



THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES

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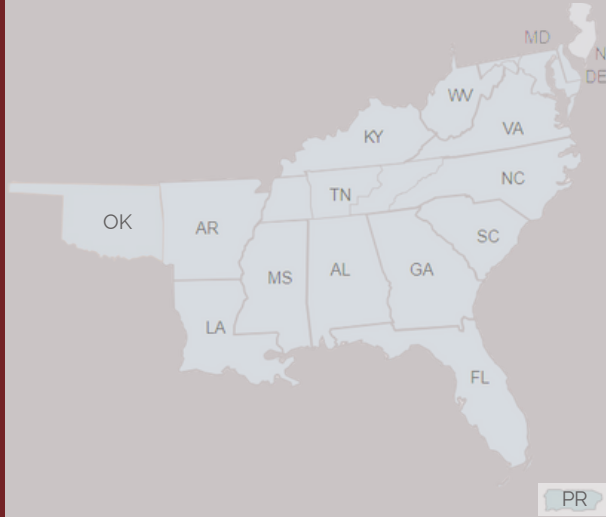
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THANK YOU FROM KMA!



Photo courtesy of Brigette Knudsen (Miranda Mosley's sister)

Jackson Hole, WY

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY SHAWN JONES, MD, FACS



A Season of Gratitude and Purpose

It was a pleasure to gather once again—this time in National Harbor, Maryland—for the AMA Interim Meeting. The spirit of collaboration was evident in every committee room and hallway conversation. It's always a powerful reminder that when we come together as physician leaders, we don't just discuss policy—we shape the future of medicine.

Your engagement continues to strengthen the voice of our Southeast Delegation. Thank you for your dedication, your thoughtful advocacy, and the time you invest in standing up for your patients, your practices, and our profession.

Looking Ahead

 Jan. 8-10, 2026, in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

 Feb. 23-25, 2026 | Washington, DC.

These events are critical opportunities to bring our voices to the national stage. We encourage you to attend and stay involved—whether in person or virtually—because your voice truly matters.

This Holiday Season

As the year draws to a close, I hope you'll find moments of peace, rest, and true presence with your loved ones. In a time when the demands on physicians remain high, never forget the importance of caring for your own well-being. Recharging isn't a luxury—it's essential.

We're grateful for your leadership and camaraderie throughout the year. Together, we've made meaningful strides, and together, we'll continue to advance the mission of organized medicine.

Season's Greetings and Warm Wishes

On behalf of the entire SED leadership team, we wish you a joyful, healthy, and hope-filled holiday season.

Shawn

THE GIFT OF OUR PRESENCE

SHAWN C. JONES, MD, FACS

As the most wonderful time of the year approaches, the question on many of our minds may be:

What can I give my loved ones that they will truly treasure? If you are like me you often struggle with finding just the right gift. My desire is to get the ones I care most about something they would like. At the same time it would be best if the gift were actually meaningful.

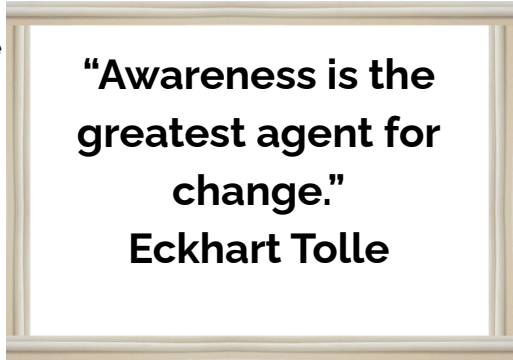
I would like to suggest something simple, elusive, and immeasurably powerful although it can be difficult to execute. That is giving our loved ones as well as ourselves the gift of our presence.

Not our physical proximity. Not our availability. But our full, attentive, disarmed selves.

Mindfulness is “the awareness that arises by paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.” (1) It is not just a therapeutic strategy or a wellness trend, it is a way of being in the world, and in our relationships. When we are truly present with someone, we create space for connection, meaning, and even healing.

What is the relationship between awareness and presence?

Awareness is the vast, unchanging backdrop of consciousness—the observer or “witness” that notices your thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and surroundings. It is the container in which all experience arises. It doesn’t judge or interfere; it simply notices.



**“Awareness is the
greatest agent for
change.”
Eckhart Tolle**

Presence, by contrast, is the embodiment of that awareness in the now. It is awareness in action, fully engaged, attentive, and non distracted. Presence brings awareness into the moment, grounding it in breath, sensation, and experience without fleeing into the past or the future.

Think of awareness as the clear sky, and presence as standing under that sky with open arms, feeling the wind and sun. One is the spacious context; the other is the felt, lived engagement.

Together, they form a powerful union.

- Awareness allows you to witness your life.
- Presence allows you to live it fully.

Cultivating presence through mindful practices such as breath awareness, body scans, yoga or centering prayer can deepen your access to awareness itself, sometimes resulting in what mystics and contemplatives call “pure presence” or “awareness of being aware.”

Ultimately, while awareness is the capacity to notice, presence is the courage to inhabit what you notice fully, kindly, and without distraction.

The Fractured Now

Modern medicine has made it difficult to be present. Our interactions with patients are mediated by screens, charting platforms, alerts, and metrics. We often spend more time documenting our care than actually delivering it. We click our way through a patient’s story instead of listening to it unfold.

But this same disembodiment isn’t limited to our clinical lives. It follows us home. Dinner tables dimly lit by phone screens. Children competing with email notifications for our attention. Many of us are “spending time” with our families without really *being there*.

THE GIFT OF OUR PRESENCE-CONT

Christine Rosen's *The Extinction of Experience* warns of this very phenomenon. She speaks of a world in which spontaneity, face-to-face interaction, and unstructured time are vanishing. Her critique of digital mediation isn't anti-technology, it's a call to return to our humanness. To reclaim wonder. To wake up to what matters.

The Power of Presence in Practice

As physicians, we've long known the value of being present. Over 100 years ago, Dr. Francis Peabody, who knew he was dying when he addressed Harvard Medical School students, said:

"The secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient." His point was that real healing requires attention, empathy, and time.

A 2020 JAMA article (2) reaffirmed what Peabody knew: meaningful connection depends on our ability to be truly present. Five practices were identified as most impactful:

1. Prepare with intention
2. Listen intently and completely
3. Agree on what matters most
4. Connect with the patient's story
5. Explore emotional cues

**"We had the experience
but missed the
meaning."
~T. S. Eliot**

These aren't revolutionary ideas. But they are countercultural in our fast-paced, metric-driven, screen-dominated world. And here's the surprising thing: these practices are good for us, too. Presence doesn't just reduce medical error or improve patient satisfaction. It combats burnout. It reconnects us to purpose. It makes the work more human—for everyone involved.

What About Home?

But what about outside the hospital walls? Can these same practices apply at home—around the tree, the table, the fireplace during the holidays?

Imagine, for a moment, a gathering with family and friends where phones are put away and eyes meet. Where stories are told and heard. Where boredom isn't feared, but welcomed as the soft space where memory and connection take root.

Stop multitasking (3) and simply watch your child's or loved one's expression as they speak. Or ask your significant other: What matters most to you this season? And then truly listen.

We have a tendency, especially as physicians, to optimize and manage everything. But presence isn't something to manage. It is something to allow however. To lean into. To protect.

Let this holiday season be a time when we return to one another and to ourselves.



Corfu, Greece

THE GIFT OF OUR PRESENCE-CONT

Giving Presence: Practical Invitations

If this feels out of reach in your current season, here are a few invitations to help you begin.

- **Pause at the threshold.** Before entering your home, take a breath. Leave the day behind. Enter with intention.
- **Eat a meal, phone-free.** Sit by a window. Chew slowly. Look someone in the eye.
- **Replace one text with a conversation.** Or better yet, a walk with someone.
- **Schedule boredom.** Fifteen minutes a week with no agenda. Let your mind wander. See what surfaces.
- **Notice.** What's one small, beautiful thing in your day? A laugh, a light, a line from a book or a word from a friend or loved one?

Each of these are simple acts. But together, they constitute a quiet revolution against fragmentation, against absence against the erosion of meaning.

This season, give your loved ones the gift of presence.

It also is a present we give ourselves.

Not just *showing up...* but truly being there.

Let us dwell. Fully. Here. Now.

Happy Hanukkah! Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays!

And just to be clear...I would definitely get the special ones in your life a gift to unwrap as well! :)



Hue, Vietnam

1 Mindfulness as defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn in "Wherever You Go, There You Are"

2 Zulman et al., Practices to Foster Physician Presence and Connection With Patients in the Clinical Encounter. JAMA. 2020;323(1):70-81. doi:10.1001/jama.2019.19003

3 Take note that multitasking is generally considered an oxymoron. The more appropriate term of "taskswitching" reduces quality and efficiency making the concept of doing multiple things well at once contradictory.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR AMPAC CHAIR

JOHN POOLE, MD

As Chair of AMPAC, I'd like to thank the Southeast for your generous support of AMPAC.

There are 22 state delegations that have achieved 100% AMPAC participation. 10 states are from the Southeast: Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Virginia. As usual the Southeast is a leader when it comes to advocacy and protecting our patients and our profession. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

Before I tell you why I so wholeheartedly believe in AMPAC and daily imbibe the Kool-Aid, let me briefly highlight a few points about AMPAC.

AMPAC is the oldest non-union PAC in the country-founded in 1961. Next year will be AMPAC's 65th anniversary and will be celebrating with a party at Annual-26.

Quoting directly from AMPAC's standing rules, AMPAC's mission is to *provide members of organized medicine and other eligible persons with the opportunity to support candidates for election to federal office who will promote the highest standards of excellence in medicine, promote sound public health policy and strengthen the ability of physicians to care for all of America's patients.*

It is also to assist physicians and others *in organizing themselves for more effective political action, and in carrying out their civic responsibilities as participants in democratic government.*

Physicians can be proud that AMPAC was an early adopter of several election tactics that have now become routine such as strategic spending on Federal candidates, independent expenditures and campaign schools to name a few.

Why am I such a true believer in AMPAC?

I truly believe political action is good patient care. We took an oath to put our patients' interest before our own and to first do no harm. I'm convinced that our patients will be harmed unless we have a strong voice in our state legislatures and Congress. It is up to us to do everything we can to help elect physician champions to Congress on behalf of our patients and our profession. Contributing to AMPAC is a vital part of such efforts. I invest in AMPAC for my patients.

My journey in advocacy began in the early 2000s, initially out of self-interest. Like many states, NJ was in the midst of a tort reform crisis. Just being named in a lawsuit could put you in a high-risk pool with unaffordable premiums. Suddenly I realized my career depended not just on how well I practiced as a general surgeon, but on the policies passed by the NJ legislature. Out of 120 legislators there was only 1 doctor and you guessed it-the legislature was stacked with lawyers. Back then, we had a 3-5-day statewide job action where there was no elective surgeries or elective office visits to highlight the crisis. I attended rallies. I travelled around the state and met and became friends with many of my fellow advocates. As it turns out, many of them are now serving in the NJ AMA delegation. I was hooked. Rather than just feeling helpless in the face of the politicians' latest proposals I felt empowered to effect change. Rather than just complaining in the hospital cafeteria I felt that I was actually doing something to take back control of our profession and advocate for our patients' well-being.

From there it was a natural step to become involved in my state PAC, eventually becoming Chair. This allowed me to more effectively advocate on behalf of our patients and our profession on a broader range of issues.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR AMPAC CHAIR, CONT

I realized that on the state level we could advocate for issues such as tort reform, prior-auth reform, scope of practice, etc. However, there were still major issues such as SGR reform, now Medicare payment reform, Medicare Advantage prior-auth reform, Medicaid access, etc. that could only be fixed by physicians having a strong voice in Congress.

I eventually attended the AMPAC Campaign school. I participated not because I planned on running a political campaign but because a campaign is all about messaging, which is such an important part about being an advocate. I figured it would help me to better spread the message to my hospital staff and MSNJ colleagues as well as my patients. Also, I figured it would help me be a better advocate when meeting with state or Federal legislators. As it turned out the AMPAC Campaign school was one of the best courses I have ever taken- and like all of you- I've spent my life taking courses. I would highly recommend it.

From there it was only natural to become involved in AMPAC. I am proud to have the opportunity to serve as your AMPAC Chair. I am proud that my tag-line has become; "my name is John Poole and I'm here to ask for money"! What am I really saying? I'm asking for money for our patients and our profession. I'm asking for your help and commitment to elect physician champions to Congress so that our profession and our patients will not be harmed.

As Chair of AMPAC I get to travel around the country and update state association members on the importance of investing in AMPAC. And yes-ask for money. For me, it has given me the opportunity to not only start a conversation with the physicians across our great country, but to start a relationship and often develop a friendship! That's the best part of my job. This year, among the 18 trips I made on behalf of AMPAC, I traveled to Oklahoma, Alabama, Maryland, New Jersey, Florida, Louisiana, Kentucky and Virginia. Thank you so much for the warm Southeast hospitality you have extended to me when I visited your state.

I think the best part of organized medicine is the relationships and friendships we get to develop by having a conversation and breaking bread together and empowering ourselves to save our profession. For me, it is the best cure for "physician burnout"- far superior to the yoga and meditation courses hospital administrators think will be helpful. It also makes for better policy, in my humble opinion.

In closing, I love history. One of my favorite inspirational passages is from Shakespeare's King Henry V. It's the eve of the battle of Agincourt. The English are vastly outnumbered by the French. Some of Henry's lieutenants come to him and tell him many of the men are afraid for the outcome of the upcoming battle. The King tells them that any man who is afraid is free to leave. However, he also lets them know that the English will win a resounding victory the next day. Generations will toast the victors... "from this day to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remember'd; we few, we happy few, we band of brothers". He lets them know that those that have left will have to live with the regret of not being part of the victory. As you may know, the English did win a resounding victory against all the odds. When I reflect on this story it motivates me to do everything I can to advocate for our patients and our profession.

When we are asked by our medical students, our residents, our colleagues, our patients, our families what we did to save medicine, especially now, don't we want to let them know we joined the battle- no retreat, no surrender?

My name is John Poole and I'm here to ask for money.

Thank you again for the honor of serving as your AMPAC Chair. If you would like to continue this conversation with thoughts, suggestions or criticisms feel free to contact me any time.

John W. Poole, M.D.
jpoolemd@gmail.com
201-230-8753

A MESSAGE FROM OUR AMPAC CHAIR, CONT



AMPAC

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INTERIM MEETING RESOLUTION SUMMARY

WOODY JENKINS, MD
CHAIR, SED RESOLUTIONS
COMMITTEE

The 2025 AMA Interim Meeting was a tremendous success for the Southeastern Delegation, with several sponsored initiatives achieving strong support and passage.

Key Themes

1. Medicare and Payment Models

- Advocate for centralized, standardized provider data repositories to reduce administrative burden and improve directory accuracy. (Res 208)
- Support legislation allowing physicians to partially opt out of Medicare in certain settings. (Res 209)
- Establish minimum standards for alternative payment models to sustain rural hospitals, including fixed cost payments and administrative simplicity. (CMS 03)

2. Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs)

- Push for divestiture of PBMs from insurance companies and affiliated pharmacies to improve transparency. (Res 210)

3. Medical Education and Workforce

- Integrate AI literacy into undergraduate, graduate, and continuing medical education. (Res 307)
- Protect access to Public Service Loan Forgiveness and income-driven repayment programs for physicians. (Res 217)

4. Patient Safety and Access

- Study hospital inpatient virtual nursing to ensure physician oversight and patient safety. (Res 809)
- Improve access to emergency ophthalmologic surgical care, especially in rural and underserved areas. (Res 821)
- Advocate for coverage of colonoscopy preparation costs under ACA preventive care requirements. (Res 806)

5. Insurance and Coverage

- Oppose non-medical switching of medications by insurers unless clinically justified. (Res 811)
- Ensure equitable payment for pediatric lead screening and point-of-care testing in physician offices. (Res 825)
- Advocate for fair reimbursement for immunizations and vaccine administration. (Res 826)

6. Public Health and Nutrition

- Promote education on healthful vs. unhealthful ultra processed foods. (Res 901)
- Support regulation of nitrous oxide branding to prevent abuse. (Res 903)

These resolutions underscore the SED commitment to tackling systemic issues by focusing our AMA on:

- Enhancing patient safety and access to care.
- Supporting financial stability for physicians
- Reducing administrative burdens

Our delegation's collective expertise, collaboration, and dedication led to the passage of impactful policies. The outcomes of this meeting demonstrate the strength and effectiveness of the SED team. Excellent work by all.

Thank You

**The KMA team is honored to serve and support the Southeastern
Delegation to the AMA.**

We wish all of you the happiest of holidays!

Miranda, Rachel, and Jenny

