

**COUNTY MEDICAL ASS'N INAUGURAL SPEECH**  
**FOR**  
**KUTTY CHANDRAN**

Good evening everyone. I want to thank all of you, from my fellow colleagues and distinguished guests to my family and friends for sharing this milestone with me. Tonight promises to be a memorable event, not only for me as I enter this new phase of involvement with the BCMA, but for all of you as well. During my tenure as your new President, and beyond, it is my intention to honor the mission and the purpose of this organization as we work together to strengthen the sense of community throughout Broward County and its medical programs. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, and the members of the Broward County Medical Association for electing me as your 85<sup>th</sup> president of the BCMA. It is an honor and privilege to serve you. Thank you. Most of all, I'd like to express special thanks to Cynthia Peterson, our executive and vice president, for her dedicated service to BCMA and making this event a special one. Thank you Cynthia.

Of course, there are some very special people who are by my side and inspire me with their constant love and support, and without them, I would not be as present, dedicated and committed to my work within the medical community. To

Amie, our wonderful children, Maya, Jenica and Kelsey, I love all of you and I thank you for making both my life and work filled with purpose.

As we all know, the world has gotten faster and more complicated, and as a result, each one of us faces new challenges on a daily basis, and because of these challenges, processes and demands that were once a natural part of every day life seem to have become more and more daunting. Now, more than ever, we all need a “go to place,” one that serves as a context and a nexus for all phases of the medical community to be able to converge and share situations, solutions and other forms of information that will ultimately support all of us in being more effective medical professionals. A year ago, a patient of mine for 20 years was hospitalized while I was away for the weekend. She was very ill. She was assigned to a hospitalist. The following Monday, when I visited the patient, she and her family had a statement for me. “Doctor, I was your patient for the last 20 years and when I really needed you, you were not here.” **(Pause)** This is the result of a system change.

**(Ask the question to audience)** “Knowing the current system of medical care, and for that matter, the future of medicine the way it is prescribed by the government. Imagine yourself as a patient. Is that really what you want?” As members of the BCMA, there are ways we can work together to avoid this sort of patient distress and miscommunication. As

individuals, we are forced to face problems and challenges alone. As members of a core group, we have each other as invaluable resources to aid in navigating the increasingly complicated and frustrating terrain known as modern medicine. None of us wants to disappoint a patient or have the patient feel they are not properly cared for. We all work way too hard to have that condition exist, but we are also entitled to have a means to successfully balance our professional and private lives, and being part of an organization like this can be instrumental in all of us achieving that balance.

Let me take a brief moment to describe the history of organized medicine. When the medical societies were formed in the in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the function of the society was to educate and produce quality physicians and to regulate the profession with ethics and professionalism. The societies were not involved in the financial aspect of medical practice. It was left to the free market phenomenon. The medical societies even had the power to grant licenses. Thus, the medicine man of those days did not have a choice but to belong to the society. The first medical school was created by the effort of a medical society in 1765 in Philadelphia. As the medical societies were creating the best medical education, finding new medical cures, and building model institutions such as the Mayo Clinic, the Government stepped in and started to chip away at the power of organized medicine inciting the public interest. One of the tools that the government created and used was Antitrust Laws. The result was the fragmentation of organized medicine. Multiple specialty groups and sub specialty

societies were formed such as educational institutions and its organizations; employed physician groups; different certifying boards, several ethnic medical societies and so on and on!! There was a time most of the members of the medical profession if not all, were members of organized medicine. In this day and age, only about one third of our colleagues belong to a national association. Consider this in contrast: most, if not all attorneys belong to the bar association. We all have heard the maxim, “**Strength in Numbers.**” It is in the best interest of our profession, our patients, and our process that once again, we reclaim that sense of community and use those connections to strengthen **OUR** numbers- whether we refer to membership, patient and peer satisfaction, or statistics and efficiency, we are all part of this organization to **strengthen our numbers.**

Dr. Nathan Laufer of the Maricopa Medical Society in Arizona published an article titled, “Organized Medicine: why it Matters.” In Part One of the article he states, “ If we have several wishes of our medical practices these are probably what they look like: we would like to continue to practice independently as small businesses, be fairly compensated for our work and years in school, have influence with legislators regarding healthcare issues, be in charge of quality care issues, maintain patient choice regarding doctors and hospitals, get rid of the roadblocks that are preventing collections from payers and most importantly to be allowed to organize and do collective bargaining (if needed Federal Trade antitrust exemption). I have to say, I agree with that statement, and I am sure, as each one of you considers the impact that can be created by maintaining a

strong and viable medical association, that vision is not only probable, it's very **POSSIBLE!!**

The medical profession and all its attendant satellite professions and industries have evolved light years in the past several generations. It's hard to believe that back in the 1800's, medical men were laypersons that did not enjoy the prestige and status that we enjoy today. Thanks to the efforts made to organize our "industry," it is universally considered a noble profession throughout the world.

There are so many complicated and stress-inducing Issues facing today's practicing physician:

- Low reimbursement for services with rates fixed by the government,
- Loss of physician autonomy and medical staff issues,
- Cumbersome new Medicare enrollment issues,
- Escalating of costs in all areas of practice, from administration to insurance, legal fees, technical support fees, etc.
- Electronic Medical records issues,

It also seems as if rules and regulations are changing more frequently than ever, and it's becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain a sense of being informed. Sometimes I think, "There's only so many hours in the day. What's more important, tending to the health and well being of my patients, or making sure mountains of paperwork are completed?" I'm quite sure you'll all agree with me that we all face **THAT** dilemma!!

As the President of this fine organization, I will work with state and national associations to address some of these issues. But I need help from **YOU**, the **essential** membership of this organization. We need active participation and we need to grow our ranks and bring more members to the house of medicine. As the organization grows, so will the benefits of belonging. Remember the expression, "**Critical Mass.**" As we grow, so will our influence and voice grow stronger. As individuals, each one of us is a fine upstanding and respected member of the medical community. As the BCMA grows, it has the potential to be a force in this community, in Florida, and even in the entire country!!

Never lose sight of who you are and how you've chosen to share your life, your knowledge and your compassion. The Physician still has the power... The power of the pen, or, shall I say, for that matter the power of the computer keyboard. As Physicians, you give people life, you tend people through illness, and you sign both birth certificates and death certificates. Every day each one of us in practice, we make hundreds of decisions that have indelible impact on the people trusted to our care. We took the Hippocratic oath and we pledged our lives to care for others. In this day and age, we have choices. We can either accept conditions as they are, or we can choose to come together to strengthen our collective voice and have a positive impact on our practices, supporting industries and ultimately, our patients. We have the ability to prolong the

longevity of our society, and we also have the ability to rally for positive change.

Positive change can happen in the medical professions through the collective strength and participation of all of you, my colleagues. Remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi. He said, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Change only comes if we choose to proceed to change. If one man like Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in obtaining independence from the great British Empire, If one man like Dr. Martin Luther King could bring on social change and if one man like George Washington could lead and win a war then collectively we all can bring a change to the medical world for the common good.

As you see, I've "stepped up to the plate," and I am proud to see all of you as my teammates, united in a the very worthwhile cause of promoting the health, stability and positive growth of the noble profession we've all chosen as our life's work. I invite all of you to join me in being the change we want to see in this world and I look forward to a year full of positive and impactful work for our community and I welcome all of you to participate!

Thank you and God Bless America!