at the Frontiers of Flight Museum near Love Field. Please join us and host a table of medical students. You will be richly rewarded. You will have a chance to share your story and encourage the newest members of our profession to become involved in organized medicine. What better way is there to recruit them to be involved in DCMS and TMA? I guarantee you will be uplifted by the experience. **DMJ**