

2021 President Fahad Elmi, MD President's Address to Membership

I want to give thanks and recognition to some very special people and friends. They have been and still are very important in my life's journey. I hope by sharing these thanks and recognitions with you I would be sharing with you a sense of who I am and what drives me to serve and work on behalf of our members and colleagues in our profession and on behalf of our patients.

Going to Medical school in Iran during an unnecessary war and seeing casualties firsthand and subsequently serving in remote areas where healthcare was so scant, fueled me with a strong desire to improve health disparities and to help people in need. I want to begin by saying thank you to my colleagues in our practice. Thank you for your incredible dedication to our patients. You are an inspiration to all of us, working with you is an honor and a highlight of my career. And thank you to my mentors. I'm lucky to have some of my mentors as fellow members of our society and I'm very grateful for your friendship and mentorship. Thank you to our board members, board trustees, and Mr. Douglas Kilpatrick. Thank you all for your engagement and selflessness all these years. and thank you for your incredible work. I'd also like welcome our new board members, Dr. Maneesh Ailawadi and Dr. Douha Sabouni. I'd also like to thank my wife, Aram. Our life continues to be an incredible journey from the start as we were both interviewing for the same residency position until today. You are my best friend and strongest supporter.

The practice of medicine allows us great insight into humanity. We get to be present for incredibly intimate moments in our patients lives, and to influence them in powerful ways. We see them when they are vulnerable and help them to rise again. We have the privilege of being there for them at the right time. What we do is for more than a job, it's a profession, it's an art.

On those days when the frustrations mount, sometimes because of administrative burdens, we should remind ourselves that we are providing quality care to our patients and to those in need.

The NCMS has been our ally since its founding in 1849. The work of NCMS continues, doing what needs to be done so that physicians can continue to provide the care to the people who need it. The NCMS got involved in epidemiologic issues though out its history. In 1903, the society determined that the typhoid fever epidemic in the region was related to drinking contaminated water from the Delaware river. Also in the 1960s, the society promoted oral vaccination and vaccinated our local population against polio and helped to irradicate the disease.

Now in 2021, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCMS stands ready to work with health officials, and local health networks to ensure the health of our community in 2021 and beyond. We appreciate the hard work and dedication shown by all healthcare providers as we collectively address the COVID-19 pandemic. Together we must strive to refine the process quickly and safely to achieve herd immunity.

The main goal of society in 2021 is increasing the engagement of our local physicians. I'd like to focus on a few new initiatives that I feel are important to address this year. The first item is new strategic planning.

Given the ongoing profound changes in the healthcare landscape, coupled with equally disruptive administrative burden on the physicians, we need to establish and form a committee to develop a new strategic plan. The committee needs to conduct a review of the current medical society strategic plan and identify key drivers of change in advocacy and member relations. Our board members and trustees will guide and assess future directions for the medical society. The focus will be on increasing diversity of the society's membership and providing more opportunities for younger physicians, improving emergency preparedness, patient education especially on COVID-19, and the vaccination process. To accomplish this, the strategic planning committee, officers, and board members should participate in a collective strategic planning effort.

The other item of emphasis this year is to establish a women's physician task force to begin innovative work and new initiatives to advance equality for women physicians in both professional opportunities and leadership.

Living in this area for the last 20 years, I have been impressed by many dedicated physicians who provide care in the area with enthusiasm and quality. I suggest we establish a community physician of the year award to recognize a dedicated physician in our community yearly.

This year, we will strive for NCMS to remain the most trusted, and respected regional leadership voice in healthcare.

Our goal will be to improve patient care and outcomes while maintaining diverse engagement and expanding Membership.

The board of trustees and I need your continued support over the next few years as our new strategic plan moves from a plan to an exciting sustainable future for our community, physicians, and the medical society.

Remember universal access to health care in all dimensions is a basic human right. We will certainly work hard on it.

To end, I would like to share my favorite quote from Persian polymath, Avicenna: "There are no incurable diseases – only the lack of will. There are no worthless herbs – only the lack of knowledge."

To the Northampton County Medical Society staff, board and members, I thank you for the privilege of serving you in the year 2021. I will do my best.

2021 NCMS President - Farhad Elmi, MD, FACP, FACC