

## Greetings

I have been on the AAFP board of Directors for the last 2 years and wanted to give you an update on what we have been working on at a national level. Additionally, I would also like to ask you to come to our state meeting and to announce my candidacy for the president elect position for the AAFP. I will try to keep it short as I know you are busy, but there is a lot going on.

The AAFP is working hard on your behalf. I will include our strategic plan for the next year. We have had success in raising the income of family physicians. Our incomes have risen the most of any speciality, but we will not be content until we are on par with other specialties. We see the issue of family physician income as well as medical student loan repayment as being the most important issues for the continuation and growth of our specialty.

We are also actively engaged in addressing the opioid epidemic. Initially, family medicine was seen as part of the problem and legislation was being drafted that would increase our workload significantly without improving outcomes. We were able to intervene and are now seen as an important part of the solution.

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment we had over the last 2 years was the repeal of the sustainable growth rate, which was an automatic reduction in Medicare payment that required a patch from congress every year. This was replaced with MACRA which is due to start this January, but which is still undergoing serious revision. We are also pushing hard to make EHRs work better and to reduce a lot of the redundant and useless busywork like preauthorizations. To do this we are aggressively talking with insurers, congress, and government agencies.

Practicing medicine in Alaska is very different from the lower 48, and frankly we are in a better position than most other states. We don't have nearly the practice consolidation that is seen in the midwest and east coast, with large medical systems buying out most if not all the private practices. Our malpractice insurance is not as high as many states. And our payment has not been ratcheted down as much as many areas of the country.

Alaska also enjoys a great impact nationally. Prior to my term in the board, Barb Doty, MD from Wasilla served the AAFP well on the board of directors. In addition we have had Pete Hanson, Ron Christensen, Marin Granholm, and Jennifer Hyer. Our academy has an important voice that has changed the course of the academy as well as the nation.

I would like to continue this legacy by running for president elect of the AAFP and I would like your support in several ways. First of all we need help with our state Academy, specifically in terms of being a part of committees or even being an officer. I realize that additional time commitments are difficult, but there is no better antidote for burnout and being discouraged with a medical career than to be actively involved in improving family medicine. That is why I have been doing this for so many years. Additionally, I would love to have members from Alaska come to San Antonio, Texas for the week of September 11 -13, 2017. There will be a hospitality suite as part of my campaign followed by an election. It will be fun. This will be followed by FMX, the AAFP's yearly meeting. Lastly I would like to invite you to our meeting in October Oct 7 - 9 at the Sheraton. I want you to come and tell me your concerns.

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