



I wanted to take a moment this week to focus on the importance of advocacy and the need for physicians to be leaders in all aspects of life, from the office to society. As doctors, we are respected for our skills, abilities and knowledge, coupled with our ethics and integrity. Even though it seems that the internet search has taken over as a source for information, the general public still values the thoughts and opinions of doctors. What we say and do matters and that has never been more critical than it is today in the current Florida Legislature and the healthcare debate occurring throughout the country.

The American College of Physicians has already released its vision on creating a better health care system in the United States, you can Register Today for webinar on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 3:00 pm – 4:00 p.m. (EST) for the ACP's Vision for U.S. Health Care System.

<https://annals.org/aim/fullarticle/2759528/envisioning-better-u-s-health-care-system-all-call-action>

We have a strong voice to accomplish our shared goals of better patient care and improvements of the art and practice of medicine. That voice is best heard when spoken as one with a clear and concise sense of vision and purpose. A single branch

may break when by itself but hold many branches together and it is unbreakable. The need for membership and growth has never been more important than it is now. The practice of medicine is under an all-out assault by the Florida Legislature and the current Speaker of the House, Jose Oliva.

If you have not been following the speeches and presentations by the House Speaker, you have missed him attacking the practice of medicine and doctors. He has placed a Nurse Practitioner as Doctor of the Day for the legislative session. He believes that the unregulated and minimal hours of schooling by a Nurse Practitioner is equivalent to the countless years of training and residency and experience that we have as doctors. He believes in complete independent practice of non-physicians and wants to replace doctors with mid-level providers. While they are important members of the medical team, that team must be physician led. We cannot allow our profession to be devalued or minimized. We cannot allow our patients to be misled and endangered. We have a responsibility to stand up for what is right and true and prevent this travesty from occurring. This is a call to arms for all doctors to be the advocates that our patients and profession demands.

The advocacy process is complex and requires many different aspects to accomplish. One of the more important aspects is membership in your specialty society and state medical association as well as involvement in the Political Action Committees that are necessary for the process to work. This allows us to work with a unified voice and unified purpose. The Florida Chapter of the American College of Physicians and the Florida Medical Association have had a longstanding and collegial working relationship that has allowed us to accomplish many of our shared goals. We cannot do this alone and we must all work together. The time to prevent the current problem was years ago when we should have all been members of the organizations and involved in the process. It is not too late to secure our future and we must act now. I have often equated the process to a preventative colonoscopy in that you can remove the precancerous polyp at age 50 but if you wait the ten years and do nothing, you will have cancer in your 60s. While we cannot go back in time, we can contribute now and make sure that medicine will have a future.

If you are reading this and not a member of the ACP Florida Chapter and not a member of the Florida Medical Association, you should join today. I cannot stress enough the importance of dual membership in both the ACP and FMA.

<https://www.acponline.org/membership>

https://www.flmedical.org/florida/Florida_Public/System/Login.aspx?LoginRedirect=true&returnurl=%2FFlorida%2FFlorida_Public%2FShop%2FDues_Invoice.aspx%3Fmc%3DACP

If you are not a member of the FMA Political Action Committee, consider joining if you believe noce/Systatio(h)(34)TJET@0.0000