



# WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

September 2023

Volume 39, Issue 8



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### DOCTORS NEED TO KNOW THEIR SH...!

**PETER ACKER, MD PRESIDENT**

Medicine for many us practitioners, particularly those of us that have been doing this for a while, can become fairly routine. For the primary care doctors, we tend to see the same sort of things over and over. We do checkups, treat common illnesses, get involved in mental health issues, and respond to emergencies. We observe trends and keep a lookout for diseases that are prevalent in the community, often aided by the seasonal predilection of certain maladies like coxsackie virus or influenza. Of course, we were all discombobulated by the pandemic. It tossed infectious disease seasonality on its head. After seeing very little flu and RSV over the previous two years we were inundated with both starting much earlier than usual last fall. I don't remember seeing a single case of strep for two years and then recently it was coming in in droves. The explanation was fairly simple: in pediatrics for example, extreme caution was employed and this prevented many of our routine illnesses from occurring. Thus when these policies were lifted, we were confronted with large swaths of kids with no immunity to our common viruses. Usually they percolate through the community, avoided those with immunity and jumping from unimmune individuals to others. It is like a forest that has not had a fire for decades. Its accumulation of underbrush and wood causes it to spread like as they say wildfire.

Now, with dealing with the spate of common illness returning with a vengeance, we still have to keep an eagle eye out for the unusual. Indeed, our daily lives are enlivened something unusual for the first time. I had such an experience recently when I was on call for my group. A mother reported that her husband was walking with their 19 month old daughter. According to the father, the toddler has stuck her finger into raccoon poop and then and stuck that finger into her mouth. Multiple questions flooded my mind, like what the heck is in raccoon poop and how did this father know how to identify it as coming from a raccoon. I would say the only definitive way would be to witness the raccoon doing his business. I put in calls to the department of health and infectious disease and while I waited for call backs, I did some googling. Turns out there is a type of roundworm (Baylisascaris procyonis) that is indigenous to raccoons. There eggs can hatch in a

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*PETER ACKER, MD  
President, WCMS*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**WAM GOLF OUTING  
TUESDAY, OCT 24, 2023  
WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB  
RYE NY**

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**FROM THE GUEST EDITOR...****“BEST PERFORMANCE VERSION OF YOURSELF”  
TRANSLATION PLEASE?**

**BRUCE MOLINELLI, MD, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**



*“When you truly study top performers in any field, what sets them apart is not their physical skills: it is how they control their minds”  
Elite Minds- Dr Stan Beecham*

*“Top performers don’t do things perfectly. They do things purposefully”-anonymous*

Recently I read a throw away media medical journal article which gave some self help advice to physicians. It listed multiple self awareness concepts to maximizing the “best performance version of yourself”- defined as “striving to reach your highest potential in various aspects of your life including personal, professional emotional and physical.”

All great advice to any professional but there is potentially a great divide between sitting in your comfy chair reading the article and formulating it into our profession’s current reality.

First let me list some of the strategies:

developing goals,  
time management,  
staying committed,  
putting in the time,  
sacrificing our personal pleasures ,  
remaining focused,  
persistently learning,  
becoming adaptable,  
prioritizing our health,  
balancing work-life,  
remaining authentic to ourselves,  
ensuring a positive mindset,  
helping others.

We cannot argue these are not sound strategies . They are just as wholesome as apple pie or puppy dogs. But what does it mean in real, practical terms?

For example the self improvement strategy of “time management”, may be the most glaring disconnect on the list of strategies to becoming a better performance version of oneself. The self help- comfy chair version reads:

“Efficiently managing your time allows you to prioritize your tasks and allocate your resources effectively. This ensures that your can work towards your goals in a structured manner”

Translation: See only a set amount of patients to deliver quality care, and check off all those ancillary requirements (EMR, billing codes, quality metric measure etc.) with enough time to go home after a “normal” time at the office or hospital.

*(Continued on page 5)*



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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
**DOCTORS NEED TO KNOW THEIR SH...!**  
**PETER ACKER, MD PRESIDENT**

*(Continued from page 1)*

human's intestine and then migrate causing severe disease including encephalitis. Very young children are particularly vulnerable. I immediately called the mother back and the father was dispatched to take samples of this poop and I told them to bring her to her primary care doctor the next day to coordinate with the health department. Since this just happened, I haven't heard back. Admittedly, It is very unlikely that this child will get sick there have been only 22 cases reported over the last 30 years.

The next day, I was working out with my trainer and I couldn't resist recounting this unusual story. Another trainer in the next room overheard our conversation and he came running over. "Doc, I know all about this." He actually knew the name of the roundworm and said he had seen squirrels moving in a very uncoordinated way and he said that they were known to get brain disease from it. I was astonished – you never know where you will get information. My ID doc had to look it up, but not the trainer! Doctors, we need to know our sh..!



*FROM THE GUEST EDITOR...*  
**BEST PERFORMANCE VERSION OF YOURSELF"**  
**TRANSLATION PLEASE?**  
**BRUCE MOLINELLI, MD, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
*(Continued from page 2)*

In what world does this exist? If this is your world, then please tell us all how you do it! But for most of us, this is more of a utopia, a goal that is unachievable. Although that may not really be fair, I guess it could be achievable in our world, but it will come at a cost— our income.

Or "balance" defined as "balancing various aspects of your life to become the best performance version of yourself should not be at the cost of your well being. You must balance work, family, health and hobbies to achieve long term success and happiness."

Translation: The only way to practically balance my already overbooked life as a physician is to work less which, once again leads to decreased income. Make

no mistake, this is not about refusing to work hard and expecting a certain level of compensation, it is more about being unable to work hard enough to achieve a basic level of compensation.

All of these self improvement strategies sound good, make sense and appear great on paper (or viewed from that comfy chair). But when tested in real life, all of these require one major assumption - that we have **control** of such factors. Well in fact we DO but not under the current healthcare system if we wish to maintain current income levels. Today's physician is either self employed (only 20%) whose income is based on volume and business efficiencies, or employed (80%) whose income is based on productivity. So we really DO NOT have control over these self improvements if we want to remain in the current system AND meet a certain income. We have to be productive and see X numbers of patients daily, weekly, yearly, meeting metrics and other preset criteria determined by analysts and industrialists, not determined by physicians. We DO have control however, if we are willing to earn less. Then we are free to balance work life, focus on health, improve time management etc. But it comes at that aforementioned cost... a salary cut.

So the pragmatic question is not "How do I develop the best performance version of myself?" but, "How do I afford to develop the best performance of myself?"

In other words, "How do I make enough money being a physician today without sacrificing the "best performance version of myself?"

Crickets.....

*(Wait, you really can't leave me hanging like that without some attempt at a resolution or fix! Who lets you write in this journal if you're going to simply state the obvious without any suggestions or directions? Pointing out the problem is no great skill! We all know our problems! What value do you bring to us through this article if you cannot at least promote something that we can decide on regarding its applicability and effectiveness in our own lives.)*

You got me. I wish I had the answer. But I don't. I do have some suggestions to get through the here and now, and some thoughts on the extended future, but they are only suggestions.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## STOP THE TRAIN Elliot Barsh, MD

***“Expect the unexpected, otherwise you will not find it.” -Heraclitus***

Hi everyone.

I hope our column finds you looking forward to the beauty of the fall.

*Change* can feel *uncomfortable, unsafe*, and even *dangerous*.

The *disruption* feels like it alters everything, in and around us.

We become *attached* to our *past*, and imagine ourselves and our lives, good or bad, to be unchanging. (Have you looked in the mirror recently?!)

Instead of *embracing* change, we spend our time in *conflict* with it.

The conflict comes from our need to *control* it, which adds to how we *suffer* through it.

We can feel true *terror*.

The terror that all of our *“good days”* are behind us, and that all that awaits us is *uncertainty, danger*, and *death*.

When we can *let go* of our need for control and *embrace* how we change, and what is changing, we can live more *fully* and be *happier* with ourselves.

We *awaken* to see our *freedom* to live, based on what we *value* and who we *love*.

Instead of hopelessness for our future, we can have hope, or as *Rebecca Solnit* calls it, *“wise hope”*.

*“Hope as a commitment to act in a world whose future remains uncertain and unknowable.”*

Thanks for reading.

***“We are a doppelgänger of our former selves.”***  
**To Know Yourself, Consider Your Doppelgänger**

Our doubles show us parts of ourselves we can least bear to see, at a slight angle and through a

warped mirror.

*“Head down, legs strong, breath steady, small adjustments to keep afloat.”*

## Swimming

*“Healing can be found unexpectedly”*

## Pinned Under the Bodies of Men

I thought being sexually bold was a game I was allowed to play. I had no idea of the punishment that awaited me — or the surprising healing to come.

*“We can ... see mindfulness of death as a precursor to truly living.”*

## The Life-Changing Practice of Death Awareness




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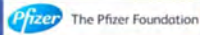
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## **Westchester Academy of Medicine hosts The First Annual Bertrand-Pilkington Golf Outing & Fundraiser**

**Date—Tuesday, October 24, 2023  
Westchester Country Club  
99 Biltmore Avenue  
Rye, NY 10580**



**Registration, Driving Range & Halfway House Lunch—12:00pm  
Tee times will begin at 1:00pm Golf Format: Scramble  
6:00 PM—Cocktails  
7:00 PM—Dinner and Raffles**

**Individual—\$600 ♦ Individual plus Hole Sponsorship—\$800  
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Please contact Janine Miller for details

*All proceeds will benefit the Westchester Academy of Medicine  
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Contact Kalli Voulgaris [kvoulgaris@wcms.org](mailto:kvoulgaris@wcms.org) or 914-967-9100 for more details.*

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# Westchester Academy of Medicine

## First Annual Bertrand-Pilkington Golf Outing & Fundraiser

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## MSSNY Podcasts

MSSNY

The Medical Society of the State of New York has created a number of podcasts on topics that are timely and relevant. In addition to weekly MSSNY Updates from the Division of Governmental Affairs, there are myriad timely and relevant podcasts on COVID-19 (both for physicians and patients) as well as a number of others on veterans, adult immunizations and emergency preparedness.

- |                 |              |
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**Click on the podcast titles to listen**

### MSSNY Announces two NEW Podcasts on COVID-19

#### ★ A Discussion on COVID Vaccine for Patients ★

MSSNY President, Dr. Bonnie Litvack, President-elect, Dr. Joseph Sellers and Dr. William Valenti, Chair of MSSNY’s Committee on Infectious Diseases discuss vaccines currently available for COVID-19 and answer many questions patients may have about the vaccines.

#### ★ How to Talk to Patients About Vaccine Hesitancy ★

Dr. William Valenti, Chair of MSSNY’s Committee on Infectious Diseases discusses the history of vaccine hesitancy and offers sage advice to listeners on talking to vaccine hesitant patients.

**★★The additions of these podcasts marks 100 podcasts published on the MSSNY Podcast website!★★**

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR...

## BEST PERFORMANCE VERSION OF YOURSELF™ TRANSLATION PLEASE?

**BRUCE MOLINELLI, MD, IMMEDIATE PAST  
PRESIDENT**

(Continued from page 5)

A suggested pragmatic fix to the query involves us physicians regaining control of what we can. Some of these self help improvements to developing the best performance version of yourself really are in our control, even in the current healthcare system and may truly be effective.

But there are a few assumptions that have to be made to identify the collective ascending unhappiness of our profession. Once we identify what we think we want and compare it to what is, we then can utilize the strategies to regain control to overcome these disconnects, practically.

Assumptions:

1. We enjoy being a physician and have the will to pursue it.
2. We live comfortably enough.
3. We have chosen our preferred field.
4. We are passionate about healthcare.
5. We are willing to adapt to changing times.
6. We still care to shape delivery of healthcare in this country and our community.
7. We are willing to lead.

So, how do we become the best performance version of ourselves?

To verify our enjoyment, we must be authentic to ourselves.

To identify our income expectation we need to determine our income goals and the sacrifice needed to reach them and just as importantly, affect needed compensation changes necessary across our industry.

To redirect our expectations, we need to adapt our way of thinking and perhaps learn new skills.

To reconsider our practice setting may require adapting and even changing our goals, sacrifice the known and comfortable to the unknown and challenging.

To remain pertinent in the discussion regarding delivery of healthcare to our community and our patients, we must put in the time to stay involved and

lead those discussions adapting with the changes but remaining authentic to our profession.

We ultimately need control of our destiny by leading with policy formation and practice structures commensurate with our expectations to achieve happiness.

Which ones apply and how we adjust are up to us individually, but make no mistake, our collective decision is vital to the longevity of our profession and the achievement of the best performance version of ourselves.

With that, I leave you, retiring to my comfy chair to read something less work-life balance threatening, like ... I don't know.... politics, religion or the meaning of life.



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**Pending Alert: Oppose Harmful Liability Expansion Bills That Impede Patient Access To Care!**

Earlier this year, due in large part to your overwhelming grassroots response, Governor Hochul rightfully vetoed a bill passed by the legislature that would have greatly expanded damages awardable in wrongful death actions and dramatically increased liability insurance premiums. As anticipated, a similar version of this bill (A.6698/S.6636) has been re-introduced in the Senate and Assembly. Unfortunately, this legislation once again fails to address the significant concerns raised by physicians, hospitals, businesses and municipalities, as it would significantly increase the type of awardable damages in New York, potentially increasing liability premiums by 40%. This would have a devastating effect on our health care safety net, and reduce patient access to care. Please urge your local legislators and legislative leaders to reject this proposal and develop balanced legislation to address New York's already exorbitant liability costs.

**This bill will be up for a vote before the end of the year. Please take action by clicking on the link below and contact your legislators and Governor to prevent the passage of this devastating legislation for New Yorkers.**

**[Take Action to Prevent Untenable Increases in  
Malpractice Premiums in New York](#)**

*Don't forget, please do it today.*

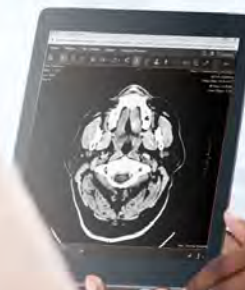
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# Women Physicians Leadership Academy (WPLA)

The Medical, Education & Scientific Foundation (MESF) and  
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Virtual Leadership Webinars for Physicians

## Dates

Saturdays October 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2023

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> 2024

All sessions are from 7:45-11:15 AM



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## Facilitators

**Patrice Harris, MD:** *Past President, AMA; Past Chair, AMA Opioid Task Force; Past President, Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association; Past Trustee, American Psychiatric Association; Co Founder and CEO, eMed;* **Julie Silver, MD:** *Associate Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Harvard Medical School; Associate Chair, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network*

## Educational Objectives

- \* Describe methods to improve women physicians' communication skills within work or professional settings including the C-Suite
- \* Identify professional skills to enhance advocacy of self and the development of professional networking
- \* Develop leadership skills
- \* Outline methods to enhance physician wellness



## Supported by a grant from The Physicians Foundation

The Medical Society of the State of New York is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The Medical Society of the State of New York designates each live activity for a maximum of 3.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

# Veterans Matters Collaborative Teaching Day

## hosted by MSSNY, SU, and Crouse Health

THE DANIEL AND GAYLE D'ANIELLO BUILDING  
HOME TO THE NATIONAL VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER (NVRC) AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Thursday - October 26th, 2023

**7:00 am - 7:30 am:**  
Registration

**7:30 am – 8:30 am:**  
TBI in Returning Veterans- David Podwall, MD

**8:35 am – 9:35 am:**  
PTSD in Returning Veterans- Frank Dowling, MD

**9:40 am – 10:40 am:**  
The Special Mental Health Needs of Women Veterans  
Maria Basile, MD; Sharran Chambers-Murphy

**10:45 am – 11:45 am:**  
Burn Pits: Psychological and Physical Impact on Veterans  
Mary Lee-Wong, MD; Frank Dowling, MD

**12:30 pm – 1:30 pm:**  
Military Culture: Everything Physicians Need to Know About Veterans as Patients Lt.  
Col. Lance Allen Wang, Adolph Meyer, MD

**1:35 pm – 2:35 pm:**  
Suicide in Veterans- John McIntyre, MD

**2:40 pm – 3:40 pm:**  
The Impact of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) on Veterans  
Janine Fogarty, MD; Sharran Chambers-Murphy

**3:45 pm – 4:45 pm:**  
Substance Use Disorders in Veterans  
Thomas Madejski, MD

**For in Person or Remote Attendance**

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Contact us at (518) 465-8085 or [nhospodar@mssny.org](mailto:nhospodar@mssny.org)

Funding for this program is provided by a New York State Senate Legislative Grant and the New York State Office of Mental Health.

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## YOUR HELP NEEDED ON EMERGING MIPS SITUATION

On Aug. 10, CMS made available 2022 MIPS performance feedback, which determines whether physicians will receive a positive, neutral or negative payment adjustment on Medicare services furnished in 2024. The AMA has heard alarming reports of physicians facing MIPS penalties in 2024 for the first time since the program started. We strongly encourage you to view this information as soon as possible for two reasons:

If there are any errors, you should consider submitting an appeal, also called a targeted review. For more information about how to request a targeted review, please refer to the [2022 Targeted Review User Guide](#) (PDF). The deadline to submit a targeted review is 8 pm ET Oct. 9, 2023.

You can help us advocate against Medicare physician payment cuts in 2024 by sharing this information. If you feel comfortable, you can share de-identified score and corresponding payment adjustment information. This will inform our understanding of the impact of MIPS on physician payment in 2024 and can help us in our conversations with the administration and Congress about ensuring physician payment supports high-quality care to Medicare patients. Please share your information by emailing the AMA Advocacy staff at [ama.advocacy@ama-assn.org](mailto:ama.advocacy@ama-assn.org).

Physicians can view their 2022 MIPS Performance Feedback information on the [Quality Payment Program \(QPP\) website](#) using their HCQIS Access Role and Profile (HARP) credentials. The CMS Payment Adjustment [User Guide](#) (PDF) walks through the process of accessing and downloading performance feedback.

Questions? Please contact Jennifer Hananoki [jennifer.hananoki@ama-assn.org](mailto:jennifer.hananoki@ama-assn.org) or Koryn Rubin [koryn.rubin@ama-assn.org](mailto:koryn.rubin@ama-assn.org).

### THE 9TH DISTRICT BRANCH COUNTIES OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY STATE OF NEW YORK URGED TO CALL THE GOVERNOR ON 10/19 & 11/9

As you are aware, the Wrongful Death Bill is currently under consideration, and its potential implications for our medical community are concerning. We are asking the Governor to veto this legislation (A.6698) because it would harm patient access to care in our communities by significantly increasing damages awardable in wrongful death actions. If signed into law, this could increase already exorbitantly high physician and hospital liability costs by over 40%. In order to effectively oppose this bill, we will need to join forces with MSSNY to greatly strengthen our efforts.

To that end, a comprehensive strategy, was created, that includes mobilizing our physicians to reach out to the Governor's office through phone calls. MSSNY has provided us with a well-crafted one-page talking points sheet for our physicians to utilize during their conversations. This will ensure that you are equipped with the necessary information to express their concerns effectively.

The 9th District Branch counties have been asked to call the Governor's office on the following dates: Thursday, October 19 and Thursday, November 9. You can reach the Governor's office by calling: **518-474-8390, press option 3, to urge that she veto this legislation**

**Please continue to send letters in opposition via the MSSNY Grassroots Action Center and ask your colleagues to do the same!**

[Click here for MSSNY Talking points](#)