



WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HOLIDAY MESSAGE

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

Dear Colleagues,

As we approach the final months of the year, a season filled with gatherings, reflection, and renewal, I want to extend my deep gratitude to each of you. Whether you will spend the holidays inside the hospital or outside of it, with family, friends, or catching your breath after an intense year, please know that your work, your compassion, and your presence in our Westchester community are recognized and appreciated.

This is a time of gratitude, and my heart is full.

Every day, you bring healing into the world. You deliver difficult news with tenderness, care for patients at their most vulnerable, and carry responsibilities that many outside our field may never fully see. And still, you show up with skill, with humanity, and with the quiet resilience that defines the medical profession.

As physicians, we know that our lives do not pause during the holidays. Some of us will be rounding on Christmas morning, taking call on New Year's Eve, or making last-minute accommodations for patients who rely on us. Others will finally step away for rest, celebration, or meaningful time with family. Both are acts of service. Both are valuable.

This season, I want to emphasize the importance of work-life fit, a concept that honors the reality of our profession. It is not about a perfect balance; it is about finding the rhythm that allows us to serve our patients while still attending to our own physical, emotional, and family needs.

Work-life fit acknowledges:

- that our schedules ebb and flow
- that caring for ourselves strengthens our capacity to care for others
- that community, both personal and professional, is essential to our wellbeing

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ANAÏS CARNICIU, MD
President, WCMS

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FROM THE EDITOR...

***THE COVENANT OF WATER* BY ABRAHAM VARGHESE**
A BOOK REVIEW
PETER ACKER, MD



I first heard of Abraham Varghese many years ago when I read his seminal book (**In My Country**) about his time working in Appalachia during the 1980s as an infectious disease doctor. It was at the peak of the AIDS epidemic and he found himself caring for young men who having been banished from their origins to large cities were returning sick with HIV. Dr. Varghese brought an interesting perspective as he observed the cultural conflicts that arose between the young men and their rural and often conservative and religious family members. He was able to offer an objectivity afforded by his own origins. He was born in Ethiopia to Indian parents who were originally from Kerala in SW India. He attended medical school in Madras, India and complete his training with a fellowship in infectious diseases in the United States. He later turned to fiction with the novel **Cutting for Stone** (reviewed in this newsletter several years ago).

The Covenant of Water depicts several generations of a Malayali family living in Kerala from 1900 to 1977. It starts with an arranged marriage between a 12 year old girl and a 40 year old man which wasn't too unusual at the time. The bride eventually grows to be Big Ammachi (grandmother) who is the matriarch of an estate in a fictional town in Kerala. She learns of a strange affliction that has cursed several generations of the husband's family – an aversion to water and each generation has members who have died by drowning. Kerala is an interesting setting (which I visited a number of years ago) in that it is dominated by numerous rivers, canals and waterways. Another thread introduced is of a Scottish doctor named Digby Kilgore who after a series of unfortunate events, ends up as a doctor in an Indian leprosarium which results in a connection with Big Ammachi's extended family.

It is a long (more than 700 pages) and complicated novel with multiple characters and threads which requires a certain amount of dedication and attention from the reader but it is well worth the effort and I think most will find the denouement surprising and very satisfying. It is a rich description of culture in Indian society. The characters are richly drawn and their interactions are well depicted. There is, no surprise, a lot of medical issues which come up and add immensely to the fascination of the story.

I have for long time been interested in the nexus between medicine and writing and thus have enjoyed fiction written by doctors. As W. Somerset Maugham in an essay: "I can think of no better training for a writer than to go to medical school." He, in fact, went to medical school, but quickly turned to writing. There is a rich tradition in narration in medicine, ie the diagnosis lies in the story that the patient tells you. In this case, the medical details are quite realistic and fit with the plot and characters and give it very realistic feeling. I strongly recommend this book of course to all serious readers, but also especially to physicians and other health care workers. Would love to hear from readers of this book and to listen to your comments!



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STOP THE TRAIN Elliot Barsh, MD

(Links to articles mentioned are found in the body of this piece)

**“Why does your face look so down today?”
-Joseph (speaking to Pharoh’s chief butler
and chief baker in prison)**

Hi everyone.

Welcome back and happy holidays.

We are living through a crisis that is changing the way we may think of ourselves.

As physicians, we are accustomed to being *respect-
ed* and *trusted*.

But today that respect and trust feel increasingly *fragile*, and our *futures* as physicians seems less certain.

The holidays we celebrate this month remind us that we *matter*.

What makes us matter?

Who do we matter to?

We are born with *purpose*, and *matter* because we are here.

And our *value* only grows from there!

Even though we are born with *purpose*, we are born *unfinished*.

Our purpose is an *energy* within us, awaiting the moment it becomes *action*.

Every *choice*, *success*, *failure*, and *small act*, *reshapes* us.

Our *patients* help us discover *kindness* and *pa-
tience*.

Quietly, almost without noticing, we *learn*, *grow*, and *find* ourselves.

Our growth is *slow*, *uneven*, *imperfect*, and *real*.

We matter because we are here.

We matter to ourselves and everyone who chooses to live alongside us.

We don’t matter because of what we do, what we do is significant because we matter.

Happy Holidays!

See you next month.

E

**“The tears kept coming and I couldn’t hide them.”
A Wrinkled White Coat**

“...that stranger in the mirror is not a true outer representation of the new, inner, fresh life, still being born, far inside us.”

I’m 62. Stop Telling Me I’m Old.

Ken Stern on why Americans should stop classifying 65 as “old.”

**“Doctor, would you like some ice cream?
Pistachio Ice Cream**

“Why try to improve the world if it’s ending tomorrow?”

How We Became ‘Half in Love With Easeful Death’

Apocalyptic predictions may actually serve as comforting fantasies, at which point our future freakouts become an excuse for inaction.

***Just Beyond Yourself* by David Whyte**

Just beyond
yourself.

It's where
you need
to be.

Half a step
into
self-forgetting
and the rest
restored
by what
you'll meet.

There is a road
always beckoning.

(Continued on page 6)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE HOLIDAY MESSAGE

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

(Continued from page 1)

As your medical society, we remain committed to supporting you in that pursuit. We will continue advocating for physician wellness, expanding peer connection opportunities, and ensuring you have a platform where your voice matters, because it does.

During this season, please take a moment for yourself. Breathe. Reflect. Reach out to a colleague. Celebrate a small victory. Honor the meaningful work you do each day.

On behalf of the Westchester County Medical Society, thank you for all you have given this year, your expertise, your dedication, your partnership, and your friendship. It is a privilege to serve alongside such exceptional physicians.

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm, restorative, and joyful holiday season. May the coming year bring renewed energy, deep fulfillment, and continued connection within our extraordinary medical community.

With gratitude and respect,
Anaïs Carniciu, MD
President, Westchester County Medical Society



STOP THE TRAIN Elliot Barsh, MD

(Links to articles mentioned are found in the body of this piece)

(Continued from page 5)

When you see
the two sides
of it
closing together
at that far
horizon
and deep in
the foundations
of your own
heart
at exactly
the same
time,
that's how

you know
it's the road
you have
to follow.

That's how
you know
it's where
you
have
to go.

That's how
you know
you have
to go.

That's
how you know.

Just beyond
yourself,
it's
where you
need to be.



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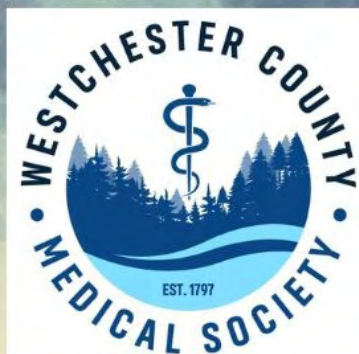
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& MANIFEST
pure joy THIS
HOLIDAY



MEDIA ALERT

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December 17, 2025
For Immediate Release

NY Physicians Praise Gov Hochul for Signing Medical Aid in Dying Legislation with Significant Negotiated Changes

Statement attributable to:
David Jakubowicz, MD
President, Medical Society of the State of New York

“Governor Hochul is to be praised for signing into law the Medical Aid in Dying legislation, which encompasses significant negotiated changes. These include placing further restrictions and requirements around the circumstances for when this extraordinary measure can be requested by a patient—and subsequently have that request be honored. We also praise Assemblymember Paulin and Senator Hoylman-Sigal for their continued efforts to work through the many legitimate questions that have been raised surrounding this profound change in the law.

“This legislation is consistent with [policy](#) adopted by the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) at its 2024 House of Delegates meeting, and subsequently re-affirmed at its annual meeting earlier this year. That policy supports legislation such as this if physicians can “retain their choice to opt-in or decline to engage in the processes and procedures as outlined in any proposed medical aid in dying legislation.”

“This position statement reflects a majority of the 300 physicians who are delegates to MSSNY, but we recognize and respect that this support is not uniform among physicians. Physicians across New York State have diverse and legitimate perspectives on this issue shaped by a variety of personal, societal, social, professional, and religious factors. Physicians are trained to heal. Given these diverse perspectives, we appreciate that the negotiated chapter amendments will provide important guardrails to better ensure the patient would be making this choice of their own volition with medical professional input, as well as ensuring that a patient’s physician and other care providers do not have any duty to assist the patient in this request if they disagree for any reason with the patient’s decision. Our hope is that this new right will be used only in the most dire of circumstances.

“With a 6-month implementation window, MSSNY intends to work closely with the Governor’s office and New York State Department of Health to ensure that physicians across the state—and their patients—are familiar with the logistics of this significant new law and that its implementation allows those with cultural and religious objections to opt-out.”

#

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

DR. ANAÏS CARNICIU

Dr. Carniciu, is a Castle Connolly Top Doctor for 2025, and President of the Westchester County Medical Society.

Let's Talk™: Winter brings a surge in dry eye symptoms, eyelid inflammation, and styes due to harsh winds, indoor heating, and increased screen time. Since you specialize in advanced treatments like broad-band light phototherapy (BBL/IPL) for chronic dry eye, can you explain why these problems worsen during the colder months and how BBL improves these conditions?

Dr. Anaïs Carniciu: Winter is one of the most challenging seasons for patients who suffer from dry eyes. Cold outdoor air and heated indoor environments significantly reduce humidity. This causes the tear film to evaporate faster and leads to inflammation of the meibomian glands, which are the oil glands that keep our tears stable.

When these glands get clogged, the eyelids become irritated, tears become unstable, and patients develop blurred, fluctuating vision. Sometimes, this can progress to the formation of styes or chalazia, which are painful or firm bumps caused by blocked eyelid glands.

Let's Talk™ With...
Dr. Anaïs Carniciu
A Leading Expert In
Oculofacial Plastic Surgery
Castle Connolly Top Doctor for 2025
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Full article: www.letstalk.press



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