

## From the President

# Fighting the Good Fight

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AAPS is many things to many people. We have remained, over the years, staunch defenders of doctors' rights to practice independently and free of interference from insurance and government parasites.

We have always been, and remain, a venue for independent thought, publishing critical essays and articles on a wide range of medically related topics. We have come together around critical, timely issues in the past, successfully defeating "Hillary care" in 1994. Over the past decade AAPS has emerged as the only beacon of freedom for those physicians yearning to breathe free of third-party intrusion.

When I wanted to start my independent practice 11 years ago, it was important to me not to be the only doctor out on a limb. When I found AAPS, I found allies, I found resources, and I found the courage to take the leap of faith and start the practice I dreamed of. Had I not discovered this unique organization, I may well have followed the shambling mass of defeated doctors who slave and toil for their insurance overlords and Medicare masters.

Reflecting on the year as AAPS president, I am struck again by the fierce and independent intelligence of our members. With members from a wide range of backgrounds, nationalities, and religions, some conflict is to be expected, yet it is the intelligence of our members that is most striking. Not a meeting or conversation occurs without sparking stimulating conversation and provocative discourse. Perhaps this is the reason it is rare for any of us to be in complete accord. It makes our accomplishments all the more rewarding. This herd of cats (or roomful of independent thinkers) comes together again and again to better the lot of American medicine and the lives of our patients.

We fought to hold off nationalization of medicine. When we won, our efforts bought the world another 10 years of freedom. We fought, and won significant ground against out-of-control state medical boards that destroy doctors' lives by the whims of tyrannical bureaucrats, many of whom are not doctors. How many other professional boards are made up of non-professionals?

We fight against specialty boards, against their greedy, short-sighted Maintenance of Certification schemes that make being a doctor more difficult and expensive, while ignoring our profession's loss of territory to lesser-trained nurse practitioners and physician assistants. They tell us we aren't a good enough doctor to put "Board Certified" on our

door unless we pass their test again, jump through their hoops, and pay their fees, yet someone with a tenth of our training is good enough to be our replacement.

We continue to fight the politically named Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. While we have yet to overcome this foe, we provide our members with a way around this monstrosity, which is to opt out. This Act has also given AAPS a broader, larger, and more receptive audience than we have ever had, and it has been my privilege to bear our message.

America needs a strong AAPS. No other organization is free of entanglements. No other organization has the history of activism, the willingness to fight, and the record of success against powerful opponents that AAPS has won.

The fight is not over. Young doctors awakening to the reality that all they have trained for will be taken from them need to know they are not alone, and that they can practice medicine, not guidelines. Millions of Americans, now tasting the disappointment of this ill-conceived law in just the enrollment process, will soon learn what a swindle their politicians have wrought. When they finally realize coverage isn't care, they will seek out good doctors to take good care of them instead of having the government tell them what is best for health in America.

No other group understands the depths of greed and depravity of the insurance industry as it writes its own golden ticket into federal code: forcing young, healthy people to buy its worthless products, and helping itself to our tax dollars to subsidize those who can't afford the outrageous premiums—or those who meet the government's criteria for deserving this help.

In time Americans will rue being swindled, but only if AAPS is there to educate them. We are the only legitimate voice of independent doctors left; we are the only voice for free-market medicine; we must remain steadfast, and on message. This is the fight of our generation.

Thank you for fighting strong with me in this past year, and thank you for being there for the AAPS in the years to come. Stay strong and fight the good fight.

It is a fight worth fighting.

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