

# DCMS 2020: The Year of Absolutely Nothing, Mission Accomplished



DCMS 2020 President Mark A. Casanova, MD, FAAHPM

One year ago, when I was bestowed the privilege of taking the helm of arguably the best county medical society in the nation, I committed to each and every member that everyone on the Board of Directors would commit to doing absolutely nothing in 2020. Absolutely nothing different than we have all come to expect of ourselves, that is. It turned out that 2020 was going to test that commitment. I am proud to say, as your outgoing president, that we did in fact live up to the commitment of doing nothing, and then some.

Just to review our “nothing different” objectives we laid out in January, we committed that DCMS would maintain its stance as a forward-thinking leader in all things related to the promotion and health and

welfare of the citizens of Dallas County. We committed to maintaining our position as a trusted leader during times of crisis, whether this be an infectious disease assault, or works of Mother Nature. I am comfortable, confident, and proud to say that DCMS can check that box! It has been an amazing year of collaboration and tireless effort on the part of our physician members, society staff, and many other stakeholders, namely the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council – led by Mr. Steve Love. We even saw our commitment to this endeavor in reaching out across our region with the development of the North Texas County Medical Society Coalition with the understanding that the viral onslaught posed by COVID-19 was not going to stop at county borders. DCMS members have led the way in the establishment of and

representation on the TMA COVID-19 taskforce.

Our second “nothing different” objective was that member physicians should continue to expect that DCMS would continue to look to advance the interests and needs of not just individual physicians, but groups of physicians as well. This includes engagement with residents and younger physicians in our county and to foster their development, not to mention a pipeline of leadership for ourselves. This was accomplished with six DCMS physicians being selected for the TMA Leadership College. But of course, we didn't stop there. Additional support for our physician members came with the help in coordination by TMA and the distribution of approximately \$12.5 million worth of free PPE to physicians and physician practices in Dallas County. For



many, this was instrumental in keeping their offices open, and for some, even re-opening shuttered offices.

At the beginning of the year we also set out with the expectation that physician members should continue to expect that DCMS will pursue a thoughtful, informed evaluation of our current membership, but more specifically, friends and colleagues in the county who are not members. During my acceptance speech I introduced the notion of "Mission 8000." This was an ambitious plan to see growth in membership of DCMS when almost all other county medical societies were seeing attrition. The reality was that in light of events that had taken place earlier in the day of my installation dinner, our immediate past president, Dr. Kevin Klein, and our colleagues at UTSW, had come to an agreement that all of their medical students and house officers would become dues paying DCMS members. So, in truth, that very night "Mission 8000" was achieved. Despite that, we've actually continued to see growth all during the pandemic. It is our continued hope that those physician colleagues in

our county that are not members will have been a witness to the value our amazing society has provided in this last year. I am confident this will foster ongoing growth.

We also committed to the objective that DCMS would press forward in collaboration with TMA to address the access to care struggles that so many of our uninsured or under insured population struggle with. In collaboration with other stakeholders in our region, we are beginning to see some hopeful signs on the horizon at a state level. More to come.

At the outset of the year we couldn't have imagined the relevance of our fifth objective, which was that our physician members should continue to expect that DCMS will continue to promote and foster physician, and physician family, well-being. While we were not able to engage in any in-person social events, that are always a bright spot of our time together, we didn't let that hold us back in regular outreach to members. This included a virtual wellness series that continues to this day. Furthermore, when our "national heart" was broken by the death of George Floyd, and many other individuals of

color, we committed to the formation of the committee on diversity and inclusion so as to ensure that we, as a proud professional society, do not fall victim to the blind spots of systemic racism.

So to conclude, it has been an amazing year of "absolutely nothing.... different" on the part of the best county medical society in the nation! Along with my fellow board members, we would like to personally and sincerely thank our staff – Jon, Rebekah, Anna, Deanna, Steve, Jackie, Cara, Pamela, Lindsey, John, Lauren, and Tony. Without this amazing team, absolutely nothing would have come from our nothing. I personally would like to thank my fellow board members for your support, especially Beth, who is going to take this society to new levels – I have no doubt. I would be remiss if I didn't thank both my family and my work colleagues for affording me the time to partake in one hell of a year of zoom meetings and interviews. Lastly, thank you to each and every member of DCMS for allowing me the singular honor of being your 2020 DCMS president. Stay safe and be well. **DMJ**

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