



Perspective/Opinion

In the Streets, At Your Ward and In Your Doctor's Office

By Alexa Wild, Clinical Research Coordinator in the Department of Neurosurgery

When so much of life feels out of our control, how can we truly help others?

What memories do you have of empowering someone? I hope it comes easily to you, and if you are reading this, I imagine you are someone that makes an impact.

On a chilly February morning, in a Milwaukee Park pavilion, I created a core memory. As an election worker, I had always avoided operating the registration table. It was a role I deemed too important for me to take on. I was trained and educated on the process, but I did not feel I had earned the role yet. But that February day, after arranging all the documents for the table, rather than walking away, I sat down.

When it came time to hand off my first ballot to a newly registered voter (after quadruple checking all the documents), I was beaming! Thank goodness we were wearing mask because joy was spilling out all over my face.

There is the saying: “you don’t know what you have until it’s gone.” But this was the opposite. What exactly would that be? Perhaps, “you never know what you have to give until you give it.”

Zooming in on one individual person is what made this moment so emotional. That one person, with their own struggles and their own version of the American dream, had a chance to pick people to represent their values.

Our Voice

Our voices need to be heard. Each and every one of us, including all the people we interact with at work: our coworkers, students, research subjects, patients, etc. Everyone deserves the dignity to be heard.

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As a legal observer, I witness people enter the streets risking arrest in hope that their cries for justice are heard. As an election worker, I see people quietly (for the most part) feeding their values into a secure machine. As an individual, I worry about the people I do not see in either of these situations. How are they heard?

The Voice for Health Care

If health care is patient centered, how are we hearing patients on all levels? How are we helping them lift their voice? As physicians and researchers, there are limits to what we can do to help our patients, despite our wishes otherwise. The ticket they need to be fully heard is easy access, support, and knowledge about voting.

If we are leaders in health care, we need to be doing all that we can to support people who work in health care and people who access health care to more easily get their ballots cast. Life is busy and getting registered to vote or getting to the polls is not easy, especially for people struggling to make it through each day.

Let us Make an Impact

When can grow our community impact as a health institute if we build knowledge about voting into the fabric of what we do. How can we do this?

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