

WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OUTGOING REMARKS

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

I want to express what a privilege it has been to serve as President of the Westchester County Medical Society over the past year. It has been an honor and a pleasure to represent our physician community and to work alongside dedicated colleagues who are deeply committed to the future of medicine and to the patients we serve.

One of the reasons I became involved in organized medicine is my passion for physician advocacy. At its core, advocacy is not simply about protecting physicians. It is about protecting our ability to provide the highest quality care to our patients.

I believe physicians must have the strongest voice in shaping the healthcare environment in which we practice. When physicians are able to exercise professional judgment guided by evidence-based medicine, ethics, and the needs of each patient, care is optimized. When administrative burden, financial pressure, or external constraints increasingly dictate decisions, both physicians and patients are negatively affected.

For me, physician autonomy is about preserving the integrity of the physician-patient relationship. It is about ensuring that medical decisions are made collaboratively, informed by science, experience, and what is right for the individual patient in front of us.

As I reflect on my career and the changes we have witnessed over the past several years, I am struck by how quickly our profession has evolved.

When I entered practice, I assumed the traditional insurance-based model would be the framework for my entire career. Like many physicians, I accepted its challenges as part of modern medicine. Quickly, however, I watched administrative complexity increase, autonomy decrease, and professional satisfaction erode for many colleagues.

At the same time, physician burnout has become one of the defining challenges of our profession. While often discussed at the individual level, burnout clearly reflects broader systemic pressures. Increasing administrative burden, expanding regulatory requirements, declining reimbursement, and reduced control over clinical decision-making have

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ANAÏS CARNICIU, MD
President, WCMS

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FROM THE EDITOR... **REFLECTIONS PART 2**

PETER ACKER, MD



In the year 2000, I wrote my first column for the newsletter. It was titled reflections and I wrote about the state of medicine/pediatrics at the time. In it I discussed the state of medicine and, looked at the past and the future and marveled at the incredible advances that had been made in the years since I started from medical school. For example, CT scans were just starting to be used. The first CT scan of a live patient was in 1971, but it took a number of years to refine it. I remember the excitement when attending physicians would discuss the marvels of this technology. There also a number of vaccinations that hadn't been developed yet. The Haemophilus Influenza and Pneumococcal vaccines only become available in the late 1980's and early 1990,s respectively. During my residency, I became highly skilled at doing spinal taps. The possibility of missing the early signs of a bacterial infection prompted practitioners to be very quick to culture the blood, urine and spinal fluid. I remember years later my middle daughter (who was born just as I was starting in my pediatric practice in 1987) towards the end of her pediatric internship and excitedly telling me that she had performed her first spinal tap! I marveled at the time that at that stage of my career, I had had done dozens of spinal taps.

I am on the cusp of switching to part time, which I will continue for another six months until I retire fully. It is bitter sweet. Of course, there are many positive things to look forward to and I will have time to pursue several interests which I have given short shrift to such as writing, playing piano, travel and foraging for wild mushrooms. One thing I worry about though is that I won't have an excuse for not getting more writing done! I plan to finally to write a sequel to my medical thriller **Blood Brain Barrier** which I have been contemplating for years, but never finding the time to spend long hours at the computer waiting for ideas to pop into my head. I will miss the day to day interaction with my patients, the feeling of anticipation when I give a soft knock on the door and enter the exam room. Of course, usually there is no great mystery about is going on since it is checkups and common illnesses that fill the schedule. Yet there are subtle differences between each encounter and there is joy in being cocooned in a small room with a parent and child and the feeling of a deep connection. Unlike ER medicine or surgery, in primary care, we establish long term connections and get know some of her patients intimately, experiencing the joy of their accomplishments and being there in times of emotional crisis. I am at the stage of my career where a number of my patients are the children of former patients! Of course, it makes me feel old, but it is wonderful to become reacquainted with my former patients who have now successfully entered adulthood. There is inevitably a sort sadness, when my patients age out of the practice and I often memories of them will pop into my head and I will wonder about where they are and what they are doing.

The prospect of retirement has but my brain on hyper alert for any memories of past pediatric experiences: an eight year old girl entering my

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FULL-SERVICE, ONE FOCUS: HEALTH CARE

STOP THE TRAIN**Elliot Barsh, MD**

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

“Through a shift in thinking, all circumstances become blessings.”

Hi everyone.

We rush through our work day *focusing* on our schedules and tasks.

We are expected to move from one patient to another and may not recognize, or think about, much else.

Visiting the doctor, seeing a patient, and working with staff, become *transactions*, like paying bills or buying a coffee at Starbucks.

Yet every transaction, or moment, every time one person meets another, is an *opportunity* for so much more.

It is an invitation to transform what we do and who we are.

Hidden within every interaction is the chance to *encourage* another person, restore *hope*, and remind someone that they *matter*.

Gratitude drives this transformation.

It can turn *ordinary* exchanges into *extraordinary* experiences.

Through gratitude our mind shifts focus, or *perspective*.

Through this shift in perspective, we gain a shift in *feeling*.

We start to see people differently, not as interruptions or obligations, but as *gifts*.

Gifts that help us practice *letting go* of anger, *patience* for delays, *forgiveness*, and *peace*.

Transforming our lives with gratitude is not about changing our external circumstances.

It is about changing our internal habits of thought.

As David Whyte writes,

"gratitude arises from paying attention, from being awake in the presence of everything that lives with-

in and without us."

It is about making the choice to *notice* the *blessings* in our routines and finding the *purpose* in everything we do.

Have a good month and thanks for reading.

E

"We all want to be seen."

The Before and The After

"Appreciating how other people live can make us better."

The Most Important Way That Fatherhood Has Changed

I'm fascinated by the fathers my brothers became.

"We all want to be understood."

Doctors, This Is Why Our Patients Are Using ChatGPT

Even doctors can learn something from A.I.

"The Knicks are champions, and boy are we grateful!"

Knicks Give Their City Something New: Impossible Joy

At long last, the team that New York City cares about the most has loved it back.

GRATITUDE BY MARY OLIVER

What did you notice?

The dew-snail;
the low-flying sparrow;
the bat, on the wind, in the dark;
big-chested geese, in the V of sleekest performance;
the soft toad, patient in the hot sand;
the sweet-hungry ants;
the uproar of mice in the empty house;
the tin music of the cricket's body;
the blouse of the goldenrod.

What did you hear?

The thrush greeting the morning;
the little bluebirds in their hot box;
the salty talk of the wren,
then the deep cup of the hour of silence.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OUTGOING REMARKS

Anaïs Carniciu, MD
(Continued from page 1)



all contributed to a reality in which physicians spend less time practicing medicine and more time navigating systems.

The healthcare landscape has also undergone significant consolidation. Independent practices have become less common, while large health systems, corporate entities, and private equity-backed organiza-

tions have become increasingly influential. These changes have left many physicians feeling more removed from decision-making and less able to shape patient care.

While I do not believe the current system is on the verge of immediate collapse, I do believe we are in a period of transition. Ongoing discussions around burnout, reimbursement, practice structure, and autonomy reflect a profession actively searching for more sustainable ways to deliver care. My own experience reflects that evolution.

A few years ago, I never would have imagined practicing outside traditional insurance networks. Over time, however, I became increasingly frustrated by a system in which insurance companies could retrospectively challenge or recoup payments for services that had already been authorized and delivered. More broadly, I began to question the extent to which third-party entities were influencing decisions that should remain centered on the physician-patient relationship.

My decision to practice differently was not driven by economics. It was driven by a desire to align my work more closely with my core values.

I wanted the ability to spend the necessary time with each patient without constant pressure from productivity metrics, prior authorizations, or administrative barriers. I wanted the freedom to make clinical decisions based on training, experience, and

judgment. Most importantly, I wanted my primary obligation to remain the patient in front of me.

What has been particularly meaningful is that I am far from alone in this perspective. Across Westchester and beyond, more physicians are exploring alternative practice models, including independent practice, direct care arrangements, and other approaches that seek to restore autonomy and strengthen the physician-patient relationship.

This is not a criticism of employed or corporate practice models, which provide important stability and support for many physicians. Rather, it reflects the reality that different physicians are seeking different solutions to shared challenges in our profession.

As we look toward the future, I believe the central question is not which model will prevail, but how we create a healthcare system that is sustainable for both patients and physicians. A system that rewards thoughtful, patient-centered care. A system that preserves professional autonomy while maintaining accountability. And a system that allows physicians to find meaning and purpose in their work.

I would not be surprised if the current trajectory of consolidation, corporatization of medicine, and vertical integration by insurance companies is significantly disrupted in my career lifetime, ultimately requiring a rebuilding of a more sustainable system from the ground up.

Medicine remains one of the greatest professions. The privilege of caring for patients is something none of us take for granted. If we want the house of medicine to thrive, we must be willing to have honest conversations about the forces shaping our profession and the changes needed to preserve what makes medicine meaningful.

Thank you.



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2026 Annual Meeting Westchester County Medical Society Westchester Academy of Medicine



On Tuesday June 23rd, the Westchester County Medical Society and the Westchester Academy of Medicine held their Annual Meeting at the Westchester Country Club in Rye, New York. About 100 members and guests enjoyed an evening of fellowship with colleagues and family, great food, networking, and the opportunity to interact with WCMS preferred business partners and sponsors. Outgoing WCMS President Anaïs Carniciu, MD was thanked for her outstanding leadership and gave remarks on her time as President of the medical society (page 1). She also thanked her colleagues for all of their support throughout his year as President. President-elect, Daniel Gold MD, an ENT physician in White Plains with ENT & Allergy, gave his inaugural remarks which can be found on page 8 of this publication. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Gold as our next President whose term starts July 1, 2026. Dr. Gold has served as an officer of the Westchester County Medical Society, the Westchester Academy of Medicine, our 9th District Councilor and a Westchester Delegate over the past decade. We are happy to welcome Dr. Gold as our new President and wish him a very successful term.

A special presentation was made to honor Robert Amler, MD, MBA as the 2026 “Career Achievement” awardee. Dr. Amler is a pediatrician and public health physician, and a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Currently he is Vice President for Government Affairs at New York Medical College. Formerly Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Practice and Institute of Public Health, he co-founded the Center for Disaster Medicine, Children’s Environmental Health Center, and *BioInc*, the region’s biotechnology incubator. Dr. Amler consults in environmental medicine at Boston Children’s Health Physicians and serves on the Boards of the Westchester County Association, Business Council of Westchester, and Hudson Vally Economic Development Corporation.

Another special presentation was made to Sudeep Chaudhuri, Vice President, Information Technology, DataMatrix Medical. Sudeep Chaudhuri serves as Vice President of Information Technology at DataMatrix Medical, bringing more than 30 years of experience in programming, system design, and healthcare technology to his role. This honor reflects DataMatrix Medical’s long-standing commitment to supporting the physician community and its continued partnership with the Westchester County Medical Society and Westchester Academy of Medicine.

We also welcomed MSSNY President Mark Adams, MD, MBA, FACR who gave an update on the legislative wins and challenges over the past year. We continue to work hand-in-hand with MSSNY to inform our members of any legislative issues that could affect the practice of medicine in New York State.

We would like to thank all of the event sponsors and attendees for making it such a great evening. Without all of you, the work we do would not be possible.

2026-2027 WCMS/WAM Officers: Daniel Gold, MD, President; Bruce Molinelli, MD, President-elect; Rubina Heptulla, MD, Vice President; Thomas Lee, MD, Treasurer; Kham Ali MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP, Secretary; Anaïs Carniciu, MD, Immediate Past President & Peter Acker, MD, Academy President.



Ronald Jacobson, MD &
Robert Amler, MD



Sudeep Chaudhuri &
The DataMatrix Team



MSSNY EVP Thomas Lee, MD;
MSSNY President Mark Adams, MD
& John Lombardo, MD

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE INCOMING REMARKS

Daniel Gold, MD



As I begin my term as President of the Westchester County Medical Society, I am filled with optimism about the future of medicine. Advances in technology, artificial intelligence, and medical science are creating extraordinary opportunities to improve patient care, but they also make the role of physicians more essential than ever.

In an age where patients are inundated with information from the internet and large language models, physicians remain the trusted experts who provide context, judgment, compassion, and personalized guidance. Our responsibility extends beyond diagnosing and treating disease—we help patients navigate an increasingly complex healthcare landscape and distinguish reliable evidence from misinformation.

Equally important is our commitment to one another. By supporting our colleagues, advocating for our profession, and working together to strengthen healthcare in our communities, we ensure that physicians can continue to provide the highest quality care. I look forward to partnering with all of you as we embrace innovation while preserving the enduring values that define our profession. If you'd like, I can also make this message more inspirational, more advocacy-focused, or tailor it specifically to the physician community in Westchester County.



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Passing of the gavel—2025-2026 WCMS President Anaïs Carniciu, MD to 2026-2027 WCMS President Daniel Gold, MD



Daniel Gold, MD. WCMS President-elect with Annual Meeting Sponsors and ENT & Allergy Reps John Catanzaro & Steve Borzoni

*FROM THE EDITOR...**REFLECTIONS PART 2***PETER ACKER, MD***(Continued from page 2)*

office with late on a Friday afternoon with a strange rash circling her eyes, the worried expression on a mother's face that caused me to look more closely at the sick infant before me or palpating the abdomen of a febrile toddler and feeling an enlarged spleen. The eight year old turned out to have dermatomyositis. I remember vividly looking at her knuckles and seeing grotton papules which are pathognomonic for this condition. On questioning, I discovered that at school she had recently needed help lifting her backpack into her locker, a sign of muscle weakness. She is now in complete remission and nearing the end of college. The worried expression on the mother's face for some reason concerned me more than usual. Parents always worry, but there was something different here that I couldn't put my finger on. I ended up doing a full workup and diagnosing and treating the only case of E. Coli meningitis I have ever seen. She is now in her early thirties, though sadly I lost touch with her when she aged out. Finally, the toddler with the enlarged spleen. It looked like yet another viral illness on a busy winter Saturday – same old same old! Still remember my surprise and shock, suspecting that this could portend something serious. As it turned out, he had leukemia. After two years of arduous treatment, he went into remission and now is a successful adult. A corollary to this story is that he mother, an architect became fascinated with medicine during her son's treatment and ended up changing careers by going medical school.

So as I continue to contemplate my coming retirement, I will also continue to write about which I find therapeutic and allowing me to cope with the impending change. Reflections Part 3 coming!

**STOP THE TRAIN****Elliot Barsh, MD**

Links to articles mentioned are found in the body of this piece (Continued from page 5)

When did you admire?

The oaks, letting down their dark and hairy fruit;
the carrot, rising in its elongated waist;
the onion, sheet after sheet, curved inward to the
pale green wand;
at the end of summer the brassy dust, the almost liq-

uid beauty of the flowers;
then the ferns, scrawned black by the frost.

What astonished you?

The swallows making their dip and turn over the water.

What would you like to see again?

My dog: her energy and exuberance, her willingness,
her language beyond all nimbleness of tongue,
her recklessness, her loyalty, her sweetness,
her strong legs, her curled black lip, her snap.

What was most tender?

Queen Anne's lace, with its parsnip root;
the everlasting in its bonnets of wool;
the kinks and turns of the tupelo's body;
the tall, blank banks of sand;
the clam, clamped down.

What was most wonderful?

The sea, and its wide shoulders;
the sea and its triangles;
the sea lying back on its long athlete's spine.

What did you think was happening?

The green beast of the hummingbird;
the eye of the pond;
the wet face of the lily;
the bright, puckered knee of the broken oak;
the red tulip of the fox's mouth;
the up-swing, the down-pour, the frayed sleeve of the
first snow—

so the gods shake us from our sleep.



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