

A New Lexicon for Physicians: A Poem for Physicians Who Care



AMARYLLIS SÁNCHEZ WOHLEVER, MD

What if EHRs, MIPS, and MACRA all stood for something else — something truly meaningful?

I recently read that there are 10 nonclinical administrators and staff for every physician in the United States (see <https://hbr.org/2013/09/the-downside-of-health-care-job-growth>). This means a greater portion of every health care dollar goes to paying for staff who have nothing to do with direct patient care. Yet these administrators dictate much of what we physicians do. We are forced to see more patients in less time, although many are sicker and on more medications than patients 10 years ago. We are asked to supervise others on the health care team, and we carry an unfair burden of liability. No wonder physician burnout is so high. What's remarkable is that it isn't higher. Despite mounting and exhausting obstacles to excellent, compassionate care, we still strive to care for people every day according to our high standards, *placing patients first*. I believe this is due to our high levels of resilience and dedication.

But enough is enough. After becoming a patient and experiencing the “other side” of health care, I was inspired to write the following

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Sánchez, a family physician in Orlando, Fla., is a physician coach, speaker, and author of *Recapturing Joy in Medicine*. This poem first appeared on her blog, faithfulMD.com. Author disclosure: no relevant financial affiliations disclosed. Copyright © 2019 Amaryllis Sánchez Wohlever, MD.

poem to encourage my colleagues to take a stand — for our patients and ourselves.

A New Lexicon for Physicians

Imagine if PQRS and ICD-10, EHRs and the looming MACRA, MIPS, and APMs all stood for something else, like measures of meaning and care aligned with what patients need and with who we are: true servants at heart. These sly abbreviations champion some other dream that hijacked our profession and disrupts the health care team. But we refuse to abbreviate care, cut corners, detach, and forget who we are. I dream of autonomy and its friend, common sense, and that sacred relationship we all still defend. I dream of scaling that fence built by faceless EHRs that split my vocation ... from ... the human person I vowed to assist. So why not rename the despised click-click-clicker that keeps us a-u-t-o-m-a-t-e-d and every misnomer that traps us 'til we're duly subordinated. Here's a new dictionary of medical terms born of our noble dream, not theirs. **P**hysician, arise! This is my earnest plea.

Quit playing someone else's maddening game.

Rules that hinder, intrude, disrespect, and inflame.

Success is, now, LISTEN — up to you and me.

Mandates and regulations keep choking.

Administrators blindly add more stress.

Care suffers while we smolder, too busy to voice our distress.

Remember your Hippocratic Oath?

Anyone else take that pledge?

We know what matters most.

Our patients are first.

Make another vow, for the future's at stake.

It's time to stand up; we must stay wide awake.

Patients deserve much less haste, something better.

Sacred relationships front and center — forever.

I believe in you,

Colleague. You're ready!

Dare to speak your truth and to **STAND!**

10 thousand more voices all over this land.

A new future requires a return to the basics.

Practice your craft. We cannot be complacent.

Make everything count for you and your patient.

It is time to heal our profession.

Let's scrub in and start healing our nation.

Let us all work together to see

Everyone's

Health

Restored.

Including our own. **FPM**

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