Reflections and Projections

I would like to share the important initiatives and activities the Denver Medical Society has taken this past year. As the medical profession is rapidly changing, membership representation in your local medical society is more important than ever. This is especially true for employed physicians who may practice in one community and live in another. If you identify as a Denver Medical Society member, despite where you are currently practicing, we welcome you to continue to be associated with the Denver Medical Society and participate in programs that benefit you and your patients.

In conjunction with the Denver Medical Society Foundation, the DMS offered Joy and Happiness workshops this year providing renewed enthusiasm and connection after the isolation of the Covid-19 years.

However, our goal of focusing on joy and happiness within our professions was overshadowed by our growing awareness of physician suicide, at a rate which has become nearly pandemic. Within the last year, we have been deeply touched by the deaths of several physician

colleagues and friends from suicide. This realization redirected the DMS to concentrate on efforts to increase suicide awareness among our colleagues and the institutions in which we work.

With guidance from Abraham Nussbaum, MD, we began exploring what we could do to make a difference. We are also deeply indebted to former Board member Brenda Bucklin, MD, who connected colleagues specialized in this area for developing a DMS physician suicide awareness committee, now expanding into a multi-county task force. Stephanie Miller, MD, was the initial spark who inspired deeper DMS involvement. We are fortunate that two psychiatrists serve on the DMS Board including incoming President Liz Lowdermilk, MD and Adriana Manygoats de Julio, MD. We are grateful for everyone who engaged with us to help develop this task force.

DMS supported HB 25-1176 to reduce the burden of reporting past illness to the Colorado Medical Board on licensure to reduce stigma for seeking help while Adriana Manygoats de Julio, MD provided written endorsement.

We invited national expert, Abbey Kruper, PsyD., to develop and present our first workshop to bring physician stress and suicide to the forefront. Her presentation “The Burden and Privilege of Being a Physician; Supporting Professional Fulfillment as a Physician” on September 10, Suicide Prevention Day, was well received. Ultimately, we seek to reserve September 17, the National Physician Suicide Awareness Day, for the continuing forum to address physician suicide.

Kristi Keil, MD, who champions physical health, has graciously agreed to chair the DMS committee on Physician Wellness for us. If interested in participating, let us know.

Advocacy for physicians is of paramount importance to affect change. This suggests that having our local medical society become more physician advocacy focused is imperative. We welcome anyone wanting to work on this important issue. (vcastleberry@denvermedsociety.org)

Cognizant of our public health duty to Denver, DMS focused on promoting vaccine awareness in our community as vaccination levels in Denver fell during the pandemic. Please keep recommending vaccines to your

patients. Under the astute leadership of Colleen Murphy, MD, we formed a more robust Disaster Preparation Committee including Telligen's Mr. Disaster, Christine La Rocca, MD, Sangeeta Rao, BVSc, MVSc, PhD, a Colorado State University faculty member specializing in zoonotic diseases, and Kathy Crabtree, MD, among other experts.

We also have developed a robust AI Committee directed by our newest board member, Howard Saft, MD. The committee is hosting a panel discussion on AI in Healthcare on October 29, 2025, that should be enlightening. Previous Board Members Adam Carewe, MD, and Arlen Meyers, MD, also contributed to this committee.

Our newly elected Treasurer, Alex Leung, MD, is focusing on developing infrastructure to allow early career physicians to network effectively and securely. Liz Lowdermilk, MD, and Michael Keller, MD, from the Denver Medical Society Foundation planned and sponsored the August 17th music event at the Levitt Pavilion for all physicians to connect.

Through all this work, President Kelly McAleese, MD has been a stalwart and visionary leader. Now she assumes the role as Chair, Liz Lowdermilk, MD as President for a second time, Colleen Murphy, MD, as President-Elect and Alex Leung, MD, as Treasurer. So, the leadership of this organization is in good hands. Stay connected and encourage your colleagues to reconnect with the Denver Medical Society. Given the national challenge to medical insurance, the local changes, and the increasing business of medicine pressures, participating in the DMS is more relevant than ever!

Carol Stamm, MD

October 22, 2025

Chair Denver Medical Society 2024-2025