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Vice President-elect Candidate

You're running for an important office, but voters like to know about the human side of their candidates. What's your favorite movie? What was the last good book you read? TV series you watched?

My favorite movie is Back to the Future. It isn't necessarily the best movie but my husband and I watched this on our first date so it has sentimental value. The last book that I read was actually written by one of our own dermatology colleagues, Dr. Jerry Bagel. He wrote, "The Numbers on my Parents' Arms," which describes in vivid detail the horrors that his parents lived through in the Holocaust. This is a personal account of torture and survival and a difficult but exceptionally important history lesson.

In terms of TV, I am a news story junkie. I love Dateline, 48 Hours and 20/20. I will secretly admit that I also watch The Bachelor!

Win or lose, what will you do the day after election season is over?

In this unprecedented time, I will probably still be consumed with COVID-19 issues. I will, however, take a moment to either celebrate with my family or wish the successful candidate good luck and extend my support.

Do you see burnout as a big problem in dermatology? And, on a related note, what do you do to relax?

Burnout is a major problem in dermatology. Part of this comes from the excessive amount of time that is spent on non-medical, administrative issues. We need to keep up the dialogue with our legislature on the importance of decreasing the red tape facing our practices and the burden of prior authorizations.

I relax by exercising. I hit the elliptical as soon as I get home. It is strategically placed in front of the TV in our guestroom. My exercise hour relieves my stress, makes me feel healthy and allows me to catch up on the day's headlines.

What impact do you think the increased presence of private equity has had on our specialty?

Private equity is a reality that has become a significant part of our specialty. I believe that not all groups are the same and that there is both good and bad. On the positive side, dermatologists find that much of the administrative burden is lifted allowing for more personal time. With economies of scale, these companies can negotiate more favorable contracts. Also the financial risk for physician owners is mitigated.

On the negative side is loss of control. Private equity companies exist to make a profit and that is paramount for them. You may be told what to do by a non-physician manager and group decisions may be against your best judgment. Physician extenders may be used in an inappropriate manner and above their level of competence. In addition, companies can be sold and you have a new set of rules that you did not sign up for. As a specialty, we need to educate our members about all of the issues to investigate prior to signing on. I think that it is certainly possible to practice great dermatology within a private equity group however you must do your research.

Effectively integrating non-physician clinicians into Dermatology has been a topic that is frequently debated on various platforms. As Vice-President, what will be your approach for expanding and ensuring appropriate and adequate education of non-physicians working in care teams led by board-certified dermatologists?

First, we need to educate the public so that they are educated consumers. Many patients do not understand the different educational levels of their care team. Patients deserve to know the licensure and qualifications of their health care providers and demand that the board-certified dermatologist is the leader of the team. Physician extenders must be formally educated and show competence in order to increase their level of responsibility. At this point there is no dermatology specific competency examination for physician extenders and I believe that the academy should work with the American Board of Dermatology to come up with appropriate guidelines.

Over the past 10 years, AAD Presidents have made an amazing effort to engage Young Physicians by getting them involved, utilizing their strengths and harnessing their buy-in. This is certainly exemplified through Academy councils, committees, and task forces, which now have a number of Young Physicians which corresponds to the percentage of Young Physician Members in the Academy itself – around 30%. What kind of an impact do you think would be made if a representative number of Young Physicians were represented on the Board of Directors? Why is it important to consider Young Physicians' talents and perspectives on today's specialty issues?

Young dermatologists are the future of our specialty. They have specific needs and desires that will shape the direction of dermatology. As we plan and develop our mission, it is imperative that we address the needs of all of our members and make sure that the voice of our newest members is heard. One way to accomplish this may be to consider having a dedicated spot for young physicians to serve on the Board and encouraging more young physicians to run for office.

The American Academy of Dermatology has taken an active stance in addressing the lack of racial and ethnic diversity within the specialty. Despite this, the number of underrepresented dermatologists is still low. What steps can the American Academy of Dermatology take to combat this disparity in representation?

The earlier that we engage with underrepresented students, the more likely that they will have an interest and passion for dermatology. Our specialty is highly competitive and the journey to residency can be intimidating. We need to seek out students who represent racial and ethnic diversity at the college and early medical school years to help them to navigate the complicated pathway to success. Mentoring at this early stage will help these students to plan their research and outside activities to put them in the best position to be competitive. The exposure that the average medical student has to dermatology is a week or two at best. A mentoring program will expose these students to all of the diverse opportunities that dermatology delivers and provide a concrete plan to help direct them to achieve success.