Denver Medical Society Inaugurates New President

On November 4, the Denver Medical Society held its 146th annual meeting at Palettes at the Denver Art Museum. The evening included the inauguration of new DMS President Usha Varma, MD, an obstetrician-gynecologist in private practice. Her acceptance remarks follow.

Thank you all for attending the DMS annual meeting and my installation as the president of a very old -146 years- and elite professional organization. My family here includes my daughter Sonia, son-in-law Conor, my sister Dr. Shashikala Varma and my other sister Rekha and her husband Dr. Nampalli Vijay.

I have been debating for some time as to what to say tonight and finally decided to start with part of my journey as a physician. I was born in India but my birth certificate does not say India. A little history lesson-the part where I came from was ruled by a king and had its own name. I was one of six children and my father was a general physician who worked for the government and then had his own private practice until his death. My father was a self-made man and raised himself starting at age 10. My mother was one of 13 kids and came from a well to do family. Eventually I grew up in suburbia with lots of extended family within walking distance.

I was 12 years old when I saw my sister and her friends dissecting frogs and guinea pigs on my house verandah. So I decided that I wanted to be a doctor and started my medical school at age 17. At this age I walked into the anatomy dissection hall with cadavers loaded with formaldehyde on steel tables. All I knew was someday soon I was going to be a doctor.

I am sure even today a medical student feels the same way in the USA--one step at a time. Who guides us constantly in this journey--the medical school, our family, our environment or social media?

I divided this into stages-medical school is hard work, long hours, unemployed and loans for most in some form and the lucky ones who are financially supported by their parents. Today about 40% have 100% student loans when they graduate. They do not lose sleep over this.

The environment is full of positive energy and they meet new people all the time. If only cadavers could talk. We also have the proud parents who have a glow on their faces when they let society
know about the future doctor child— all the perks they can get as parents, no waiting in doctors’ offices, an advocate when they are sick and more. In my case I was the 2nd child—2nd daughter in medicine.

My parents wanted us to study abroad and bring the knowledge back home. I am sure most parents in the USA would like to have their children close as they get old.

The next stage was deciding the graduate program. I was fond of surgery and preferred to work with women mostly at the time due to my upbringing. It is a time today when most graduates get married and have children. It is also a time, like for athletes who are waiting to be drafted, when young physicians are weighing their futures as employed physicians of various sorts or starting their own private practice. Today it is rare for a physician to venture out on their own. Most graduates are not too worried about the student loans since they know in a short time they will get paid enough to pay the loan off. They are more concerned about their location and where they would like to raise a family and their hobbies. The business end of medicine at this stage can be confusing.

I came to Denver after graduating from Michael Reese Medical Center in Chicago which at the time was part of the University of Chicago. The only three female ObGyn group on the west side of Denver wanted me to take over their obstetrics practice but I was not ready to be alone. Instead I joined another female, Dr. Louise Walker. Most of you know her from old times. My contract was one page long. I was only thinking about launching my career as an OBGYN and working for a living finally.

The fact that I came from a very strong graduate program and was trained in laparoscopy was a big plus for us both and as I figured out later she was looking for a female to join her. For me it was an absolute great situation—private practice just like my father, a female who could later understand the needed time off when I was pregnant, my ignorance in the business end of medicine and her being almost 25 years older than me made her a fantastic mentor who was very successful professionally in Denver.

Then comes the years of practice and confidence grows in your abilities and your success. I feel today we need mentors even at this stage of our careers and know that older physicians are not taking jobs away from young ones. We do know that there will be a shortage of physicians in the USA in the next 10 years. So the choices you make in this stage are important because most will stay in this stage for at least 20 to 30 years. It is the time to raise a family, travel, do amazing research in your job and build lifelong friendships. It is time to be involved in community where the family is involved. Most physicians are financially stable and the loans are paid off. Retirement is getting funded and children’s college tuitions are getting paid.

The next stage is the hardest part of a physician’s career. I have read many articles, books and seen videos of this stage and most of the time we call it the physician burnout. Every medical magazine almost daily has their point of view on this topic. I do not plan to go into the details on why that happens but would like to explore the problem. My quest as a part of the medical society is to learn how we can help each other. We should be part of a medical society where we can help each other. Physicians bound by contracts should be able to discuss their concerns with us. I want medicine to be a profession and not a business.

The medical societies have done a great job over the years to work on different areas impacting physicians in these difficult times. I find that medical societies can bring us together and glue us together to find a solution for the burn out. There is a quote from a book that says that physicians are the key stake holders in any health care organization and these organizations are almost 100% dependent on physicians.

(Continued on page 6)
Dec 7th, 2016

WEDNESDAY

MIX AT SIX

PHYSICIAN NETWORKING EVENT FOR OUR MEMBERS

LIGHT APPETIZERS/ MICROBREWS & MARTINIS

JOIN US! DEC 7TH 6 - 7:30PM

BAR LOUIE - DTC
8000 EAST BELLEVUE AVE.
GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO 80111

RSVP BY MONDAY DEC 5TH
INFO@DENVERMEDSOCIETY.ORG
DMS Members Enjoy the Evening at 146th Annual Meeting

Physicians and their guests enjoyed an evening of fellowship as the Denver Medical Society celebrated its 146th Annual Meeting since its founding in 1871. The evening included the installation of Usha Varma, MD as president and the honoring of 14 members, 10 of whom were able to attend the evening, who are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their graduation from medical school. Those celebrating their 50th anniversary are:

David M. Charles, MD
William E. Fuller, MD
W. Ben Galloway, MD
Clarke C. Godfrey, II, MD
Joel H. Goldstein, MD
Loren E. Golitz, MD
Everette G. Jones, MD
Howard J. Kerstein, MD
Melvyn H. Klein, MD
Louise L. McDonald, MD
Wendy M. Parkinson, MD
Donald W. Parsons, MD
Michael A. Sarche, MD
Moshe Ziv, MD

50 Year Physicians are honored by DMS Chair Aaron Burrows, MD and incoming president Usha Varma, MD

Drs. Michael Lepore and Herb Jacobs enjoy the evening with their wives, Betty Jennings and Michela Lepore

Drs. Naomi Fieman, Debra Parsons, David Downs, and Christine LaRocca
New DMS member Jeff Kesten, MD chats with Tara Burrows and DMS Chair Aaron Burrows, MD

New DMS president Usha Varma, MD celebrated with her family including daughter Sonia and son-in-law Connor, sister Dr. Shashikala Varma and sister Rekha and her husband Dr. Nampalli Vijay.

Former DMS president and 50 Year physician Don Parsons, MD and former DMS board member Paul Redstone, MD
This industry needs us to survive and profit and so they also should pitch in with our efforts to stop the burn out and help physicians once again feel joy in their work. I want us to explore how we can help all physicians, no matter where or how they practice, participate in efforts to build a healthcare system that serves patients and supports physicians rather than burning them out.

If a physician survives a burn out the next stage is great with more freedom to enjoy your jobs, control your hours and spend time with family and community. Let us start looking for opportunities for physicians to speak up and share their stories but to also come together to seek solutions.

My special thanks to Dr. Naomi Fieman for inviting me to join the Board, all of you who have come here tonight, my family and friends and a special thanks to the staff at DMS and CMS and especially our executive director Kathy Lindquist-Kleissler who keeps us all in shape to be on time and keep up with meetings and topics.

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We’ll be looking forward to your input and feedback in order to make the new Bulletin a useful and valuable asset to Denver physicians. Watch for the new, mobile-friendly format in January.

(continued from pg 2)

Watch for a new format next month as the Denver Medical Bulletin begins its 107th year of publication! Since 1910, the Bulletin has been the voice of Denver physicians and their source for information and knowledge about the issues impacting them and their patients. This tradition will continue as we launch a new, more contemporary format that will provide readers with easily accessible, up to the minute resources that fit their busy lives in 2017!

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

DMS’ 2017 Medical Spanish Class will be held
April 21-24, 2017
CME thru AMA, AAFP and ACEP
AANP Contact Hours
Watch for registration details in January!
Metropolitan Medical Society
Legislative Night 2017

Wednesday, February 1, 2017
6:00 – 8:00 pm
Cocktails and Hors d’oeuvres
Warwick Hotel – Millennium Ballroom
1776 Grant Street, Denver

The Denver, Arapahoe-Douglas-Elbert, and Aurora-Adams County Medical Societies, in conjunction with the Colorado Medical Society, are proud to team up and present a night of informal discussions with our Denver Metro State Legislators. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to meet some of your legislators and offer your insight on hot issues this legislative session like health plan networks, parity for Medicaid rates, administrative burdens placed on physician practices and proposed health plan mergers. Following the election, we have some brand new legislators who, along with their more seasoned colleagues, will face enormous challenges in addressing these issues in the coming legislative session and they need to hear from you!

In order for us to best prepare for this evening, reservations are required no later than Friday, January 27th.

RSVP by email to info@denvermedsociety.org, call us at 303-377-1850, or fax your reservation to 303-331-9839. Please give us your name and specialty when you RSVP.

Name ___________________ Specialty ___________________
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