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Concluding remarks on the New York County Medical Society Presidency
6/22/22

I want to thank everyone for coming out or for Zooming in this evening. It gives me great pleasure to see your faces and to hear your voices.

Over my time on the Board of the New York County Medical Society, I have had many feelings that have helped me to grow in this role and as a physician. As I conclude my Presidency, I would like to share some of them with you.

I have been **challenged**. The forces impacting healthcare are myriad. No longer is the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship the primary influence in our daily lives. I have witnessed you all, however, working to preserve this sacred tradition. We fought unjust pharmaceutical benefit manager programs; worked with our elected leaders to safeguard the interests of doctors and patients in a potential single payor healthcare system; developed resolutions to improve the public health (like making sure we don't get run over by an electric bike when we exit this building) and worked against scope-creep that would endanger patient safety. We continue to work towards common ground on the even bigger issue at the interface of public health and gun control. We are also helping to preserve a woman's right to choose – an issue that should never be dictated by anyone outside her clinical realm. These challenges, met by our tireless advocacy, have been the main source of our discussions and what propel us forward. I am reminded of a quote by Margaret Meade:
"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

I have been **impressed**. We have renewed our efforts in attracting members with reaching out to friends and colleagues and with an ongoing telethon drive. We exit this year in better financial shape thanks to our members and our endorsed vendors including The Doctor's Company, Winston Health Staffing, Flushing Bank, Storage Quarters, and others. We also cut costs to make us nimbler in the post-pandemic world. And we were wholly transparent with all of this. It seems apt to mention the quote attributed to Mark Twain: "The rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated." Certainly, NYCMS, is not dead and we will continue to flourish!

I have been **strengthened**. Wellness initiatives to augment the joy of patient caring while reducing burnout are critical to keeping our work force intact. Many of us have even started to participate in meditation efforts to strengthen our resolve and focus. Reverend Bernice A. King, MLK's youngest daughter, preached: "You cannot direct the wind, but you can adjust the sails." We do exactly this every day as we help our patients navigate their healthcare journey. Our work at NYCMS fortifies us and allows us to help patients even more.

I have been **inspired**. Our social media/public relations committee finally has an Instagram page! As we get our messaging out to our members and the public, we hope to engage more concerned citizens to act. Our Diversity and Inclusion committee has mentored students from

New York County medical schools. In so doing we are growing the leaders of tomorrow. We must continue to inspire in these ways.

I have been **moved**. Quite literally, the pandemic has shifted where we care for patients, how we meet as a group, and which venues we choose to socialize in. This year has also marked the end of our lease at 261 West 35th Street. We embarked on a “Brick vs virtual” mission to reshape how best to serve our members and landed at 245 West 38th Street; we should be moving within the next couple of weeks! I suspect as we move into this new sun-infused location that we will be able to come together in person more easily to continue our work.

And as I move on, I have great confidence that our new President Dr Erick Eiting will ably lead our group in the right direction. Erick is passionate and politically-savvy. He is hard-working and solutions driven. I look forward to working with him in this new role.

Finally, I have been **gratified**. I need to thank my friends, my family, my medical assistants, nurses, office managers, and physician partners who help me every day in caring for patients and educating the next generation of doctors. I must also thank Weill Cornell for its constant support. A huge thank you to Erick, Tom, Jessica, Loren, Stu, Michael, Connie, Michelle, Maria, Henry, Mark, Purvi, Richard, Ami, Michael, Scot, Paul, Gabrielle, and Art. You have offered me sound advice and given of your time and expertise to improve the functioning of our Board and its service to our members and patients. I am proud of the work we have done together.

And a special thank you to Cheryl, Susan, Sonny and Lisa for all their hard work behind the scenes. None of this is possible without them. Cheryl, it is you that really deserve the accolades of the evening! It seems you are always working on the meetings, calls, emails, and other business of the NYCMS.

I appreciate the mentorship, collegiality and friendship from NYCMS. I will close with a quote by Maya Angelou that I love: “Be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud!” You all have been rainbows during the sometimes-cloudy days in medicine – and I (and our patients) thank you all for your efforts.